

November 2017

A Special Supplement to

the Oneida Daily Dispatch

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HOME

for the **Holidays**





HOME

for the Holidays

- 3 Tips to simplify holiday hosting
- 4 The origins of some holiday traditions
- 5 18 ideas for making holiday memories
- 6 Fresh Christmas tree care
- 8 The history of Christmas stockings
- 10 Holiday songs have storied pasts
- 12 Christmas music origins
- 13 Christmas cookies made simple
- 16 How to make holiday travel more enjoyable and affordable
- 17 Be prepared for unexpected company
- 18 Gift of Charity
- 20 Gifts for Seniors
- 22 Holiday Films

the Oneida Daily Dispatch

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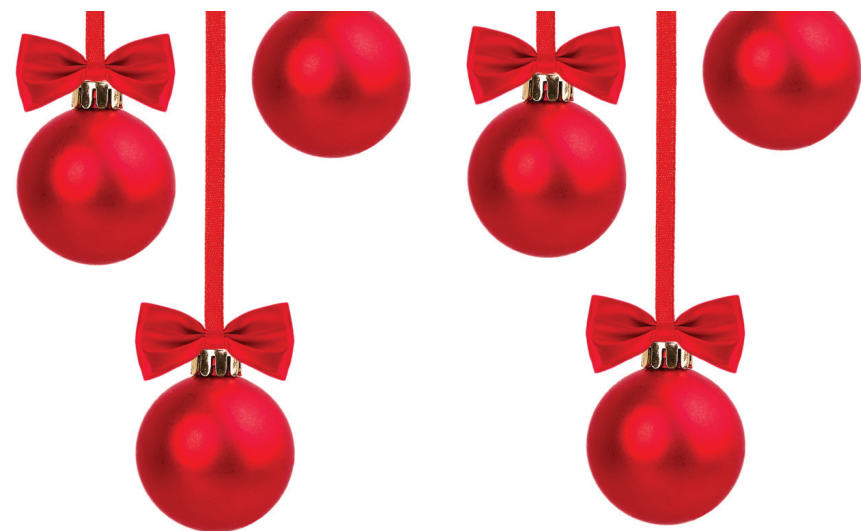
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Tips to simplify holiday hosting

Hosting family and friends for the holidays is a tall task. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, during the Christmas/New Year holiday period, the number of long-distance trips (to and from a destination 50 miles or more away) increases by 23 percent compared to the rest of the year. While many of those traveling will stay in hotels, many more will enjoy the hospitality of loved ones.

Holiday hosting can make an already hectic time of year that much busier, as hosts must prepare their homes for guests in the midst of holiday shopping excursions, office Christmas parties and social engagements around the neighborhood and at kids' schools. Holiday hosting does not have to run hosts ragged in the days leading up to guests' arrival. The following are a handful of ways to simplify holiday hosting.

Plan menus well in advance of guests' arrival. One of the more time-consuming tasks associated with holiday hosting is cooking. Hosts who plan their holiday menus in advance can get started on prep work several weeks before guests arrive. Choose dishes that can be prepared in advance and then frozen, so dishes need only be defrosted and cooked once guests arrive.

Let guests pitch in. Some hosts may feel obligated to cater to all of their guests' needs during the holiday season.

But many guests want to pitch in any way they can. If guests offer to do some holiday baking or take the family out for dinner during their visits, allow them to do so. This takes a little responsibility away from hosts while also allowing guests to show how much they appreciate the hospitality of their hosts.

Plan a night out. Another way to make hosting friends and family for the holidays less taxing is to plan a night out for everyone. In lieu of cooking at home, dine out at an affordable, family-friendly restaurant before taking everyone to a local holiday light display or bazaar. This gets everyone out of the house and allows hosts to showcase their hometown pride.

