

The Gift Basket Formula

Turn your kitchen table into a business people line up for

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BY SARAH WHITFIELD

A warm, rustic kitchen scene featuring a wooden table. On the table are two wicker baskets, a brown paper bag filled with shredded paper, two rolls of ribbon (one white, one light green), a pair of scissors, and some white paper. In the background, there's a white countertop with a wooden cutting board and a jar of wooden spoons. A window on the left lets in soft, natural light.

THE GIFT BASKET FORMULA

PART 1 — Before your first basket

1. Welcome to my kitchen table

Hi. I'm Sarah, and if you're reading this, you did something most women never do: you decided to try.

Three Octobers ago I made a boo basket for the family across the street. Mini pumpkin bread, a jar of caramel apple jam, a candle, cinnamon sticks tied with twine and a little ghost plush. It cost me about \$29. Two moms on my street asked if I could make theirs, and they insisted on paying \$75 each. I drove to the store for supplies doing the math out loud.

By Christmas I had sold 41 baskets from the kitchen table you'll see in every photo of this guide. I wrote down everything: what went inside, what it cost, what it sold for, and every mistake I made. That notebook is this guide.

Here is what I want you to know before you turn the page:

- **You don't need to be creative.** I'm not. I follow a structure, and the structure does the work. You'll copy it.
- **You don't need money.** Your first basket costs about \$30 in supplies. From the second one on, your customers pay for supplies before you buy them (Chapter 15).
- **You don't need a shop, a website or followers.** Your first ten orders will come from people you already know (that's the Launch Kit).
- **You need one afternoon.** Read this guide tonight, build your first basket this weekend, post one photo. That's the whole plan.

Everything in here is written so you can do it exactly as shown. Photos of every step. Numbers instead of adjectives. When I say "\$30 of supplies," I mean the receipt in Chapter 4.

Let's build something.



Sarah's kitchen table on a Sunday afternoon. This is where every basket in this guide was made.

2. Why baskets sell when everything else doesn't

I tried other things first. A leggings MLM that left \$1,800 of inventory in my garage. Jewelry on Etsy at about \$6 an hour. A course I never finished. Every one of them needed me to be someone I'm not: a salesperson, a designer, someone with followers.

Gift baskets are different for three reasons, and understanding them will change how you sell.

1. It's local. Nobody in your town is competing with you on Amazon. When a woman needs a gift for her mother-in-law by Saturday, she's not comparing you with a website. She's comparing you with driving to three stores herself.

2. Every basket you deliver is an advertisement. The person who receives it sees it. Everyone who was in the room when she opened it sees it. Half of my orders in the first year came from someone who had *received* a basket, not bought one.

3. There is always an occasion four to six weeks away. Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's, Mother's Day, teacher week, baby showers, housewarmings, get-well. People always leave

gifts to the last minute, and they always feel guilty about it. You're the person who has it ready.

One more thing people don't say out loud: a basket is not the things inside it. A customer once told me, "I could have bought the same things at the store for \$30. I didn't want the things. I wanted someone to have thought about it for me." That's what she paid \$85 for. Keep that sentence. It's the whole business.



A finished housewarming basket at the customer's door. She'll show it to six people before the day is over.

3. The 5-Layer Formula at a glance

Every basket that looks professional, in any shop, at any price, is built the same way. Five layers, always in this order. Once you see it you can't unsee it.

Layer 1 — The Base. The container: wicker basket, printed box, wooden tray, crate. It decides the shape and the price range before you put anything in.

Layer 2 — Height. The filler and risers that lift everything to the rim and above. This is the layer beginners skip, and it's why their baskets look half-empty.

Layer 3 — The Hero. The one item people will remember. The tallest, the prettiest, or the one that says "this is for you." Placed at the back-center, first.

Layer 4 — The Supporting Cast. Four to six smaller items arranged in front of and around the hero, tallest at the back, in odd numbers, in one color family.

Layer 5 — The Finish. Cellophane, the ribbon, the bow, the tag. The finish is worth \$20 to \$30 of the price on its own.

