



MAKE Gorgeous Gift Baskets AT HOME

By Shirley Frazier

*Take one cup of imagination,
mix in a tablespoon of resourcefulness,
and add a pinch of creativity.*

What do you have?

*The perfect recipe to start
making your own gift baskets.*

Shirley Frazier is America's gift basket expert and author of *How to Start a Home-Based Gift Basket Business*. She owns GiftBasketBusiness.com and speaks with moms nationwide on gift and gourmet entrepreneurial topics.

Gift baskets are the most popular gift choice around the world, and with good reason. They can be made for any occasion and packed in a basket or another container. The chosen foods and gifts are limited only by your ingenuity. Today's most popular themes are pamper baskets filled with bath and body products, snack attack baskets with delicious sweet and salty foods, tea and coffee, and romantic dinner for two.

I began making gift baskets in 1990 as an extension of my love of crafts. Sewing and crocheting were longtime hobbies, and my friends liked receiving more than just fruit in a basket. When shopping in a gourmet store or strolling through a flea market, I pictured combining beautifully-packaged preserves and cookies with antique lace and linen napkins. My friends adored these handmade gift baskets which were given to them for birthdays and special occasions.

Tanuverne Ligon of Nashville, Tennessee, has been making gift baskets for eight years. "I made a pamper basket with a woman's hat box and included foot and body soaps, bubble bath, lotion, a manicure set and a nail brush."

Some gift basket makers have turned this part-time hobby into a small business enterprise. To understand if this creative craft is right for you, ask yourself three questions:

1. Am I a person who enjoys making crafts by hand?
2. Do I have an outgoing personality and like to meet new people each day?
3. Will I be patient as I learn different gift basket making styles?

"I wanted something that let me be creative," explains Flora Brown, a teacher in Fullerton, California who started making gift baskets 11 years ago. She made felt bookmarks for co-workers and went to craft shows for ideas before reading a book that said gift baskets were popular to make. "Why



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didn't I think of that?" Brown wondered, as she began looking for baskets and snacks to make gifts for friends.

Making gift baskets is fun and easy, and you don't have to spend your life savings to start. You'll need baskets, pre-packaged snacks, small gifts such as stationery and writing instruments, cooking utensils, bath products, shredded tissue, cellophane and bows. Begin by finding items at craft stores, discount shops and warehouse wholesalers that sell anything from cookies to caviar under one roof. You'll also find great products in linen stores, where snacks and beverages that compliment fine bedding are sold, and gift items in the clearance section of the country's largest department stores.

If you want to use containers as well as baskets, use items with a hollowed center. "I look for containers wherever I go," says Ligon, who uses flower pots and tote bags. Her children's baskets utilize sand buckets so that "in the summertime, kids have something to play with." She packs crayons, coloring books, games and anything that "keeps them active."

Buy enough foods and gifts to make six to eight baskets in a variety of themes, such as for birthdays, anniversaries and housewarmings. This assortment will expand your creativity without stretching your budget or taking up too much space at home. That's how Susan Wilhelm of Reisterstown, Maryland

started eight years ago. "I made six gift baskets, and one person bought all of them." If you decide to sell some of your baskets, the average selling price is between \$35 and \$40, and the

cost to make them is roughly half of what you pay for materials. You'll find yourself selling many baskets around Christmas and other national holidays.

The best part about making gift baskets is that you're not alone. There are videos to help you perfect your designs, adult schools that offer gift basket classes, and lots of camaraderie on Internet message boards. These boards attract many who have joined this \$4 billion industry, sharing information on new products and talking about their latest designs. Gift basket groups and associations are also growing in popularity, and one might be located in your state where you'll share ideas and opportunities with like-minded designers.

Best Selling Holidays

Christmas
Valentine's Day
Mother's Day
Easter
Hanukkah

Best Selling Themes

Happy Birthday
Thank You
Get Well
Good Luck
Congratulations

Resources

www.GiftBasketBusiness.com
www.GiftBasketBusinessWorld.com
www.GiftBasketBusiness.org
www.NashvilleWraps.com
www.GBExchange.net

Here are five steps to get you started with gift baskets:

1. Get educated. Take a gift basket or floral design class at an adult school or community college. Learn the basics of product placement, and don't be overly critical of your work. Remember, this is fun, and your design is probably better than you think.