Rotate hosting duties. The holiday season is full of tradition, and some hosts may feel beholden to tradition and offer to host each year. But family traditions are about getting together, not about getting together in a particular place each year. Families who rotate hosting duties each year can ensure one member of the family does not feel overwhelmed time and again. And sharing hosting duties means someone new gets to avoid the hectic holiday traveling season each year. Holiday hosting is an enjoyable yet sometimes difficult task. Fortunately, hosts can take steps to simplify holiday hosting without sacrificing tradition.



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The origins of some beloved holiday traditions



Saturn with partying and gift-giving. During the winter solstice, green branches served as a reminder that spring would arrive anew. Germans are credited with first bringing evergreens into their homes and decorating them.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus' origin story can be traced to St. Nicholas, a Christian bishop who lived during the fourth century. St. Nicholas was very generous and gave away his fortune to help the needy. He also did various other good deeds. St. Nicholas' became infamous and began to be known by various names around the world. The Dutch called him Sinter Klaas, which was eventually transformed to Santa Claus. The jolly persona came later when 20th century advertisers — especially the artists responsible for Coca-Cola ads — portrayed Santa in a red suit with a big smile.

Mistletoe

Mistletoe is hung in doorways and couples who stand beneath are encouraged to share a kiss. The tradition of hanging it in the house goes back to the times of the ancient Druids. Mistletoe was thought to bring good luck to a household and ward off evil spirits. The custom of kissing under mistletoe can be traced to England. Originally, a berry was picked from the sprig of mistletoe before the person could be kissed. When all the berries had gone, there could be no more kissing.

Christmas bells

Church bells ring for many special services, including Christmas mass. During Christmas midnight mass in the Catholic church, the altar bells may be rung while the priest says the "Gloria." Bells are part of caroling, and jingling bells are associated with sleighs and Santa's reindeer. Christmas is rife with traditions that date back ages.

Christmas time is here. The presents are being purchased and wrapped. The stockings will soon be hung on the fireplace mantle. Mistletoe is pinned above the front entryway, and poinsettias add rich color to home decor. Tradition is integral come the holiday season. Throughout the month of December, traditions fill people's days and comprise the many reasons why individuals decorate, celebrate and dine the way they do this time of year. But few may know the origins of some of the more beloved holiday traditions.

Christmas stockings

The Christmas stockings of today may be a byproduct of various traditions. One such tradition dates back to a Dutch custom in which children would leave shoes full of food to feed St. Nicholas' donkeys, and then St. Nicholas would leave small gifts in return. Another origin story of Christmas stockings can be traced to the twelfth century, when nuns would leave socks full of nuts, fruit and tangerines for the poor. This is why some people still put tangerines in Christmas stockings.

Christmas tree

Christmas Trees are everywhere this time of year. The use of evergreen trees predates Christmas and is associated with the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which celebrated the agricultural god

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18 ideas for making holiday memories

Counting down to Christmas Day means many different things to people across the globe. Although people likely have several different traditions they anticipate each year, it can be fun to incorporate some new merrymakers into the festivities. Here are some festive ideas to include in the days up until Christmas — a special family calendar of fun finds.

- 1. Annual memento:** Have the kids or adults make one new handmade ornament each year. This way the tree is always evolving and everyone can track milestones.
- 2. Cookie day:** Devote one day to making Christmas cookies. Invite friends or family members over. Distribute some cookies to elderly neighbors.
- 3. Holiday classic:** Spend a night in and watch a classic Christmas flick you've never seen before. Streaming movie services often put classics and obscure titles into rotation during the holiday season.
- 4. Christmas concert:** Host a gathering of children where they can sing or perform their favorite tunes for an audience. Take it on the road to a nearby nursing home.
- 5. Dine out:** Take a break from cooking, shopping and hosting and stop into a restaurant you've been meaning to



try. Keep it local to support nearby businesses.

6. Adopt a child/family: Volunteer with a charitable organization that provides for less fortunate families. Answer the Christmas desires of a needy child or family by purchasing an item on their wish lists.

7. See the sights: Pack the children into the family car to tour nearby areas and look at Christmas lights displays. Bring along cookies and hot chocolate.

