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Holiday Gift Guide



Getting Gift Ideas

There have never been more ways to find good gift ideas. [Gifts.com](#) is a fantastic resource this time of year. You can [browse gifts](#) by your recipient's gender, relation, lifestyle, or price range—but that's just the beginning. Dig a little deeper and you'll find the really good stuff, like a [children's toy guide](#), which allows you to see rankings of the most popular toys by age range. Alternatively, you can [build a profile of your recipient](#) by answering some simple questions. Once the profile is completed, a custom list of suggested gifts will be presented, based on your answers.

[Amazon](#) is another great place to find gift ideas (and to purchase your gifts). They have an incredible selection, reliable reviews, great customer service, and a [gift organizer](#), which helps you build an online list of everyone who will be receiving a gift from you, and then helps you to design a plan for selecting and shipping all of your items. You can also utilize Amazon's suggestion algorithm: on each Amazon product page, a selection of items is listed that are commonly purchased by people who view and like the item that you are viewing. Select items that your recipient likes (a favorite movie, for instance) and you will be provided with a list of items they are also likely to enjoy, based on that preference.

If neither Gifts.com nor Amazon.com helps you to find the perfect gift idea, you can try an analog method. Go to a bookstore and find the magazine department. Flip through a couple of magazines that would appeal to your recipient and see what companies and products are advertised in the magazines. This will likely provide you with a couple of solid ideas.



Finding Hard-to-Find Gifts

If your recipient wants an iPod or a pair of sunglasses, you can probably figure out where to go—but what about those specialty gifts? Where do you find the things not readily available at Amazon or Best Buy? [eBay](#) continues to be the gold standard for online auctions and is a great resource for rare, collectible items. [Craigslist](#) can serve the same function, although it is more difficult to navigate and generally has a smaller selection. On the plus side, you can restrict your search to sellers in your area, which is particularly useful if you are looking for big items (e.g., furniture) or items that you would like to inspect personally before buying.

For a truly memorable gift, consider an antique. This [online antique store](#) offers a wide variety of antiques in nearly every price range, with easy-to-view images and reliable customer service.

What about sold-out gifts? There is always one more Wii or Guitar Hero set, if you know where to look. You can find just about any sold-out item on eBay...for a price. You may also [search Twitter](#) to see what people are saying about the item. When an item becomes scarce, there are usually quite a few tweeters sharing tips on how to secure the item. If all else fails, [purchase a gift card](#) to a store that has the item on backorder and place a hold on the item in your recipient's name. When the item arrives, they can exchange their gift card for it. It's the next best thing.



Getting More for Less

There are various ways to save money on gifts this holiday season. Before purchasing any item, do some quick comparison shopping. Sites like [Pricegrabber](#) make comparison shopping a breeze. Simply type your item in the search bar and view the results from several different consumer sites.

If you purchase your gifts online, shipping costs can quickly offset any discounts you may receive by comparison shopping. Make sure you take these into account before finalizing any purchase. This time of year, many top consumer sites offer free shipping. Some even offer free gift-wrapping. To take advantage of these offers, your purchase may need to exceed a certain dollar amount (e.g., \$100). It may be prudent to batch your purchases (purchase all of your gifts from just a few sites) so that you can take advantage of the maximum savings. This will also make it easier to manage your shipments.

[Overstock](#) is a site that purchases overstock items from department stores and manufacturers and sells them at discounted rates. The selection is quite impressive, although you may have to hunt to find the exact size or color that you want. Although Overstock doesn't offer free shipping, they provide the next best thing—a \$3 flat rate for shipping on all orders.

Finally, for shipping heavy items across country, take advantage of the [USPS flat-rate box](#). Flat-rate boxes can be purchased for a modest flat fee (the most expensive is less than \$10). The Postal Service will then send whatever you can fit into the box (no matter how heavy) anywhere in the country at no extra cost. This is a particularly great deal for small, but heavy items.

