

# Holiday Gift Guide



# Gifts that Make a Great Story

Great stories often begin with great experiences. And who doesn't love a great story?

This year, gift the storyteller in your life an experience that they can retell again and again over the years.

Help the recipient make new memories during one-of-a-kind experiences, or by trying out new hobbies or getting into the great outdoors. Many experiences lend themselves to inspiring a great yarn. As a bonus, gifting these types of experiences allows you to shop local, keeping your gift dollars in your community. Be sure to plan a sit-down with the gift recipient after their new experience, to be sure you're the first one to hear the tale.

## UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

Gift an epic experience that will be difficult to recreate. This could be a hot air balloon ride at sunset, a flight lesson where the recipient can take the controls of a small plane or an overnight stay in a reportedly haunted hotel. Tours are also ripe for inspiring new stories. Arrange a behind-the-scenes tour of a sports stadium, theater, aquarium or museum; a movie or TV filming location tour; a ghost tour; or a zipline canopy tour through a forest or mountains.



© ADOBE STOCK

## DISCOVER NEW TALENTS

Gifts that help the recipient learn a new skill or discover a hidden talent make for great stories. This could be a glass-blowing class, where they can create their own vase or ornament; a falconry experience,

where they can learn to fly a hawk or falcon; a blacksmithing workshop, where they can forge a knife, bottle opener or decorative item, ax-throwing or archery lessons, a stand-up comedy class or improv theater workshop; or a cooking class.

## GETTING OUTDOORS

For the recipient who enjoys spending time in nature, consider gifting an outdoor adventure.

Arrange for the recipient to forage for mushrooms with an

expert guide; a beekeeping experience harvesting fresh honey; a wildlife photography safari; a night under the stars with an expert guide from the local observatory or planetarium; or whitewater rafting trip on Class III or IV rapids.

# Gifts that Last

In a consumer society, it's easy to focus on quick, convenient gift ideas that fit the bill but don't last long after the wrapping paper hits the floor.

Whether it's a quality-made treasure that will stand the test of time or a handy item that the recipient will reach for again and again, there are plenty of options for gifts that endure.

## A ROBUST KITCHEN GIFT

Kitchen wares come in a wide range of quality. Some are flimsy while others have longevity. Look for well-made gifts for the cook on your gift list.

Thermopen revolutionized temperature taking by combining professional-grade thermocouple technology with a compact, fold-out, pen-style design with instrumentation-grade construction. The Thermopen One measures in 1 second or less. Reviewers love its durability, precision and professional-grade performance. \$74

## A MULTI-TOOL THAT'S ALWAYS ON THE JOB

The Geekey Multi-Tool was GRAY Magazine's 2018 Product of the Year. It can do everything from opening a bottle or can to bending wire and driving bits. It's cast from a single



© ADOBE STOCK

piece of heavy-duty 420 stainless steel and heat-treated, with no moving parts or hinges to break. It's small enough to carry on your keychain, and holds up to everyday carry, so your most-used tools are always at the ready. Bonus: It's only \$22.

## A BACKPACK YOU'LL GRAB AGAIN AND AGAIN

For the outdoors enthusiast, a high-quality backpack that will hold up to the elements is

key. Topo Designs' Rover Pack Classic is a well-made backpack for the adventurer. Underneath a double buckle clasp, it has a drawstring closure to keep your items secure. It's waterproof and has a 20-liter capacity and two adjustable water bottle pockets. It comes in a wide range of colors and finish materials, and some can be personalized. It's constructed from recycled nylon, making it an environmentally conscious

buy. Reviewers say it's very well made, heavy-duty and durable. \$99

## AN ENDLESSLY ENGAGING PUZZLE

Metal puzzles make excellent gifts because they combine craftsmanship, engineering and problem-solving. Unlike many technology products, they don't require batteries or software updates, yet they appeal to the same curiosity and analytical think-

ing that attracts many people to technology. The Hanayama Cast Nutcase is an expert-level interlocking cast metal puzzle designed by Oskar van Deventer. The goal is to disassemble the nuts and bolts to free the small, hidden metal nut trapped inside, and ultimately rearrange the pieces so the lettering reads "Case Nut" instead of "Nut Case." Its solid construction means it will last to tease brains for years to come. \$15

# Gifts that Inspire

The most memorable gifts often spark something that lasts long after the holidays.

Instead of simply providing entertainment, inspiring gifts encourage recipients to learn, create, volunteer, explore or pursue a dream.

Whether for children, adults or seniors, these presents can open doors to new hobbies, skills and life experiences.

## GIFTS THAT INSPIRE LEARNING

For those who are always eager to learn something new, educational gifts scratch the itch. Consider buying a membership to a museum, zoo or botanical garden.

Gift classes in photography, cooking, coding, music, foreign languages or almost anything else you can think of. Look to local businesses for art, dance or fitness classes, or consider buying subscriptions to educational magazines or book clubs.

Community colleges, libraries, park districts and arts organizations offer classes throughout the year. You might be able to buy a gift certificate to let the recipient decide what they'd like to learn next.