8. Trim a tree: Get together with adult friends at a tree-trimming party. Rotate the hosting house each year.

9. Play dress-up: A gentleman can dress up as the man in red and pop into a friend's holiday gathering.

10. Wilderness walk: Enjoy the crisp air and snow to see a local park from a winter perspective.

11. Acts of kindness: Choose any act of kindness and make it happen this



Christmas. It can include feeding the hungry or helping a disabled person shop for the season.

12. Kids' Secret Santa: Spread the joy of giving by having the kids choose a sibling or friend's name from a hat and purchasing/making a gift for that person.

13. Hand out hot chocolate: Make a big thermos of hot chocolate and give it out to shoppers or workers who have been out in the cold.



14. Read religious stories: Understand the true meaning of the season by reading Biblical passages.

15. Camp-in: The first night the tree is decorated, allow the kids to sleep beside it under the glow of Christmas lights.

16. Scavenger hunt: Plan holiday-themed trivia questions and hide small trinkets for children to find.

17. Surprise box: Put a gender and age non-specific gift into a box. On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, the person who finds a hidden gift tag under their chair at dinner gets to open the box.

18. Family portrait: Wear your holiday finery and pose for a portrait that actually will be printed and framed.

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putting the tree in the stand. Be careful to cut perpendicular to the stem axis, not at an angle or v-shape. The outer layers of wood are the most efficient in absorbing water, and should not be removed.

Keep it cool. Trees are used to being outdoors and not inside. Therefore, inside the home, place the tree away from a heat source to prolong its life. Avoid drafts from heating vents, radiators and fireplaces as well.

Consider a living tree. Living trees can be planted in the yard after the season, ensuring the beauty of the evergreen can be enjoyed year-round. Select a tree that is hardy to your planting zone. Live trees often need to be transitioned from the outdoors to a garage and then into the house so they will not be shocked. Reverse this process when returning the tree to the outdoors. Do not keep the tree inside longer than 10 days, advises HGTV.

Monitor any tree's condition daily, keeping it watered regularly. Select lights that use low heat. Remove the tree if it has dried out to avoid a fire risk. Following these suggestions can help trees last the entire holiday season as they serve as the centerpiece of holiday decorations.

Christmas trees are often the centerpiece of holiday decor and one of the hallmarks of the season.

The National Christmas Tree Association states that there are approximately 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees sold each year in the United States, where there are close to 350 million currently growing on Christmas tree farms. The NCTA also notes that, when a Christmas tree is cut, more than half of its weight is water. To maintain its quality and appearance, keeping the tree hydrated is of utmost importance. There are other steps to take as well to minimize needle loss and help ensure the tree lasts through the holiday season.

Buy a quality tree. It's advisable to buy a freshly cut tree from a local nursery or cut one down yourself. Trees available at tree lots may have been cut down weeks prior and may have already started to deteriorate. Some needle loss is to be expected, but if the tree you're considering loses lots of needles when shaken, go elsewhere.

Fit the stand to the tree. Rather than whittling down the trunk to fit the stand, choose a stand with an adequate reservoir to fit the trunk and water. Stands should provide one quart of water per inch of stem diameter. Make a fresh cut in the trunk before



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The history of Christmas stockings



Just when the excitement of opening presents abates after the last of the packages under the Christmas tree have been torn open, children and adults alike may discover that there are more treats to be had nestled inside of stockings hung on the mantle. The hanging of Christmas stockings is a familiar tradition with an extensive history. Several legends attribute the hanging of stockings to different people or events. Here is a look at some of the stories that have made Christmas stockings so popular.

St. Nicholas Day

Rather than hanging stockings on Christmas, many countries celebrate Saint Nicholas Day on December 6, and this is when stockings are proudly left out for treats. The small, inexpensive trinkets are later unwrapped and enjoyed on Christmas Day.

Dutch heritage

One tradition says that, in 16th century Holland, children kept their clogs filled with straw in front of the hearth for Santa's reindeer to find. They also left treats for Santa Claus. In return, Santa would leave gifts in the clogs. Over time, stockings were swapped out for clogs.

