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Put together a real Christmas treat Get into the festive spirit

WHEN putting together a Christmas hamper there is a number of rules to follow to help make it memorable.

Kay Freedman from Sauced Fine Preserves puts together thousands of hampers every year. "The most important thing is having a think about who it's for," she said.

"If it's a family with kids, you have to include something for everyone."

That could mean some lollies for the kids (but no chocolate as it could melt in the car or in a hot room) and a bottle of wine for mum and dad.

The second rule is always include items that will be used over the Christmas period, like brandy butter for Christmas pudding.

"I always put in a Christmas tea towel or an oven mitt so once everything else is eaten there's always something left behind as a reminder," Ms Freedman said. Also ensure there's plenty of

shelf life left in the products, she said.

Choosing the right basket is also important.

"It has to be reusable, whether as a fruit basket or a picnic basket or something like that. Otherwise they just end up in the rubbish bin or clogging up someone's house."

Ms Freedman said a hamper could be put together for as little as \$20.

Recipe for a basic Christmas hamper:

- Reusable basket
- Bottle of wine
- Shortbread biscuits
- Brandy butter
- Mince pies
- Cranberry orange sauce
- Fruit jam
- Chutney
- Fruit jellies
- Crackers
- Tea towel or oven mitt

From the sea

John Kyzintas, Seafood and Oyster Spot:

"Right now there's beautiful Queensland tiger prawns and closer to Christmas there'll also be king prawns hitting the market. This time of year there's also a good supply of premium fresh oysters from Coffin Bay, flathead from Lakes Entrance and good local crayfish." John's pick of the season: king and tiger prawns \$23-\$35/kg.

From the tree . . .

Rocco Tripodi, JT's Fruit and Veg Supplies:

"Cherries have been going for the past four weeks and there's a lot of good Victorian varieties. All local stone fruits are in



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season and will be of excellent quality right up until the new year. Particularly good are the local peaches and white-flesh nectarines." Rocco's pick of the season: giant ruby cherries \$5-\$15 per kg.

From the pen . . .

Daryl McGuinness, Freedom Farms. Contact: 9329 3008
"There's lots of interest in our multi-bird roasts like the Chicky Ducky - a boned chicken rolled and stuffed with a boned duck - or the Guillotine - a turkey stuffed with a duck, chicken, poisson and two quail to feed

20." Daryl's pick of the season: Guillotine five-bird roast at \$115 each.