## GIFTS THAT INSPIRE CREATIVITY

The key to this gift is showing the recipient how much you care by supporting their creativity. Choose gifts that en-



© ADOBE STOCK

courage recipients to make something creative rather than simply consume entertainment. Quality art supplies, woodworking tools, sewing machines or musical instruments are great gift ideas for creative types. Look for DIY craft kits to help makers learn a new skill.

An aspiring author might appreciate a journal or a gift certificate for a writing workshop. The budding photographer could likely use

equipment to help them get started.

## GIFTS THAT INSPIRE ADVENTURE

For those who love to wander, you can choose from a wide array of adventure gifts. Experiences often become cherished memories while promoting health and time outdoors.

For the hiker, consider buying hiking gear, or state or

national park passes to help them touch grass more often. Camping equipment or bicycle accessories help fuel adventure, while guided kayaking, birdwatching or rock-climbing experiences will provide long-lasting memories.

## GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

Gifts that reflect a recipient's values often create lasting meaning. Donate in the recipi-

ent's honor to a charity that aligns with their values. To help your whole family give back, consider arranging volunteer experiences families can do together, such as helping protect sea turtles during mating season or sponsoring an animal at a wildlife center. You could also consider donating materials for a local non-profit project, such as public trail restoration, in the recipient's name.

# Gifts that Celebrate the Game

If you have a sports fan on your gift list, don't limit yourself to tickets or team-branded merch.

Instead, think about gifts that offer a personal connection to the game or create memories that last much longer than a season.

## RELIVE HISTORIC MOMENTS

The lifelong sports fan might enjoy experiencing the game as it existed decades ago. This could include a restored radio broadcast of a famous game from the recipient's favorite team, a framed reproduction of a historic game program or ticket stub, a coffee-table book featuring iconic moments from their favorite franchise or a custom newspaper front page commemorating a championship victory.

## GO BEHIND THE SCENES

Gift a stadium tour that includes locker rooms, press boxes or the field. Or perhaps they would enjoy a tour of a sports museum or hall of fame.

Arrange for the recipient to attend a team's open practice or training camp, or spring for a VIP experience such as batting practice or pregame warmups.

## LEARN THE SPORT

For those who enjoy not just



© ADOBE STOCK

cheering on a team but playing a game themselves, consider helping them learn their sport.

A golfer or tennis player might enjoy lessons with a pro. Help them take up curling with a "learn to play" session, or schedule them to participate in a fencing, rowing, archery or pickleball clinic. There are camps to help them hone their

skills in their favorite sport, and not just for children. Sports camps for adults are increasingly popular.

## BECOME PART OF THE ACTION

If it's sports experiences they're after, consider gifting a sports activity that puts them at the center of the action. Arrange for them to drive a

NASCAR-style race car, ride along in a drift car or performance vehicle, take batting practice in a professional-quality batting cage or get pitching lessons using high-speed video analysis.

## EXPERIENCE SPORTS IN A NEW WAY

Another idea is to help the sports enthusiast expand their

appreciation for a particular sport. This could mean attending a minor league game; visiting a famous sports landmark during a road trip; watching a game from an unusual perspective, such as a rooftop, party deck, or luxury suite shared with friends; or taking a guided sports history walking tour in a city known for athletics.

# Gifts that Kids Love

Holiday shopping for children often focuses on the latest trends, but the most cherished gifts are often those that inspire creativity, exploration and family time.

Whether you're shopping for toddlers, grade-schoolers or teenagers, choosing gifts that engage a child's interests can create memories that last well beyond the holiday season.

The happiest holiday gifts aren't always the biggest or most expensive. Thoughtful presents create joyful moments that children may remember long after the toys have been outgrown.

Here are some ideas for thoughtful presents that encourage imagination, learning and lasting memories.

## FUEL THEIR IMAGINATION

Focus on open-ended toys to encourage creativity, because there is no "right" way to play.

- Building blocks and construction sets.
- Dress-up costumes and pretend-play kits.
- Dollhouses, play kitchens and action playsets.
- Puppet theaters and storytelling games.
- Fort-building kit so children can build castles, spaceships, reading nooks or secret hideouts.



© ADOBE STOCK

## ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

Gifts that allow children to create something unique provide satisfaction long after they're opened.

- Art supplies, easels and sketchbooks.
- Pottery, jewelry-making and craft kits.
- Musical instruments or be-

ginner music lessons.

- Stop-motion animation or comic book creation kits.
- Kid-friendly digital camera or instant print camera.

## MAKE LEARNING AN ADVENTURE

Educational gifts become even more engaging when families participate together.

- Science experiment kits.
- Telescopes, microscopes and binoculars.
- Coding robots and beginner programming games.
- Subscription boxes featuring STEM, geography or history.
- Metal detector for treasure hunting in parks, beaches, or backyards.

## GIVE EXPERIENCES

Experience gifts can create lasting family memories rather than adding clutter.

- Zoo, aquarium or children's museum memberships.
- Tickets to theater productions, concerts or sporting events.
- Cooking classes, art workshops or dance lessons.
- Seasonal adventures such as ice skating, skiing or train rides with Santa.
- "Be a zookeeper," "junior veterinarian," or "animal keeper for a day" experience at a local zoo, aquarium, or wildlife center.