Merchant's family story

A popular tale tells the story of a merchant, his wife and three daughters. After the wife falls ill and dies, the man

becomes devastated and squanders all of his wealth on frivolous things to mask his sadness. When it comes time for the daughters to marry, the man does not have money for a dowry. St. Nicholas hears of the plight and knows the man would be too proud to accept charity. Therefore, St. Nicholas anonymously tosses three bags of gold coins down the chimney. The man's daughters had done the laundry prior and left their stockings hanging by the fireplace to dry. The gold landed in the stockings, thus starting the Christmas stocking tradition.

Italian good witch

One stocking story does not attribute the tradition to Santa, but to a kind-hearted Italian witch named "La Befana." La Befana arrives on a broomstick the night of January 5 and fills the stockings of good children with sweet treats and toys. Bad children are awarded lumps of coal. La Befana is also credited with being the old woman who the wise men ask for directions to Christ's manger in the Christ child's story. After turning down an offer to accompany them, La Befana later carried gifts in search of Christ. Christmas stockings have become part of holiday traditions, and this beloved tradition has its own unique history.



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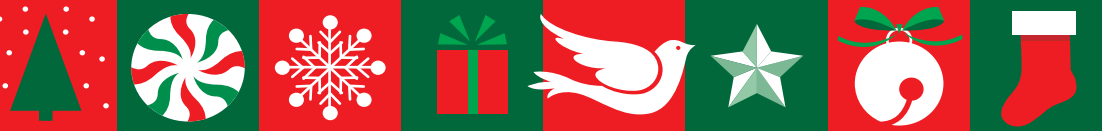
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Holiday songs have storied pasts



The holiday season is not complete without music. Holiday hits play in shopping malls, and families often trim the tree to their favorite albums. Even if Elvis' "Blue Christmas" or Johnny Mathis' "Do You Hear What I Hear" reign supreme in your household, it can be interesting to learn about some of the other songs made famous this time of year.

Modern classics

Classic carols may be the first Christmas songs that come to mind. However, less than a quarter century ago a pop singer managed to contribute to the holiday music pantheon. Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You," released in 1994, is considered to be the most popular modern Christmas standard. With global sales exceeding 16 million copies, the song is one of Carey's biggest hits.

Sad Origins

"Santa Claus is Coming to Town," with its warning to children to be nice since Santa is keeping tabs on kids' behavior, has helped children tow the line for decades. Songwriter James "Haven" Gillespie was asked to pen the tune during one of the darker times in his life. Gillespie was jobless, poor and his brother had just passed away — hardly inspiration for a Christmas tune. However, after thinking about the memories he shared with his brother, Gillespie was able to pull together an

upbeat and catchy classic, changing his life for the good.

Bestseller

Even though "Silent Night" is the most recorded Christmas song in history, another tune holds the title of the best-selling holiday standard of all time. "White Christmas" was written in 1942, and reminisces about an old-fashioned Christmas celebration. The version recorded by Bing Crosby has estimated sales in excess of 100 million copies worldwide, according to "The Guinness Book of World Records." There are various accounts as to when and where Berlin wrote the song. Some state he did so at a hotel in Hollywood, while others say it was the Arizona Biltmore. Wherever Berlin happened to be when writing the tune, there's no doubt he was pining for the quintessential white Christmas.

The song was written for the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn," starring Crosby and Fred Astaire. It became an instant classic and remains Crosby's best-selling recording. Some of the most recent versions of the song have been recorded by Pentatonix, Sara McLachlan and Laura Pusini. Christmas songs remain near and dear to people's hearts, and a few of these beloved songs have interesting back stories.

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Christmas music origins

Scores of artists have released Christmas albums or holiday-infused singles during their careers. Christmas music can be broken down into two distinct categories: traditional hymns and carols and popular secular songs.