That's it. Part 2 goes through each layer with photos, then builds three complete baskets in front of you.



The five layers, exploded: base, height, hero, supporting cast, finish.

The cheat sheet (print this page and tape it inside a cupboard):

Layer	What	Rule of thumb
1 Base	Container	Choose the price range first, then the container
2 Height	Shred, tissue, risers	Fill to 1 inch above the rim before anything goes in
3 Hero	One memorable item	Back-center, placed first, tallest
4 Cast	4–6 items	Odd numbers, one color family, tall to short
5 Finish	Cellophane, ribbon, bow, tag	Never skip. It's where the price lives

4. Your \$30 starter kit

This is the receipt from my first basket, updated to today's prices. Buy exactly this the first time; improvise after you've done two.

Item	Where	Approx. price
Medium wicker basket (10–12")	Dollar store / thrift store / Walmart	\$3–6
Kraft or crinkle-cut shred, 1 bag	Dollar store / craft store	\$2–3
Tissue paper, 1 pack (10 sheets)	Dollar store	\$1
Clear cellophane basket bag or roll, 30"	Dollar store / craft store	\$2–4
Satin ribbon, 1½", 1 spool	Craft store / Walmart	\$3–4
Kraft gift tags + twine	Dollar store	\$1–2
Contents (see the recipe you chose)	Grocery / discount store	\$12–18
Total		\$28–36

Not on the list: a glue gun, floral wire, a heat gun for cellophane. You'll want them by basket five, not basket one.

Two rules for the first purchase:

- Buy the container **before** the contents. The container sets the size of everything else.
- Buy one basket's worth. Not "supplies." One basket. Selling it pays for the next three (Chapter 15).



The \$30 starter kit laid out on the table, receipt included.

5. Where to buy for less, by store type

I don't give you a list of suppliers with names, because the names change by town and by country. I give you the types of store and what each one is for. This works in Ohio, in Manchester and in Melbourne.

Dollar / discount store — containers, shred, tissue, cellophane, tags, candles, mugs, small plush. Half of every basket comes from here. Go often; stock changes weekly.

Thrift store / charity shop — wicker baskets, wooden crates, trays. Usually \$1–3, often nicer than new. Wipe with a damp cloth and let dry.

Grocery store — the edible hero items: artisan bread, jam, honey, cookies, coffee, tea, chocolate. Look at the "local" or "specialty" shelf; it looks expensive and isn't.

Warehouse club (Costco, Sam's, and their equivalents) — once you're doing 5+ baskets a week: cellophane rolls, ribbon, bulk cookies, coffee, candles.

Craft store — ribbon in wide widths, floral picks, the glue gun. Wait for the weekly coupon; never pay full price for ribbon.

Online marketplaces — bulk kraft boxes, tissue in colors, custom tags, cellophane bags by the hundred. Only when you know what you'll reuse.

Your own printer — the boxes and trays (Module 5), labels, tags and cards (Module 6). A \$7 craft-store box becomes 60 cents of card stock.

The rule: **the container and the finish can be cheap; the hero item shouldn't look cheap.** Spend the extra \$3 on the bread or the candle, not on the basket.



Three baskets' worth of supplies, sorted by store: dollar store, grocery, printer.

A wicker basket with a handle is on the left. In the center is a closed cardboard box. To its right is an open cardboard box. On the far right, a portion of another box is visible. The items are on a wooden surface against a light, textured background.

THE GIFT BASKET FORMULA

PART 2 — The Formula, layer by layer

6. Layer 1 — The Base

The container decides three things before you put anything in it: how big the basket looks, how much it can hold, and what people expect to pay. So choose the price first, then the container.

Price you want	Container	Size
\$45–65	Printed kraft box, small wicker, mug-and-tray	7–9"
\$75–110	Medium wicker basket, printed tray, small crate	10–12"
\$125–200	Large wicker, wooden crate, big rectangular tray	14–18"

Four containers cover 90% of what you'll sell:

1. **The medium wicker basket** (10–12", with handle). The classic. Thrift stores are full of them at \$1–3.
2. **The printed box** (Module 5). Costs 60 cents in card stock, looks like \$8. Perfect for gourmet and spa baskets, and it stacks for delivery.
3. **The printed tray** (Module 5). Low sides, everything visible. Best for breakfast baskets and anything with tall items.
4. **The wooden crate** (\$4–8 at craft stores). Rustic, masculine, great for coffee and housewarming.