## GET KIDS MOVING

Active gifts promote healthy habits while encouraging outdoor play.

- Bicycles, scooters and helmets.
- Sports equipment suited to their interests.
- Backyard games and obstacle courses.
- Camping gear or hiking backpacks for young adventurers.
- Slackline starter kit designed for beginners.

## GIFTS THAT GROW WITH THEM

Some gifts continue giving by encouraging reading, financial literacy or personal growth.

- Personalized books.
- Savings bonds or contributions to an education fund.
- High-quality books that match their interests.
- Journals or memory books.

# Gifts that Pamper

During the busy holiday season, many people don't need more possessions — they need permission to slow down.

Pampering gifts can reduce stress, promote wellness and create moments of comfort long after the holidays.

Whether you're shopping for a busy parent, caregiver, professional or retiree, thoughtful presents encourage rest, relaxation and a little well-deserved indulgence.

## SPA-WORTHY EXPERIENCES

Spa experience gifts offer something many people rarely purchase for themselves. That might include the following:

- Massage gift certificates.
- Facials or body treatments.
- Manicures and pedicures.
- Float therapy or salt room sessions.

- Couples' spa packages.

## CREATE A SPA AT HOME

Build a complete relaxation basket instead of giving a single item. Here are some ideas to include in the basket:

- Luxury bathrobes and slippers.
- Plush towels and heated blankets.
- Aromatherapy diffusers and essential oils.
- Premium bath salts, body scrubs and skincare collections.
- Silk pillowcases and sleep



© ADOBE STOCK

masks.

- A red light therapy device to promote healing, reduce inflammation and encourage tissue repair.

- A facial jade or ice rolling device.

## GIFTS FOR BETTER REST

Sleep-focused gifts support overall health and well-being. Here are some ideas for helping the gift recipient get more, better quality sleep:

- High-quality pillows.
- Weighted blankets.
- White noise machines.

- Sunrise alarm clocks.
- Herbal tea collections paired with a favorite mug.

## TIME-SAVING GIFTS THAT FEEL LUXURIOUS

Sometimes the greatest luxury is giving someone back their time. Here are some ideas for gifts that allow the recipient to spend some time kicking back and relaxing:

- Housecleaning services.
- Meal delivery subscriptions.
- Laundry or wash-and-fold service.

- Car detailing.
- Grocery delivery memberships.

## WELLNESS BEYOND THE SPA

Give gifts that help reduce stress while supporting long-term physical and mental wellness. Here are some ideas:

- Yoga or meditation classes.
- Sound bath or breathwork sessions.
- Personal training or stretching appointments.
- Wellness retreats or day

retreats.

- Journals and gratitude planners.

## SMALL LUXURIES WITH BIG IMPACT

Small indulgences can brighten everyday routines throughout the winter. Consider these ideas:

- Gourmet chocolates or artisan teas.
- Cashmere scarves or cozy socks.
- High-end candles.
- Fresh flower subscriptions.
- A towel warmer.

# Gifts with Big Returns

Some presents continue paying dividends long after the holiday season.

While toys wear out and electronics become outdated, gifts that build knowledge, health, financial security or career skills can appreciate over time.

Instead of another gadget or sweater, consider a gift that continues to reward the recipient for years through financial growth, education, career advancement or a healthier lifestyle.

## INVEST IN THEIR FINANCIAL FUTURE

To invest in a recipient's financial future, emphasize that the gift is knowledge and long-term opportunity rather than immediate gratification. Here are some ideas:

- Purchase shares of stock in a favorite company, or contribute to a child's custodial investment account or college savings plan.
- Teach kids about financial products by buying them a U.S. savings bond.
- To hone financial literacy, gift a beginner's investing book paired with a small investment account or cover the cost of a stock market or personal finance class.

## BUILD VALUABLE SKILLS

To help further the recipient's career, give gifts that increase confidence, earning potential and career mobility.

For the budding professional, pay for professional certification courses or trade or technical workshops, or buy a gift certificate for software training (such as graphic design, coding, AI tools or accounting) or public speaking or leadership seminars. You could also cover the cost of career coaching sessions.

## INVEST IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health is an investment that often pays dividends in energy, productivity and quality of life.

Here are some ideas for health-related gifts that will pay off for years to come.

- Personal training sessions.
- Nutrition consultations.
- Yoga or fitness memberships.
- CPR or first-aid certification.
- Mental wellness apps or mindfulness classes.

## ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Gifts that help launch a side business or passion project may generate income for years. Nothing shows how much you believe in their success like a startup-related gift.

- Business startup workshops.
- Membership in a local chamber of commerce or networking group.
- Website domain registration and hosting.
- Logo design services.

- Small-business accounting software.

## CREATE LASTING FINANCIAL HABITS

Some financial gifts provide practical benefits that extend well beyond the holiday season.

This can include budgeting software subscriptions, sessions with a certified financial planner, estate planning consultation for parents or grandparents or tax preparation assistance for first-time freelancers or young adults.