Some believe that the religious standards have been passed down since the earliest days of Christianity. However, that is not so. Before the 12th century, music wasn't typically included in religious services, and even then music was included only sporadically. In present day, religious tunes identified as Christmas music typically are not sung until Christmas Eve and thereafter until the Epiphany.

Many of the oldest Christmas songs are not old at all. Many popular carols sung today are less than 200 years old. The world's most popular Christmas carol was originally a poem penned in 1816 by Austrian Catholic priest Josef Mohr. Two years later, Mohr asked Franz Xaver Gruber, an organist and local schoolteacher, to put his words to music. The resulting song, "Silent Night," was not translated into English for 40 years. "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" also originated from a poem and had the original opening line of, "Hark how all the welkin rings." The subsequent version was more catchy, and the faster-paced accompaniment was courtesy of Felix Mendelssohn, added 100 years after the poem was written. "Jingle Bells," a nonreligious tune



that has become synonymous with Christmas, was not originally written as a Christmas tune. In fact, the song was intended to celebrate Thanksgiving. Christmas music is diverse, with lively tunes, modern interpretations and religious classics enjoyed through the years.

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Christmas cookies made simple



Baking cookies is a holiday tradition for many families. Some the holiday season, many homes are bathed in the inviting scents of vanilla, cinnamon and melting chocolate. Baking cookies can be a social occasion in which family members and friends gather to create recipes passed down through generations. Or baking can be a solitary venture in which cookies are prepared and packaged as holiday gifts. Either way, people who bake during the holiday season understand that making Christmas cookies can be a time-consuming, yet rewarding process. This year, holiday bakers can embrace a number of time-saving tips and tricks to reduce the amount of time they spend in the kitchen and possibly even improve upon existing recipes.

Use a cookie mix. Who says you have to toil and make cookies from scratch? It's the thought that counts, and any number of creative recipes can begin by utilizing a pre-made baking mix. These mixes already have most of the dry cookie ingredients sifted together, including flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and sugar. All you have to do is add the wet ingredients and any extra embellishments to make the mix your own. If mixes are too much work, purchase refrigerated or frozen cookie dough. Include your own add-ins, such as nuts, white chocolate chips, bits of dried fruit, or crumbled candy canes, to give the premade dough a unique flavor.

Prepare ahead. Many cookie dough

recipes can be made and stored for later use. In fact, refrigerating a log of cookie dough can make it easier to cut or handle later on. Spread out the bulk of your baking over two days and you might feel less taxed.

Try a no-bake recipe. Creative culinary experts continually reveal their clever tricks, and many of these include no-bake versions of favorite desserts. No bake cookies come together in a matter of minutes, but still employ a host of delicious ingredients. Recipes frequently feature similar ingredients to traditional cookies, but rely on chocolate, honey or peanut butter as the setting agent to keep them together. Bakers may also like having no need to turn on their ovens.

Recycle leftover cookies. If you have a fair amount of cookies remaining or several that broke apart that do not look good enough to serve, never fear. Such cookies can be used as part of another delicious dessert. Grind cookies into crumbs that can serve as a pie crust for pudding pies or no-bake cheesecakes, or mix cookie crumbs with cake frosting or a nut butter and roll into balls. Dunk the balls into melted chocolate, add a lollipop stick and make delicious cookie pops.

Cookies may be holiday traditions, but there are ways to reduce the amount of work and time required of holiday baking.

Merry Christmas from

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How to make holiday travel more enjoyable and affordable

For many people, no holiday season is complete without traveling. While traveling might not be as enjoyable a holiday tradition as decking the halls or exchanging gifts with loved ones, there are ways for travelers to make their Christmastime excursions more enjoyable and affordable.

Don't go it alone. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 91 percent of holiday travel is done by personal vehicle, such as a car. College students driving home for semester holiday breaks can invite fellow students heading to the same area to share a ride home. Traveling in pairs or groups can make long trips less monotonous and more affordable, as drivers and their passengers can split the cost of fuel and tolls. Men and women can offer to pick up relatives who live along the way to their destinations so no one has to drive unnecessarily.

