

Care Package Items

The following are some of the most requested/needed/used items for care packages being sent to Marines (and military in general) deployed in combat zones. Letters are always at the top of the list. Some of the items listed are on lists elsewhere of things to not send, but these are generally the items in most demand (those are also the items you should NOT list on the customs declaration form – at least clearly identifying what they are. This just flags what packages need to be stolen).

Pogey-Bait (Snacks and Food)

Always send non-perishable food items, preferably in cans or plastic. Single-serving works best because there are few if any ways to preserve opened items. Lots of seasoning or packets with sauce or other types of things to mix with the MRIs and help 'enhance' the flavor. Do not send chocolate or anything else that will melt.

- Gum, Lifesavers, Mints, **Hard Candy** in general, jelly beans
- Fruit: single serving size **cans of fruit**, dried fruit
- **Nuts, sunflower seeds, peanuts, trail mix**
- Power bars, protein bars, nutritional bars, **breakfast bars**
- **Beef jerky**, Slim Jims or other meat snack type things.
- Single-serving bags of snacks, crackers, snack mixes
- **Pop Tarts**, cereal bars, "milk & cereal" bars, granola bars
- **Ramen Noodles**, **Cup-O-Noodles** serving cups
- Ravioli and other Chef-Boyardi type **canned ready-to-eat** meals – **Beef Stew and Chili**
- Tuna lunch kits
- **Cheese sauces/dip** and crackers. (cans or plastic – no jars)
- Taco Bell/Famous Dave's Sauce Packets, mustard, ketchup (the kind you get at drive-through or take-out)
- Seasoning salts, flavoring salts
- Cheese dips in plastic or canned (NO glass please)
- Hot Sauce (Tobasco, etc..)
- **Peanut butter tubes**
- **Cookies** (esp Oreos)
- Canned aerosol cheeses

Drink/Beverages

All the Marines in our group said there was usually plenty of water, but it also usually had that 'canned' taste – *Anything* to mix into the water to change the taste was welcome. Do NOT ship liquids for a number of reasons (weight, breakage in shipping, etc..). Generally, Marines will simply mix the packet(s) in their canteens.

- Ground coffee, coffee drink powder, tea
- Hot cocoa mix
- Lemonade, Kool-Aid, Tang, Iced Tea, Gatorade mix (Sweetened - don't have to add sugar)
- Crystal Light (or other brand) tubes where you mix one tube in a 16oz bottle of water.
- Sugar and creamer packets for coffee

Down-Time/Entertainment

When not on patrol our outside the wire, there is some down-time. Diversions are always welcome. Forward units have a greater need for small portable entertainment type things – that are light and take very little space

- Cribbage or dominos was very popular
- Deck of cards or dice
- Hand-held games, games of any type.
- Movie DVDs (new or used) – we put together a box of Very Bad Movies for Jacki's brother. As bad as the movies were, they loved them.
- Music CDs (new or used)
- Portable DVD or CD Players

- **Reading material**, especially current. Do NOT send news magazines – they don't want to hear about the news/politics behind their mission. You can guess what was best received (sports, Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition, Playboy, National Geographic, motorcycle mags, etc..just list as 'magazines' on customs declaration). Books are also welcome – especially Marine Corps books (The Corps series by E. B. Griffin, etc..)
- Bible or New Testament if religious.
- If possible, a football (even a nerf football) or a couple gloves and baseballs, are great (but can take-up valuable space).
- Small keychain type games, or small toys in general.
- Puzzle Books

Clothes

They didn't really think of these as a preferred item, but always welcomed getting them. Generally, any clothing sent should be 100% cotton – it breathes much better than anything else.

- Long underwear during winter months
- Fingerless gloves
- Stocking caps (plain, gray, black or dark green)
- **Cotton socks**, especially green/black military (military surplus stores)
- T-shirts (olive green or white)
- Bandannas (dark green, black, etc..)

Personal Care/Supply

Just about anything you can think of in this category that can be found in a travel or personal size, is always welcome. Do not send pump style dispensers. Personal care toiletries aren't in as big a demand now, but still welcome, especially if with a unit in a forward operating area.

- **Sunblock**
- Throat Lozenges
- Eye Drops (for Dry eyes – not red.)
- **Blistex, Chapstick, Carmex, lip balm** (in stick-tubes)
- Aspirin, Motrin, Tylenol, Pain Relievers (small containers)
- **Saline spray/drops** for sensitive nasal passages
- **Q-tips**
- Eyeglass wipes
- **Baby wipes** for personal hygiene (alcohol-free)
- Liquid body wash
- Liquid hand sanitizers – generally prefer the wipes, though.
- **Sanitizing wipes**
- **Moleskin**
- Athlete's Foot stuff (Tinactin, Lotrimin AF, etc.. – tubes NOT aerosol)
- Foot Powder
- Toothpaste (in hard-side tubes rather than traditional tubes)
- Toothbrushes
- Nail clippers
- Shampoo
- Liquid bodywash soap, liquid anti-bacterial soap
- Lotion (no pump-style dispensers)
- **Disposable multi-blade razors**
- ShaveMan™ Battery Powered Shaver (About \$5 at WalMart)
- **Razors and replacement blades**
- Kleenex (travel-size packets)
- **Cigarettes, Chew and cigars**. *Even if you or the Marine doesn't smoke, these are basically currency for other items the Marine might want/need. They can also get big points from their CO and/or SNCOIC who does smoke/dip. Camels, Marleboro, Copenhagen.*
- **Batteries** (AA then AAA) – these are also like gold – they go through these quickly.
- **Duct Tape** (black, dark green or tan)
- Electrical Tape
- Super glue

- **72" boot laces** (black or dark green) always need these.
- Leatherman Tool or a good pocket knife.
- **Zip Lock Bags** (Quart and Gallon) – used all the time!
- Disposable hand warmers (winter only) – like kind used when hunting.
- Disposable Cameras (this is less needed now, since most Marines bring their pocket digital cameras)
- Envelopes, paper and pens (black ink)
- Small notebooks (kind that will fit in a pocket and can be kept dry) Used for personal needs, but also used, particularly by NCOs, for noting action items and such.
- Small pocket size blank journals (like the moleskin books at B&N)
- Small Mag-Lite or other small flashlight.
- Good sunglasses

Be conscious of the weight and size of items, both due to shipping costs, but more importantly, because of the ability for the Marine to lug it around or stow it securely, particularly in an FOB.