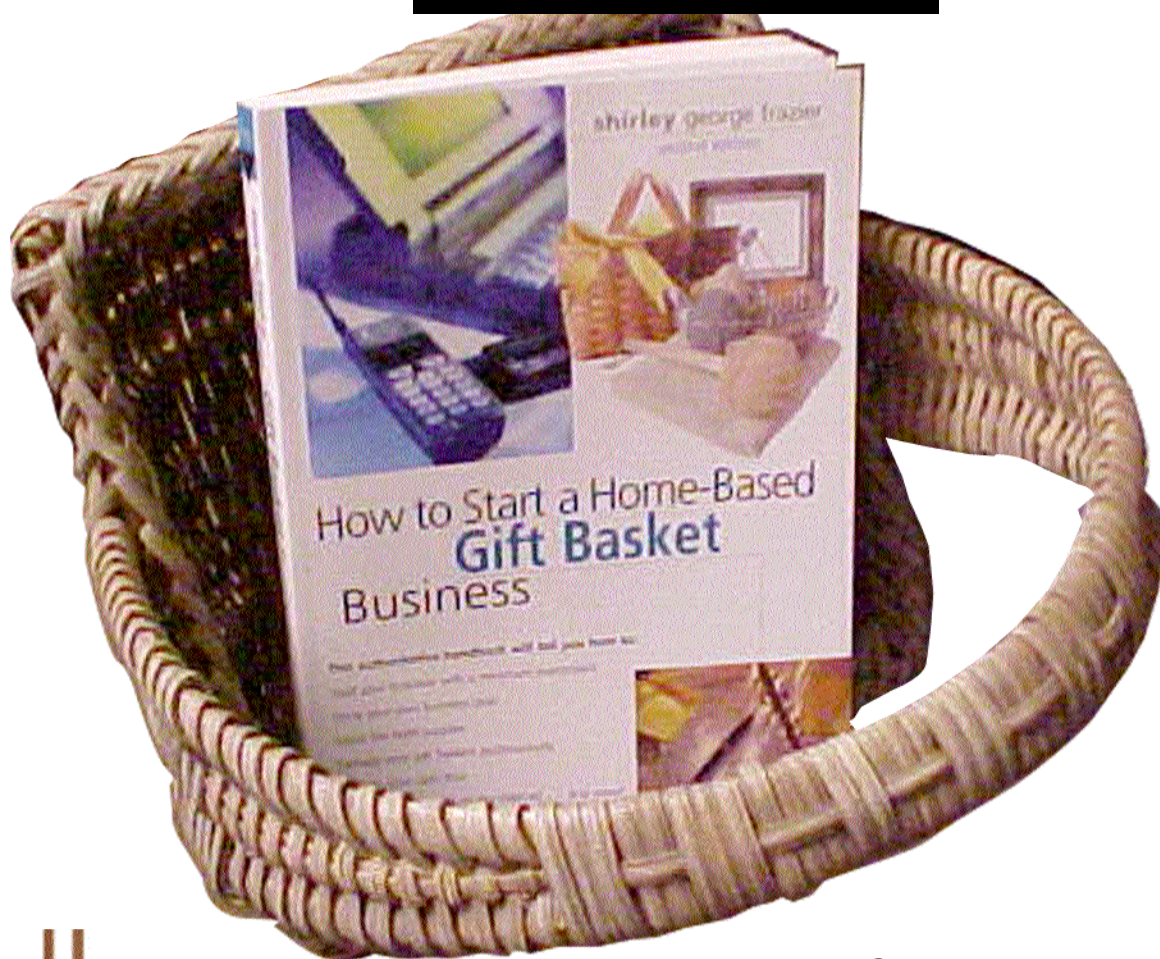
2. Watch your timing. If you want to sell some of your baskets, start making them a few weeks before a holiday. The public, especially men, needs gifts at the last minute. This sales blitz will sell your baskets fast.

3. Shop smart. Buy items in the most unlikely places. Some of the most successful designers start by buying products from grocery stores, flea markets, and garage sales.

4. Seek help. This industry is as creative as it is supportive. If you need answers to questions, you'll find solutions in magazines, on the Internet, or by talking with colleagues at gift basket support groups based in communities throughout the country.

5. Think out of the basket. To set yourself apart from other gift basket makers, consider using containers instead of or in addition to baskets. Ligon says she "doesn't lock herself into containers" but uses them for versatility because "some people prefer not to receive baskets." Painted boxes, children's wagons, cookie tins and mugs are just some of the alternatives gift basket makers love to use.

Gift baskets won't make you wildly rich, but if you love to create memories, put smiles on faces and hunt for treasures, you'll be rich in a different sense and happy you decided to start making gift baskets.



Have you ever dreamed of starting your own gift basket business? Have you been hesitant to put your plans into action? This comprehensive book contains all the necessary tools and success strategies you will need to launch and grow your own business.

Author Shirley George Frazier, a successful home-based gift basket entrepreneur, shares her experience and down-to-earth advice on every aspect of setting up and running a thriving home-based business. She will show you how to develop a business plan, estimate your start-up costs, price your services, and stay profitable once you're in business. From painless record keeping to savvy marketing techniques, her step-by-step methods are realistic, innovative, and easy to understand.

Whether you want to earn your living making gift baskets for the general public or specializing in custom creations for corporate clients, this guide can help you experience the satisfaction of building your own home-based business.

How to Start a Home-Based Gift Basket Business

by Shirley George Frazier

LEARN ALL ABOUT

- What It Takes to Be a Gift Basket Professional
- Attracting Clients and Obtaining Referrals
- Outshining the Competition
- Pricing Competitively
- Developing a Web Site and Generating Traffic to Your Site
- Getting Paid

Use these special features and workbook pages:

- Customer Profile Form
- Sample Business Plan
- Buying Chart for Supplies
- Sample Purchase Order
- Sales Invoice Sheet
- Delivery Schedule Form
- Income Statement
- Expense Analysis Worksheet
- Sales Checklist
- Extensive Gift Product Listings
- Profile of a Successful Web Entrepreneur

"Takes the novice and more experienced entrepreneur through the steps of estimating start-up costs and defining one's niche to designing beautiful, marketable baskets. The chapters on the actual gift basket design reveal ideas for making baskets that are definitely a step above the competitor's." —North Jersey Herald News

