

HOLIDAY  
GIFT GUIDE

GREAT IDEAS FOR  
EVERYONE  
ON YOUR LIST



# The Animal Lover

**A**nimal lovers are some of the easiest friends and family members to shop for because of the amount of pet products on the market. But that doesn't mean you should simply buy Fido a new food bowl and forget about it.

## GET CREATIVE

Your local doggie boutique will happily tailor most of their products with animals' names or photos.

Cute pet ornaments will provide holiday cheer for years to come, while customized photo gifts like blankets, pillows and mugs are great options for animal lovers who can't stand to be away from their pets.

Putting the time and thought into customizing a gift for the animal fanatics in your life will show that you care about both them and their pets.

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

A well-behaved pet makes for a happy owner. Treat the animal lover in your life to professional training sessions that will break their pets of bad habits like jumping, pawing and whining for attention.

Training programs are often available through local community colleges or at independent pet trainers' facilities. Do some research to find a certified, reputable trainer, and surprise your loved one with paid admission to a profes-

sional training seminar.

Their gift eventually will be a perfectly behaved pet.

## DONATIONS

There are a multitude of difference-making organizations like the Humane Society and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that are continually seeking donations to fund special projects and initiatives.

What better way to make your friend or family member feel like they are advocating for mistreated pets everywhere than by making a donation in their name?

The money you donate could help return an abused dog back to health or buy a cozy blanket for a rescued cat.

## EXOTICS

Some animal lovers are dog people, and some are crazy for cats. But what if your friend or loved one is neither?

Not to worry. Gifts for snakes, iguanas and exotic birds are just as easy to come by.

Exotic lovers are always in need of cage accessories to help keep things exciting for their pets who don't get out much. And there are a wide array of books full of tips on cleaning, feeding and caring for those wild and wacky pets.



# The Gadget Lover

**T**he results are in: People love gadgets, so much so that it is commonplace to see friends and family members with their fingers tapping and their earbuds in.

## **GAMING SYSTEMS**

Video games aren't just for kids anymore. Adults take them seriously, too.

With the progressive improvement of graphics and platforms, gaming is an activity that spans all ages. Exclusive platforms like the Sony Playstation, Microsoft Xbox or the Nintendo Wii can all be enhanced with various gaming accessories and add-ons.

These extra devices can help improve user interfaces, quality of graphics and interactivity.

## **DIGITAL CAMERAS**

Cameras sure have come a long way. Long gone are the days of film development and manually winding between pictures.

Point-and-shoot cameras give users a no-hassle tool for taking photos without all of the bells and whistles. If your gadget lover is proficient with digital cameras, you can upgrade to the consumer-grade options that take professional-quality photographs.

Also sure to please are convenient carry cases, neck lanyards, memory cards and printing paper.

## **SMARTPHONES**

New smartphone models launch at an incredible frequency, making it difficult to keep up with the latest and greatest prototype. But if your gadget lover doesn't mind an older model, you can actually use the ever-evolving smartphone landscape to your advantage.

Phone companies often offer the prior

models at substantial discounts – sometimes even for no cost. And don't forget the protective case, car charger and gift card for music downloads.

## **GPS**

Even Santa can use a little help with direction every now and again. Turn-by-turn global positioning systems provide location, time information, weather conditions and estimated time of arrival.

Some GPS units include lifetime map updates, tough screens and lane assistance. Others provide high-resolution screens, Bluetooth and traffic updates.

From the new driver learning how to safely navigate his or her way through unfamiliar roads, to the experienced driver in a new geographic location, the GPS makes for the perfect Christmas gift.



# The Kitchen Master

**F**rom the store shelves to the kitchen, these gifts will make a major impact on the kitchen master in your life.

## UTENSILS

Ever see your friend or loved one struggle to find the right utensil for the job? Maybe their kitchen tools are a bit outdated or unorganized?

Put an end to that inconvenience by giving them upscale models of utensils like bowls, mixers, knives and silverware.