What to avoid: containers with a lid you can't see through (the gift disappears), anything smaller than 7" (looks like a favor, not a gift), and colored plastic (reads as cheap no matter what's inside).



The four containers: wicker basket, printed box, printed tray, wooden crate.

Before you fill it, line it. One sheet of tissue paper pushed into the container so it comes up over the edge on all sides. Tissue does two jobs: it hides the bottom and it frames the contents like a collar.



Lining the basket: one sheet of tissue, pushed down in the middle, corners standing up over the rim.

7. Layer 2 — Height

This is the layer that separates a homemade basket from a professional one, and it's invisible when you're done.

A basket looks abundant when the contents sit **at or above the rim**. If they sit at the bottom, the basket looks half-empty no matter how much you spent. So before any product goes in, build a platform.

The cardboard staircase. Cut a piece of cardboard (a cereal box is fine) to fit the back two-thirds of the container. Fold it into a step, tall side at the back. Push it in. Now the back is raised 3–4 inches and the front is low: everything you place will be visible.



The cardboard staircase, cut from a cereal box, placed at the back of the basket.

The shred. Fill the container with shred until it's about an inch above the rim, fluffed, not packed. Kraft shred for rustic baskets, white or cream for spa and baby, red or green for Christmas. One bag does two to three baskets.



Shred filled to one inch above the rim. This is where most beginners stop too early.

Risers for small items. A crumpled ball of tissue under a jar, an upside-down paper cup under a mug. Nobody sees it; everyone sees the result.

Test: press the shred down with your palm. If it springs back, you're ready for Layer 3. If it stays down, add more.

8. Layer 3 — The Hero

Every basket has one item people will remember. It goes in first, back-center, standing up if it can. Everything else will be arranged around it.

The hero is usually the tallest item or the prettiest, and it's the one that says what the basket is *about*: the loaf of bread in a breakfast basket, the plush ghost in a boo basket, the candle in a spa basket, the bottle in a housewarming basket.

Three rules:

- **One hero.** Two heroes fight each other and the basket looks busy.
- **The hero is where you spend.** If the budget is \$30, the hero can be \$8-10 and everything else \$2-4.

- **Face it forward.** Labels, bows and the "front" of the item toward the customer.

Twelve heroes that always work: artisan bread · a candle in glass · a plush toy · a bottle of olive oil · a potted succulent or mini plant · a fluffy robe or throw · a bag of good coffee · a box of chocolates · a knit blanket · a growler or sparkling cider · a ceramic mug in a color · a small hardcover book.



The hero placed first: a loaf of artisan bread standing at the back-center of a lined, filled basket.

9. Layer 4 — The Supporting Cast

Now the four to six smaller items. This is where beginners either under-fill (three lonely things) or over-fill (twelve things, no room to breathe). The number is four to six, and the rules below make the arrangement automatic.

Odd numbers. Three items in front, two at the sides. Five total plus the hero. Odd groupings look arranged; even groupings look lined up.

Tall to short. Tallest items at the back next to the hero, medium at the sides, smallest in front. If you can see every item without lifting anything, it's right.

One color family. Pick the hero's color and choose items in that family plus one neutral (kraft, white, cream). A breakfast basket is warm browns and a cream ribbon; a spa basket

is white and blush with one green sprig; a boo basket is orange, black and white.

Mix textures. Something glass (a jar), something soft (a towel, a plush, a sock), something paper (a bag of cookies, a box), something natural (a sprig, cinnamon sticks, a mini pumpkin). Four textures make even cheap items look curated.

Fill the gaps last. Sprigs of eucalyptus, a bundle of cinnamon sticks, a small bag of candy, a wooden spoon. These cost under a dollar and they're what makes it look full.



