



Tips & Guidelines for Shipping Care Packages to Deployed Soldiers in Iraq & Afghanistan by JavaCupcake.com

The Care Package:

- **Pick a theme for your box.** It can coordinate with the month, season, time of year, holiday of the month you're sending it in. It doesn't have to go with the season, it could be sports, movie, hobby, etc related as well. The sky is the limit here. Here's a Pinterest Board I started to give you some ideas: <http://pinterest.com/javacupcake/care-packages-for-soldiers/>
- According to the USPS, **DO NOT SEND:**
 - Obscene articles (prints, paintings, cards, films, videotapes, etc). Any matter depicting nude or seminude persons, pornographic or sexual items, or non-authorized political materials.
 - Bulk quantities of religious materials contrary to the Islamic faith.
 - Pork or pork by-products.
 - More info: <https://www.usps.com/ship/apo-fpo-guidelines.htm>
- According to 2/2 CR (my husband's unit), **DO NOT SEND:**
 - Alcohol and alcohol-production products and ingredients
 - Fruits, live plants and animals
 - Pork and pork by-products
 - Pornographic and sexual materials (including nudes and semi-nudes)
 - Obscene materials and horror comics
 - Non-authorized political materials
 - Religious materials contrary to Islam in bulk quantities
 - Firearms and ammunition
 - Cash, coins, securities or precious metals in their raw state
 - Hazardous, flammable, toxic and radioactive substances
 - Items that may melt, leak, explode or turn on...
 - Use common sense and realize that packages can be subjected to high heat and bouncing around. Use Ziploc bags and lots of padding where applicable:
 - Batteries in summer
 - Aerosols and other pressurized products
 - Liquids in glass containers
 - Perishable food products that can spoil
 - Electronic devices with batteries installed
- IDEAS for what you CAN SEND...
 - Toiletries
 - Baby wipes
 - Body wash
 - Body powder
 - Deodorant
 - Eye drops
 - Foot powder
 - Icy Hot patches
 - Lip balm
 - Lotion
 - Razors
 - Sunscreen
 - Tampons
 - Toothbrushes and toothpaste
 - Ziploc bags
 - Snacks
 - Canned food
 - Cereal bars
 - Chex Mix
 - Chewing gum
 - Coffee
 - Gatorade
 - Granola bars
 - Hard candy
 - Hot cocoa mix

- Hot sauce
 - Jerky
 - Juice boxes
 - Macaroni and cheese
 - Microwave popcorn
- M&Ms
 - Nuts
 - Pickles
 - Powdered drink mix
 - Pringles
 - Ramen noodles
- Soup mix
 - Spices
 - Sunflower seeds
- Fun Stuff
 - Holiday Decorations
 - Christmas Tree/Lights
 - Batteries
 - Board games
 - Books
 - CDs
 - Dice
 - Dominos
 - DVDs
 - Hacky Sack
 - Koozies
 - Magazines
 - Newspapers
 - Notepads
 - Phone cards
 - Playing cards
 - Puzzle books
 - Video games
 - Amazon/iTunes gift cards
- Baked Goods that Ship Well
 - Stable cookies (sugar, chocolate chip, snickerdoodles, cowboy, etc)
 - Bars, brownies and blondies
 - Cake in a mason jar with a sealed lid
 - Trail Mix/Chech Mix
- Food Tips for Care Packages
 - When sending food, pack items with a long shelf life.
 - Choose home baked goods that will stand up to a lot of bumping around in a box. Example: stable cookies and bars, chex/trail mix, cake in a jar, etc.
 - Place cookies and other baked foods in an airtight container that is cushioned. Add some extra packing tape around the lid to keep it as fresh as possible. A piece of white bread in the container helps to keep the cookies fresh. I use disposable Ziploc containers from the grocery store and they work great.
 - Remember that the packages will be traveling long distances, often in hot weather, so avoid any foods and snacks that might melt. (Cookies, brownies, etc with chocolate in them are typically okay – candy bars, etc in the summer months should be avoided.)

Shipping:

- **Use a USPS Priority Mail APO/FPO Large Flat Rate Box.** This box is \$14.85 to ship to an APO address, \$2.00 less than domestic pricing. For more on this box: https://store.usps.com/store/browse/uspsProductDetailMultiSKUDropDown.jsp?productId=P_MILI_FRB&categoryId=subcatMSS_FlatRate
- Fill out a Customs Form & bring it to the Post Office with you when you mail the package. Make sure it's filled out accurately and completely. Ask the PO clerk if you have any questions about filling out the form. They will be more than happy to help you. For more about Customs Forms: <https://www.usps.com/ship/customs-forms.htm>
- You must have a name & address to send to. "ANY SOLDIER" listed on the box will not be accepted or shipped.

This is a GREAT resource with LOTS of info on shipping a military care package: <http://adoptaplatoon.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/How-To-Send-A-Care-Package.pdf>

DISCLAIMER:

**This document is ONLY meant as guideline.
Please contact the USPS for more information or guidance for shipping to Iraq & Afghanistan.**