From brightly colored to modernly sleek, kitchen product manufacturers have found a way to make cooking look good.

The market is also ripe with products that will help organize spices, utensils, and foods, which will open up the most valuable tool to most kitchen masters – counter space.

## GIVE THEM A BREAK

Even the most passionate cooks and foodies need a night away from the stove. Gift certificates to trendy, high-end restaurants can be a great option, and can also serve to inspire new ideas in the kitchen.

It's the thought that counts, but don't forget the details. Many larger establishments will require reservations, so choose a weekend evening and make it a well-planned out night on the town.

## SEND THEM TO CLASS

Many chef training programs offer one-time or ongoing courses, depending on what would work best for your recipient's schedule.

Surprising them with high-level instruction could help turn their hobby into an art and teach them the necessary techniques to thrive in the kitchen.

Check in with your local colleges to find the right class, as most institutions offer a broad range of options.

## GO ORGANIC

As the interest in using organic ingredients transforms from a trend to an obsession in many kitchens throughout the United States, it might be a good idea to consider going organic with this year's Christmas present.

Local grocers have expanded the number of organic products – fresh and packaged – that they keep in stock.

You can also find local farmers who raise their livestock with no growth hormones and offer holiday gift packages of fresh, healthy meat selections.



# The Musician

**M**usicians make beautiful art for all of us to sing along to and enjoy. Finding them the perfect gift can help ensure that they keep doing more of the same.

## ACCESSORIES

Nothing can ruin band practice quicker than broken drum sticks or lost guitar picks. Make sure your aspiring musicians have plenty of both by filling their stocking with their favorite kinds of each.

Drumsticks come in a slew of sizes, weights and brands, so do your research before buying. For picks, many companies sell punchers that allow guitarists to turn old credit cards and IDs into functional guitar picks.

## PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

As long as the musician in your life doesn't misunderstand your gesture, professional music lessons would make for a great gift.

Local music shops offer a casual environment for lessons, with private rooms, top-quality equipment and vastly talented instructors.

Stores often offer packages that allow students to pick their own schedules, too, making lessons convenient and low stress. A sharpened skill set is a gift that could last a lifetime and open doors for future opportunities.

## CONCERT TICKETS

Musicians were obviously inspired to play by other great artists, orchestras or

bands. Find out who convinced them to pick up their first guitar or horn, and check their websites for upcoming shows.

Concert tickets would make for a great gift under the Christmas tree and can foster lifelong memories. Music festivals are gaining popularity and provide music fans the opportunity to check out multiple performers all in one central location.

Be on the lookout for any upcoming festivals in your area. Tickets will be a little pricier, but they will provide a weekend full of entertainment.

## MEMORABILIA

Musicians love to be reminded of the places they have played or the concerts they have attended. A little work on your part can help them collect and maintain such memories forever.

Many bands and performers offer memorabilia like collectible album covers, self-produced artwork and T-shirts, not to mention auction-type items that have been signed by the artists themselves.

If you're ordering signed memorabilia, though, make sure you are buying from qualified vendors who can produce the proper documentation to prove the items' credibility.



# The Volunteer

**V**olunteers by their very nature are givers, not receivers. So even though they may not request any gift in particular for Christmas, it is our job to let them know their efforts are appreciated.

## DONATIONS

Most charities offer opportunities to donate in another person's name. Volunteers are generally involved in various organizations that are always seeking financial assistance.

The volunteer in your life is focused on providing sweat equity and hard work to advance these organizations' goals, so making a monetary donation in their name will help them feel even more invested.

## CUSTOMIZED GIFTS

Think back to all of the volunteer activities that your friend or family member has partaken in over the course of the year. Any pictures you have from those events would make great keepsake gifts, either framed or as part of a self-created book.

With their packed calendars of events, volunteers rarely have time to realize the impact they are making on their communities. Customized gifts will help them understand.