Supporting cast in place: jam and honey at the sides, cookies and a mug in front, sprigs in the gaps.

The step-back test. Put the basket on the counter, step back six feet and look. Can you name what it's about in one second? Does anything hide anything else? Is there an empty spot? Fix those three things and it's done.

10. Layer 5 — The Finish

The finish is the part customers photograph. It's also the layer beginners rush, and it's worth \$20–30 of the price on its own. Slow down here.

The cellophane. Use a basket bag if the container fits in one; otherwise a sheet from a roll, about three times the basket's height. Center the basket, gather the cellophane straight up

above the hero, and hold it closed with one hand while the other wraps a twist tie or a piece of floral wire around the gather. Pull the tail of cellophane up so it fans out above the tie.



Gathering the cellophane straight up above the hero and closing it with wire.

The heat trick. A hair dryer on hot, held 6 inches from the cellophane for a few seconds, shrinks it tight against the basket so it stops looking like a plastic bag. Move constantly; don't hold it in one place.

The ribbon knot that never slips. Cut 40 inches of 1½" satin ribbon. Wrap it around the gather over the wire, cross the ends, and tie a single knot pulling *down*, not out. Then tie a second knot the opposite way. This is a square knot and it won't slide.



The square knot over the wire: first knot pulled down, second knot the opposite way.

The bow. Make two loops, one in each hand, cross the right over the left, tuck it behind and through, pull tight. Fluff the loops, trim the tails on a diagonal. Practice three times on the spool before you tie the real one.

The tag. A kraft tag on twine, tied to the ribbon, with the recipient's name or "Made for you by [your name]." The tag is your business card. Module 6 has the printable ones.

The shake test. Lift the basket by the handle and give it a gentle shake. Nothing should shift. If something moves, add a crumpled ball of tissue behind it or a dab of hot glue under it.



The finished basket: cellophane shrunk tight, satin bow, kraft tag on twine.

11. Build #1 — Breakfast in a Basket (beginner)

Your first basket. Everything from the \$30 starter kit. Sells for \$75.

Contents: artisan bread or 4 croissants (hero), a jar of jam, a jar of honey or a small bag of granola, a white mug, a small bag of ground coffee or a tin of tea, a linen napkin or tea towel, a sprig of dried flowers.

Step 1. Line the medium wicker basket with one sheet of cream tissue, corners over the rim.



Step 1: tissue lining.

Step 2. Cardboard staircase at the back, shredded to one inch above the rim.



Step 2: staircase and shred.

Step 3. Bread standing at the back-center, wrapped in parchment and tied with twine.



Step 3: the hero, wrapped bread.

Step 4. Jam and honey on the left and right of the bread, labels forward. Mug in front on the right, handle out. Coffee bag in front on the left.



Step 4: jars at the sides, mug and coffee in front.

Step 5. Fold the napkin into a rectangle and tuck it behind the mug. Push the dried-flower sprig into the shred between the jam and the bread.



Step 5: napkin tucked, sprig in the gap.

Step 6. Cellophane, heat, square knot, cream bow, tag: "Breakfast in a Basket." Shake test.



Step 6: finished. Cost about \$29, sells for \$75.

Cost: \$27–31. **Price:** \$75 (Chapter 14 shows why).

12. Build #2 — The Boo Basket (intermediate)

The October basket. In the U.S. you leave it on a neighbor's porch, ring the bell and run; in the UK and Australia it's simply the Halloween basket. Sells for \$65–85 and you'll make a lot of them in one week, so this build is about speed.

Contents: a plush ghost or pumpkin (hero), a bag of Halloween candy, a small candle in orange or black, a pair of cozy socks, a mini pumpkin or two, a kraft box of cookies, a black or orange satin ribbon. Optional: a gift card sleeve.

Step 1. Use a printed kraft tray (Module 5) or a low wicker basket. Line with black or white tissue.



Step 1: printed tray lined with black tissue.

Step 2. Shred (orange or kraft) to the rim. No staircase needed in a low tray; instead, put an upside-down paper cup under where the plush will sit.



Step 2: shred and the hidden cup riser.

