

Ten tips for stress-free Christmas gift shopping

Finding the right Christmas gift for everyone on your list can be tricky, not to mention stressful. So here are some handy tips that will help make your seasonal shopping simple and stress-free:

- 1) The thought counts – Put some thought into each gift so it matches the tastes of each recipient. Everyone will appreciate it, and appreciate you more for it.
- 2) Bright and early – Start your shopping early with a set deadline. It's best to go early in the day and at the start of the week when fewer shoppers are out.
- 3) The perfect getaway – Plan a day or weekend getaway with a friend that includes a visit to a museum or gallery for unique gift ideas.
- 4) Get creative – Have a knack for crafts or culinary delights? Why not buy some supplies and make something special for someone special?
- 5) Encourage an interest – Know a wine enthusiast? Give them a wine kit. Know someone who wants to learn how to tango? Enroll them in lessons. Once you know someone's interests, the possibilities are limitless.
- 6) Certified smiles – Gift certificates allow everyone on your list to treat themselves to anything from a night at the movies to a day at the spa. They also save you time spent shopping and wrapping while reducing clutter.
- 7) It's great to delegate – Some stores feature personal shopping services, offering gift advice for everyone on your list based on their personalities and tastes.
- 8) Get online – many retailers have websites that allow you to shop at any hour from the comfort of your home.
- 9) Give an upgrade – Make that 'can't-live-without-it' item even better. Buy the new version of a popular video game or computer program, or upgrade someone from a CD player to an MP3.
- 10) Don't 'top up' – Giving gifts is about finding the right present, not how much you spend. So resist the temptation to buy that extra gift just to make someone happy.

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