## GET PERSONAL

Looking for a special way to show your appreciation? How about a hand-written letter? The best gifts come from the heart, and there aren't many better ways to show your gratitude or love than to put it down on paper.

The heartfelt gesture will make an immediate impact and will also be something they hold onto forever. You can even recruit others to get involved with the gift and ask them to contribute by penning a few kind words.

## A TRIP

For a pricier gift option, a trip to an area in need might be just what the volunteer in your life would love the most. Finding a trip that is equal parts relaxation and charitable work can be challenging, so collaborate with your local travel agency to explore your options. They are specialists in both national and international travel and will be able to target that perfect trip.



# The Weekend Warrior

**W**e all strive to be healthy and active, but some of us take it to the next level. For the weekend warriors among us, there are ample gift options.

## INSPIRATION

Even the amateur athlete needs to be inspired to perform. From football to squash – and every sport in between – there is a tell-all book or in-depth biography out there detailing the lives and careers of professional athletes.

Some are meant to tug on the heartstrings, while others are written to motivate athletes to perform. There is also no shortage of how-to books that would make perfect gifts for those weekend golfers who are always looking for an edge.

## EQUIPMENT

The beauty of most sports at their core is their simplicity, and the limited amount of equipment required to enjoy them. A shiny new basketball or a bag of bright green tennis balls might not cost much, but they are obviously crucial in athletes' abilities to stay active, fit and healthy.

And equipment doesn't have to be limited to bats, balls or hockey sticks. Large water bottles, pedometers and helmets are great gifts for cyclists who spend their weekends scaling mountains or competing in fast-paced road races.

## MEMBERSHIP

Local country clubs and athletic centers often offer specials on their membership packages, especially during slow seasons.

Take advantage of those winter golf rates or tennis dues for a unique gift

that will keep your weekend warrior busy for months to come.

Joining a club can also mean never having to wait for tee times or court space, the availability of excellent facilities and overall savings on weekly games.

## RECOVERY

Weekend warriors can sometimes push themselves a bit past their limits. For those instances, a gift card to the chiropractor might come in handy. Or how about a small gift basket filled with various ointments, heating pads, and compression

wraps?

After a weekend of beating up their bodies, female athletes deserve a surprise trip to the spa for a tune-up. Many spas offer discounted pricing for comprehensive packages that include massages, pedicures and foot soaks.



© FOTOLIA / AP

# The Workaholic

**S**ome people just can't seem to break away from their jobs. Whether they are laboring out of necessity or passion for their work, their efforts deserve to be rewarded this Christmas.

## ON DISPLAY

If the workaholic in your life has earned important college degrees or training certifications, help them show them off to the world.

A colored frame holding their hard-earned diploma and matching the office décor would be a welcome addition to any professional environment.

And don't stop with their educational certificates. Find motivational statements and have them printed on vinyl at your local press. Then stick them to your friend or family member's wall for a constant source of motivation.

## BACK SUPPORT

Sitting slouched in front of a computer all day or traveling long miles can create discomfort in the back and neck areas. Your gift

can help.

Find a cushioned wedge that is designed to improve posture and align the spine. While you're at it, why not buy the perfect leather chair to accompany the wedge? The extra support in a new chair

will help alleviate some back pain, while the leather finish will deliver serious style points.

## GEAR

Not all jobs are spent behind a desk or in a corner office with a view. Some professionals get dirty for a living, working in construction, landscaping or auto repair.

Give them the gift of comfort with new work boots, warm flannels, and even knee pads to help get them through laborious conditions. Heavy-duty thermoses, lunch boxes and coffee mugs can also help make the

work day a little less strenuous.

## ACCESSORIES

If your workaholic is burning both ends of the business candle, he or she is also most likely on the phone or tablet – a lot.

Enhance their digital experience with productivity applications, music gift cards or a new, heavy-duty case.

A hands-free Bluetooth kit can help ensure the safety of your work-focused friend or family member while they are driving from one meeting to the next, while also providing them instant, convenient access to incoming business calls.