Step 3. Plush at the back, sitting on the riser so its head is the tallest point.



Step 3: the hero, sitting up.

Step 4. Candle on the left, cookies box on the right, socks rolled and tucked in front of the candle, candy bag in front of the cookies, mini pumpkins in the front corners.



Step 4: cast arranged tall to short, orange-black-white.

Step 5. Cellophane basket bag over the whole tray, gathered above the plush, wire, orange ribbon, square knot, bow. Tag: "You've been booed 🧛." "



Step 5: finished boo basket.

Speed tip: make five at once. Line five trays, fill five with shred, place five heroes, and so on, one layer at a time across all five. It takes half the time of building five one by one.

Cost: \$22–28. **Price:** \$65–85.

13. Build #3 — Housewarming in a Printed Box (advanced)

The basket that gets you realtor orders. Built in a printed kraft box with a lid (Module 5), sells for \$110–135, and it's the one people order six of at a time.

Contents: a bottle of olive oil (hero), a small olive-wood or bamboo cutting board, a jar of flaky salt, a white candle in glass, a linen tea towel, a small potted plant or a sprig of rosemary, a box of crackers or a small loaf.

Step 1. Print and fold the large box template. Line with cream tissue.



Step 1: the printed box, folded and lined.

Step 2. Shred to the rim, cardboard staircase at the back.



Step 2: staircase and shred in the box.

Step 3. Cutting board standing at the back against the staircase. Olive oil standing in front of it, slightly to the left. The board is the backdrop; the bottle is the hero.



Step 3: board as backdrop, bottle as hero.

Step 4. Candle front-right, salt jar front-left, crackers laid flat in front, plant or rosemary tucked between bottle and candle.



Step 4: cast in place.

Step 5. Fold the tea towel into a band and lay it across the front edge like a sash. This is the detail that makes it look expensive.



Step 5: the towel sash.

Step 6. Cellophane from a roll (the box is too big for a bag), gathered high, champagne ribbon, double bow, tag. For delivery, keep the lid separate and hand it over with the box.



Step 6: finished housewarming box.

Cost: \$38–46. **Price:** \$110–135.

14. The 11 mistakes that make a basket look homemade

Every one of these is in my first ten baskets. Fix them and you skip a year.

1. **Contents below the rim.** Add shred until they sit above it (Chapter 7).
2. **Everything the same height.** Build the staircase; tallest at the back.
3. **Two heroes.** Pick one. Move the other to the side or take it out.
4. **Even numbers.** Five items look arranged; four look lined up.
5. **Six colors.** One color family plus one neutral.
6. **Labels facing sideways.** Turn every label to the front.
7. **Loose cellophane.** Hair dryer, six inches, keep moving.
8. **Curling ribbon.** Use satin or grosgrain, 1½" wide. Curling ribbon says "supermarket."
9. **No tag.** The tag is your name. Never skip it.
10. **Things that shift.** Shake test. Tissue ball or hot glue.
11. **Photographing it on the floor.** Counter, window light, phone at basket height (Chapter 17).



Before and after: the same contents, once built without the Formula and once with it.



THE GIFT BASKET FORMULA

PART 3 — Turning baskets into money

15. The 2.5× pricing method

Beginners price with their feelings: "I can't ask \$80 for this." Customers price with their eyes: they see a \$100 basket and are relieved it's \$85. The method takes feelings out of it.

Step 1 — Add up the real cost. Contents + container + shred, tissue, cellophane, ribbon, tag. Not "roughly." Keep the receipts and add them. Include a share of things you buy in bulk (a \$3 spool of ribbon does 8 baskets: 40 cents each).

Step 2 — Multiply by 2.5. That's your price, rounded to a number ending in 5 or 0.

Step 3 — Check it against the table. If the multiplied price lands outside the range for that container size, adjust the contents, not the price.

