

Holiday Gift Guide



For the Person with Everything

Let's face it, some people seem to have everything. If you have one in your friends and family group, consider giving the gift of support for their favorite cause.

With more than one and a half million U.S. charitable organizations, there's a dedicated nonprofit to suit every interest or goal. Begin by determining which cause they are consistently passionate about. They might tell you in conversation and in deeds.

THE RIGHT FIT

Your gift recipient may be the parent of a premature child. Or perhaps they're always fostering rescue animals. These kinds of connections, where a cause aligns with individual experiences or value systems, lead to many charity donations. Others may want to build better community support through local projects. If the recipient has always been concerned with food security in your town, for instance, consider donating to a food pantry on their behalf.

GETTING STARTED

If you're concerned about finding the right charity to support, turn to platforms like Charity Navigator which help potential donors discover reputable, effective organizations.



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They provide suggestions based on various interests, allowing you to explore different areas of need. Many charities offer specific examples of how donations are used.

After selecting a charity, decide on the amount you wish to contribute on your friend's behalf, keeping in mind that even small donations make a difference.

Afterward, most organizations will reach out to notify the person you've donated for, typically with a thank you card. Others may share small gifts, discount coupons or codes and other special offers.

LONGER-TERM COMMITMENTS

If you'd like to connect your gift recipient with a charity on a longer-term basis, many

offer the option to set up monthly, quarterly or annual gifts on their behalf. Even if the amount may be less than a lump-sum gift, a long-term commitment can be a huge help in planning their programs and furthering their causes – particularly for smaller organizations.

The gift recipient might also prefer their donation spread over the entire year to

potentially do the most good. In either case, the results have been proven to bolster a general sense of well-being. In fact, a study conducted by psychologists from Northwestern University and the University of Chicago shows people have a marked increase in happiness levels when making charitable donations instead of spending money on themselves.

Buying for the Traveler

If you're struggling to think of what to buy that special someone who's always on the move, try focusing on their travel experiences.

Whether traveling for business or pleasure, they'll appreciate a gift that provides comfort and convenience while away from home.

Spending a lot of time in the air or on the road can be quite tiring, and might even spark feelings of homesickness. These gift ideas will help smooth the way for weary travelers.

ON THE FLIGHT

Getting a little shuteye can be quite the challenge for frequent flyers and those who often find themselves waiting around in far-flung airports. Look for modern neck support options made of memory foam that can be adjusted to various positions for the ultimate in comfort. Beyond adjustable pillows, consider noise-canceling headphones or the latest sleep masks to create a sense of calm no matter how long the layover or how bumpy the flight.

ON THE GROUND

If they're often in faraway locations where the local language is unfamiliar, look into translators. These handy devices can greatly improve

any traveler's comfort level when navigating through unfamiliar situations. There are non-talking options where users input a word from their language and receive the translation in a digital format. Text-to-speech devices offer an audible translation and you input the terms, providing an accurate pronunciation guide that can be crucial.

Speech-to-speech options are the most user-friendly. These translators use software that listens to a word or phrase and provides an audible translation in the desired language. Whichever option you choose, remember that they're not designed to fast-track fluency in a new language. They simply make communicating far more convenient in the meantime.

Also, the software may not be familiar with every phrase.

AT THE HOTEL

Frequent travelers naturally miss their loved ones and the familiarity of home. Consider loading a digital picture frame with their favorite memories. These lightweight devices can be taken everywhere and displayed on the nightstand at

their hotel. Create a more personal gesture by preparing a care package filled with favorite snacks and goodies that are only available locally. Just remember to include only non-perishable items so they'll last throughout their adventures. If they are flying, don't include bottles of liquid that won't make it through security in their carryon.



Buying for the Busy One

With our busy lives, most everyone wishes they had more time. You can offer people just that during this holiday season by placing the gift of time under the tree.

HOUSE CLEANING

Regular chores can eat away a large portion of the weekend when your recipient might rather be doing something else. Purchase an introductory visit from a house cleaning service to give them some of those precious hours back. These initial cleanings take longer and are typically more expensive than regularly scheduled stops – and that can cause people to shy away. Look for well-rated service providers who will take their time, and ask about future rates and availability so you can share that with the recipient.

