

Effective Java

Item 43

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Return Empty Arrays
or Collections, not nulls

```
1 private final List<Cheese> cheesesInStock = ...;
2
3 /**
4  * @return an array containing all of the cheeses in the shop,
5  * or null if no cheeses are available for purchase.
6  */
7 public Cheese[] getCheeses() {
8     if (cheesesInStock.size() == 0)
9         return null;
10    ...
11 }
```

Bad

```
1 Cheese[] cheeses = shop.getCheeses();
2 if (cheeses != null &&
3     Arrays.asList(cheeses).contains(Cheese.STILTON))
4     System.out.println("Jolly good, just the thing.");
```

Good

```
1  if (Arrays.asList(shop.getCheeses()).contains(Cheese.STILTON))  
2      System.out.println("Jolly good, just the thing.");
```

Performance?

```
1 // The right way to return an array from a collection
2 private final List<Cheese> cheesesInStock = ...;
3
4 private static final Cheese[] EMPTY_CHEESE_ARRAY = new Cheese[0]
5
6 /**
7  * @return an array containing all of the cheeses in the shop.
8  */
9 public Cheese[] getCheeses() {
10     return cheesesInStock.toArray(EMPTY_CHEESE_ARRAY);
11 }
```

```
1 // The right way to return a copy of a collection
2 public List<Cheese> getCheeseList() {
3     if (cheesesInStock.isEmpty())
4         return Collections.emptyList(); // Always returns same list
5     else
6         return new ArrayList<Cheese>(cheesesInStock);
7 }
```


Thank you!