Real cost	× 2.5	Price you charge
\$22	\$55	\$55
\$30	\$75	\$75
\$38	\$95	\$95
\$46	\$115	\$115
\$60	\$150	\$150
\$80	\$200	\$195–200

Why 2.5 and not 2? At 2× you're paying yourself about \$10 an hour after supplies and delivery. At 2.5× you're paying yourself \$25–35 an hour, and the customer doesn't feel it, because she's comparing with a florist (\$90 for flowers that die in five days) and with doing it herself (three stores and an afternoon).

Why not 3? You can, on custom orders and corporate. On your first ten baskets, 2.5 gets you the yes fast, and the yes is what you need.

Never do this: don't price by the hour, don't discount a first order to "get the sale," and don't tell the customer what the contents cost. Nobody asks a florist what the roses cost.



The receipt for the breakfast basket: \$29.40 real cost, \$75 price.

16. Deposit-first: your customers fund the supplies

After your first basket, you should never pay for supplies out of your own pocket again. Here's the sentence that makes that happen:

"It's \$85. I take a 50% deposit to hold your date and pick up the supplies, and the rest when you pick it up. Venmo or cash works."

That's it. The deposit does three things: it confirms the order (people who pay a deposit don't cancel), it buys the supplies, and it makes you look like a business instead of a hobby.

How it works in practice:

1. Customer says yes. You send the deposit request the same day (Launch Kit has the message).
2. Deposit arrives. You buy the supplies for *that* basket, with that money.
3. You build, you send one photo when it's done ("Here she is! Ready for pickup Thursday after 4"), you collect the balance at handover.

No deposit within 48 hours means no order. Say it kindly, mean it completely.

Payment apps: whatever people around you already use. Venmo, Zelle or Cash App in the U.S.; PayPal, bank transfer or Revolut in the UK; PayID in Australia; e-transfer in Canada. Cash is always fine.

17. The menu: ready-made and custom

You'll sell two ways, and the guide has recipes for both.

Ready-made baskets (\$65–165). Six baskets you make on repeat, with a photo and a price each. The customer picks from the photo. You batch-build them on Sunday and sell all week. This is 70% of your income and it's what makes the business easy: same containers, same ribbon, same list.

Start with these six from Module 2: Breakfast in a Basket · Thank You / Get Well · New Neighbor · Birthday Classics · the season's basket (Boo, Christmas, Valentine's, Mother's Day) · Teacher.

Custom baskets (\$95–265). Made to order. The customer tells you the occasion, the person and the budget, and you build from the recipes, swapping items. Higher price, higher margin, and where the realtor and corporate orders live.

The custom conversation is five questions, in this order: Who is it for? · What's the occasion? · When do you need it? · What do they love (coffee, wine, spa, sweets, savory)? · What budget feels right: around \$95, \$135 or \$195? — Always offer three numbers. People pick the middle one.

Your menu is one page. Six photos, six names, six prices, your name and how to order. Module 6 has the template. Post it, print it, send it. That's your website.



A one-page menu: six ready-made baskets with photos and prices.

18. One good photo with your phone

The photo sells the basket. Not the basket: the photo. Ten rules, no equipment.

1. **Window light, no flash.** Basket beside a window, you between the basket and the room.
2. **Counter, not floor.** A clean counter, a wooden table or a white sheet. Nothing else in frame.
3. **Phone at basket height.** Kneel. Shooting down makes it look small.
4. **Slightly to one side.** A 30° angle shows the depth; straight-on looks flat.
5. **Wipe the lens.** Every time. With your shirt is fine.
6. **Tap to focus on the hero.**
7. **Take twenty, keep one.**
8. **Portrait for Instagram and Facebook stories, square for the feed and the menu.**
9. **Edit only brightness.** Slide it up a touch. No filters.
10. **Same background every time.** Your photos will look like a brand within a month.



Same basket, two photos: on the floor with flash, and on the counter in window light.

19. Delivery, pickup and shipping

Pickup is the default. "Ready Thursday after 4, porch pickup, I'll text you." Zero cost, zero risk, and the customer sees your porch with three other baskets waiting: instant credibility.

Local delivery within 15 minutes: charge \$10, or free over \$100. Three or four baskets fit in the back of a normal car; wedge them with a rolled towel so they don't tip. Deliver in daylight, take a photo at the door with the customer's permission, and ask her to tag you.