BABYSITTING/ PETSITTING

If you have busy parents on your holiday list, offer them a chance to enjoy a night out by arranging a few hours with a local babysitter. You could personally volunteer to take care of the kids. Consider booking a pet-sitting service for their next trip, if there are furry or feathered friends who need looking after. Get a voucher from their preferred



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boarding kennel or veterinarian. There are home-based services like Rover to consider.

AUTO DETAILING

Life's jam-packed schedules can make it difficult to keep a sparkling-clean, tidy vehicle. Schedule a detailing service so the gift recipient can experience that new-car sensation without having to do all the

work. For extra convenience, opt for a mobile detailing service that will come to their office or home, eliminating the need to go out of their way or face a lengthy wait without the vehicle.

LAUNDRY SERVICE

One of the more tedious time-consuming chores can be handled by others: Arrange a few weeks of laundry

service, including washing, drying, ironing and folding. As with any in-home service, however, be sure to select a reputable, experienced service provider – and then make sure the recipient feels comfortable with their presence. Or select a laundry service such as Laundryheap that offers free pickup and delivery while caring for clothes at commercial facilities.

GROCERY DELIVERY

Order a week's worth of groceries to be delivered to their doorstep. It's a luxury that some busy individuals might not easily handle. You could opt for a gift certificate at their favorite grocer, if you're unsure what to buy. Some stores have premium membership opportunities that provide additional year-round savings.

Getting out of the House

Some people are always itching to get out of the house. The holiday season is a perfect time to enrich that experience with special memberships, smart gear and other thoughtful gifts.

PASSES

Seasonal passes at state or national parks grant adventurous individuals free entry for a period of time, often an entire year. National park passes cost \$80 for the general public and can be purchased online at the USGS store, at federal recreation sites themselves or by calling 888-ASK USGS, ext. 2. Depending on the park, there may be discounted or free passes available for seniors, military personnel and others. Contact individual parks or your state's division of state parks for more details on passes.

MEMBERSHIPS

Consider buying a yearly membership to a museum, aquarium, zoo or other local activities for a family – especially if they have young kids. These can pay for themselves after just a few visits while providing year-long entertainment. Make sure to choose the appropriate level of membership based on the size of the family, since some have a limit



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on the number of family members. If the family is larger or if you think they will frequently visit with friends, you may want to upgrade to a higher level.

VOUCHERS

The holiday season is filled with gift certificate options for personal services or specific

items. You can typically purchase vouchers for things to do, including tours of historic sites, cooking classes, movie theaters and amusement parks, among many others. These passes are particularly useful because they allow a recipient to select the most suitable time to redeem their gift.

ALL-IN-ONE PLAN

If you'd like to take a more personalized approach, plan an entire trip that's centered on something they like to do – whether that's an area festival, an outdoorsy activity or a trip to the beach. Begin with breakfast at a favorite restaurant, followed by a picnic lunch and perhaps a

memorable dinner under the stars. In between, they can enjoy the trip's main activity, but be sure to incorporate passes for unique experiences that they wouldn't typically indulge in. Then you can add an element of excitement to the gift wrapping by including clues about the day's surprises.

Buying for Bookworms

If you have a friend or family member who loves to read, why not enhance the experience with gift ideas that are specially geared for bookworms?

LIGHTING

A portable book light can make all the difference for a dedicated reader. Look for options with LED lights for energy-efficient brightness and clips that can tightly grip onto the book. For added convenience, purchase lights with adjustable settings to help reduce eye fatigue. If your bookish gift recipient tends to stay up late with their reading material, alarm clocks are available that gradually dim the light to help them fall asleep and gently brighten when it's time to awaken.

ACCESSORIES

Consider other accessories to complete the look, like tiny plants or creative bookends. Journals and notebooks can add pops of color and texture to any bookshelf, reading nook or desk. You can explore a range of book-themed gifts, including postcards, tote bags and card games. There are even candles that are said to smell like books or the library.

COZY ADDITIONS

Help ward off the chilly

winter season with a snug and soft new blanket — or two! Look for options that are comfortable and easy to maintain, while complementing the home decor of your gift-receiving reader. Special reading pillows are always welcome. For an extra touch of warmth, toss in some comfy new socks, as well.

