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Toe Stuffers for Mom's Stocking

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Give Mom some little gifts with big ideas behind them for Christmas this year. You'll find these handy kitchen accessories will be "necessities" before the holiday season is over.

First let's take inventory and see what Mom needs. What about that trusty friend, the teakettle? Hers may be old and dull and no longer able to "sing." If so, give her a new colored singing teakettle which comes in cherry red, sunny gold or emerald green. It's not only an attractive gift but also a practical one for the water gets hot while the handle stays cool.

You might replace some worn-out utensils or buy a new timesaver, too. Handy kitchen shears and tongs are musts. The shears cut, snip, shred and separate. And there's nothing like a pair of tongs to lift steaming corn on the cob from the pan or ice cubes from a tray.

What about a set of good kitchen knives with handles that fit comfortably into the palm of the hand? Sharp knives are a necessity in every household. Keeping them sharpened is also very important, so an inexpensive wooden rack will really please Mom. The rack fits into a drawer or can be hung on the wall and eliminates finger cuts and dull knives.

If your mother depends on her present rubber spatula as much as mine does, she'll treasure a new narrow rubber spatula with a "blade" which is half the width of regular scrapers. This size is the solution for removing food from small, tight places. Just like its larger cousin, this new spatula has uses galore such as cleaning bottles and scraping small-neck jars.

For something a little more unusual but equally as useful, give Mom a garlic press. The trigger-action press of stainless aluminum makes a soft even paste which enables the garlic to mix with other seasonings. You'll profit from this gift, too, as you'll love the delectable flavor garlic adds to salads, sauces, meats and fish.

To store the garlic when not in use, she'll really appreciate a ceramic container molded like a garlic bulb. It's attractive and can be kept near the cutting board so it's always available.

Any homemaker will welcome help in keeping her refrigerator neat. A set of six flexible plastic refrigerator dishes will really please her. They hold a full pint and have grip tight covers so they stack easily. They can also be used in the home freezer.

You know how your family loves french fries and how often you have them. Why not save Mom some work, though, and give her a food cutter? Just insert a whole potato in the cutter, press the handle and you have 25 perfect French fries. It's good for dicing salads and other foods, too.

Even dish washing can gain new sparkle with a glass scrubber brush. Modeled after the type used in restaurants, the brush has hundreds of white plastic bristles attached to the sturdy wooden base. This base has three suction cups which attach to the bottom of the sink, holding the brush firmly in position. Just twirl the glass over the top and watch how lipstick stains, sugar and streaks disappear.

So, a little planning before Christmas and careful buying make choosing Mom's gift easy. She'll use these gifts all year and remember this Christmas as the best ever.