Shipping only for boxes (Module 5), never for wicker. Pad with shred, tape the lid, and price the shipping on top. Most makers never ship, and they don't need to.

The handover is a sales moment. Bring two business-card tags with you. "If anyone asks, here's how to find me." One out of three handovers turns into another order.



Three baskets wedged with a towel in the back of a car, ready for delivery.

20. Keep it simple: the order sheet

You don't need software. You need one page per week. Print the order sheet from the appendix (or copy it into a notebook) and fill in:

Name	Basket	Occasion	Date needed	Price	Deposit ✓	Paid ✓	Delivered ✓
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Every Sunday: look at the week, count the baskets, write one shopping list, buy once. Batch-build in layers (all bases, all shred, all heroes...). Most students spend one evening building and one hour delivering per week.

Track only three numbers a month: baskets sold, money in, money spent on supplies. If money in is at least 2.5× money spent, you're pricing right.



THE GIFT BASKET FORMULA

PART 4 — Seasons and what's next

21. The gifting calendar

There is always an occasion four to six weeks away. Announce your season basket **five weeks before** the date; people order two to three weeks out.

When	Occasion	Basket	Announce by
October	Halloween / boo baskets	Boo Basket	Sept 25
November	Thanksgiving (U.S.), hostess gifts	Hostess Basket	Oct 20
December	Christmas, corporate, teachers	Christmas, Teacher, Corporate	Nov 15
February	Valentine's	Breakfast for Two, Spa	Jan 10
March–May	Mother's Day, Easter, graduations	Mother's Day, Spring	5 weeks before
June	Father's Day	Coffee & Crate	May 10
Year-round	Baby showers, birthdays, housewarmings, get-well, thank-you, realtors	Ready-made menu	Always on

Christmas is the biggest month by far. The women who start in September and October are the ones turning orders away in December. Start now, and use the Launch Kit calendar week by week.

22. A letter from my kitchen table

You've read the whole Formula. Here's what I'd tell you if you were sitting across the table from me right now.

Build one basket this weekend. Not the perfect one; the first one. Follow Build #1 exactly, take one photo in window light, and post it with the words in the Launch Kit. Then wait. The first message will come, and it will feel like nothing else.

Don't undercharge. Don't apologize for the price. Don't buy supplies for baskets nobody ordered yet.

And when someone tells you, "I could never do that," smile. You couldn't either, three weekends ago.

I can't wait to see your first basket.

— Sarah



Sarah's kitchen table at the end of a Sunday: five finished baskets ready for pickup.



THE GIFT BASKET FORMULA

Appendix

A. Shopping lists for the three builds

Build #1 Breakfast: medium wicker basket · cream tissue · kraft shred · artisan bread or 4 croissants · jam · honey or granola · white mug · coffee or tea · linen napkin · dried-flower sprig · cellophane · cream satin ribbon · kraft tag.

Build #2 Boo: printed tray · black tissue · orange shred · plush ghost or pumpkin · Halloween candy · orange or black candle · cozy socks · 2 mini pumpkins · kraft box of cookies · cellophane bag · orange ribbon · tag.

Build #3 Housewarming: printed large box · cream tissue · kraft shred · olive oil · small cutting board · flaky salt · white candle in glass · linen tea towel · rosemary or mini plant · crackers · cellophane roll · champagne ribbon · tag.

B. The 2.5× table (print me)

Cost \$20 → \$50 · \$25 → \$65 · \$30 → \$75 · \$35 → \$85 · \$40 → \$100 · \$45 → \$115 · \$50 → \$125 · \$60 → \$150 · \$70 → \$175 · \$80 → \$200.

C. Order sheet

Name · Basket · Occasion · Date needed · Price · Deposit ✓ · Paid ✓ · Delivered ✓ — one line per order, one page per week.

D. The ribbon knot, in four drawings

1. Wrap around the gather over the wire.
2. Cross right over left, pull down.
3. Cross left over right, pull down.
4. Two loops, cross, tuck, pull. Trim tails on a diagonal.