OTHER OPTIONS

Buy new noise-canceling headphones for readers who may be fans of audiobooks or part of a large, bustling family. Some models will stop playing the audiobook when one of the buds is removed, ensuring listeners will never lose their place. For something

completely different, there's a clock that uses book quotes to tell time. Thousands of quotes are pre-loaded, with new ones added daily.

MORE BOOKS!

Of course, at the end of the day, this is all about reading. So, don't forget to pay a visit to your

local bookseller and ask for recommendations. Don't be afraid to move off the best-sellers list. Just remember to keep your friend's favorite authors and genres in mind. If you're still struggling to decide, give your favorite bookworm a gift card so they can do their own exploring.



Here's how to navigate this sometimes-difficult process:

KNOW THE RULES

Don't begin your search without a complete understanding of the company guidelines involving holiday gift-giving. Some companies may have specific limits on the amount spent. Only some types of gifts may be permitted. Make sure that everyone on your team is included and that the gifts chosen are thoughtful and inclusive. It's not necessary to give identical presents to everyone, of course, but put equal costs, thought and effort into each gift.

GET SOMETHING YUMMY

Who doesn't appreciate delicious treats like cookies, cakes and candies during this time of the year? Consider assembling a variety of sweet and savory goodies in a grab bag, ensuring that there is something for everyone's taste. Just remember to be mindful of any food sensitivities or allergies that some coworkers may have. You may need to plan for alternate gifts to accommodate someone's dietary needs.

GET SOMETHING PRACTICAL

There are certain tools of every trade. Eliminate the cost and hassle of buying or replenishing them for a coworker by putting an assortment together as a gift. That might include special pens, notebooks, highlighters or sticky notes. You can find pencils with amusing phrases – just make sure they're suitable for work. A whimsical tape dispenser or colorful collection of paper clips can complete things. Then arrange them in a special

Buying at the Office

Buying the perfect item for the office party can be a frustrating experience. You might not be familiar with your co-worker's individual tastes and there can be restrictions on what you can buy and how much can be spent.

coffee mug or basket in advance of the holiday party.

GET SOMETHING FUN

Gift cards are always a good

idea. Make the daily coffee run more enjoyable with one from the nearest local shop, purchase movie or sports passes – or consider chipping

in on a trip to a local museum or park. Even if the gift amount is limited by management, every little bit can contribute to a fun outing.

Feel free to place each gift certificate inside a holiday card, but be aware that some offices have rules about the content inside these cards.



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Buying for Furry Friends

In the rush of this gift-giving season, don't forget about your friends and family's four-legged and winged companions. Including a thoughtful present for them will complete the occasion for their thankful owners.

If you're unsure what to get, ask other members of your social circle or visit a local pet store to get advice from the staff. In the meantime, here are some helpful suggestions to get the ball rolling:

DOG PRESENTS

Treats are always a favorite for dogs, and they're a welcome gift this time of the year. Many local bakeries offer special cookies or cakes designed specifically for canine companions. Buy a selection of these delectable treats in case you encounter a picky holiday eater.

While you're at the pet store, take a look at other related items like collars, leashes, pet wear and harnesses. If your friend's dog has a thick coat, pick up helpful grooming supplies like brushes, shedding spray and combs. Water and food dishes are always practical and thoughtful options. Choose from various materials and styles that match the



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recipient's home decor.

CAT PRESENTS

Cats love toys that spark their natural hunting instincts so look for crinkly toys, small balls, feathers and other objects that can be chased and played with. Other great options include scratchers and interactive cat houses,

loungers, poles or tunnels. Just make sure the recipient has plenty of room to accommodate your new gift. Another popular choice is a laser pointer, since they can provide endless entertainment for feline pals.

OTHER PETS

If your friend or family

member owns a bird, select toys that are suitable for their specific type of bird. Find out which seeds and dried fruits are appropriate for their specific diet. Several toy options can aid in maintaining their claws and beaks. Other popular gift items include perches, nesting boxes and cage accessories.

Many pet stores sell special toys, enclosures and helpful grooming tools for other types of pets. With the more exotic examples, you may have questions that can't be answered by others in your friend group. Consult the experts at the pet store to ensure that the items you have chosen are suitable for the intended pet.