Book early. Travelers taking to the air or railways for their holiday traveling should try to book their plans as early as possible. The earlier travelers try to book, the more likely they are to get a favorable itinerary. Travel experts vary with regard to when is the best time to

book a flight, but travelers who try to book early and are willing to book indirect flights might find the most affordable deals, regardless of how far away from their desired travel date they book their trips.

Pack meals. Drivers can save time and money by packing their own meals when traveling for the holidays. Rest stop eateries tend to be overcrowded during the busy holiday traveling season, and such restaurants may not provide many choices for health-conscious travelers. Bringing along their own meals allows drivers to adhere to their personal diets and eat foods that won't make them drowsy on the road. Simply eat in the car during stops to assuage hunger.

Travel during off-peak hours. Drivers who can muster the energy to begin their trips before sunrise can get a head start on the millions of others heading home for the holidays. Kids can sleep in the backseat during early morning hours, making the trips less taxing on youngsters. Less time spent in traffic can also conserve fuel, saving drivers money.



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Be prepared for unexpected company



The latter part of the year is full of social engagements with family and friends. Pew Research Center says 92 percent of all Americans plan to celebrate Christmas as a holiday, with 69 percent using it as an opportunity to spend time with family and friends. While many social occasions surrounding Christmas are anticipated for months in advance, unexpected pop-ins are also the norm this time of year. Rather than being caught off guard, individuals can take steps to prepare for unexpected guests.

Have food available. Even if guests pop in for a little while, it's nice to be able to offer them something to eat. Keep cheese and crackers, fresh fruit, pretzels, and other snacks on hand. Make-ahead, crowd-friendly foods can be prepared and frozen. Casseroles, pasta dishes and stews are hearty and can serve in a pinch when unexpected visitors arrive. Simply take out to defrost and heat up. Keep cookies in air-tight tins and purchase a premade frozen pie to serve, if necessary. In a pinch, you can always order out, but over time the cost of having food delivered can add up.

Keep the bar stocked. Toasting to a happy holiday season is the norm during this time of year. Toasting requires hosts have some spirits on hand. Stock the bar with a few staples, such as red and white wine, vodka, rum, whiskey, and mixers. Also, you may just want to create a signature or seasonal cocktail that can be served when guests arrive, such as a spiced punch or a holiday eggnog.

Cue the musical playlist. Put together a playlist of favorite holiday music that will provide the ideal ambiance should guests ring your doorbell. Thanks to services like Spotify, Amazon Music and Pandora, holiday music that fills a home with the sweet sounds of the season is now always accessible.

Cheese and crackers are filling snacks to have on hand, and are easy to serve to unexpected guests.

Keep things neat. Set aside a closet or space that can serve as a catch-all where errant items can quickly be stored should guests arrive. Gather loose toys, books or stray papers in a basket and then stash the basket in the closet until guests depart. Routinely empty the dishwasher so dirty dishes left in the sink can be quickly loaded before guests arrive.

Create an aromatic atmosphere. Scented candles that evoke the aromas of the season can refresh stale indoor air. Butter cookie, apple pie and cinnamon scented candles can make it seem like you just finished some holiday baking. Guests tend to drop by on a moment's notice come the holidays. Preparing for the unexpected can make such visits more enjoyable.

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Giving the gift of charity

The charity watchdog organization Charity Navigator says that total giving to charitable organizations equalled \$390.05 billion in 2016. This was an increase of 2.7 percent in current dollars from 2015. In fact, giving has increased every year since 1976 with the exception of 1987, 2008 and 2009. Historically, religious groups receive the largest share of charitable donations. However, education-based charities and human services charities also received a large percentage of donations in 2016, says Giving USA's 2017 Annual Report on Philanthropy.

Giving can be a year-round occurrence, but philanthropy tends to rise during the holiday season when people are feeling charitable. Some people even turn their charitable efforts into gifts for loved ones. The following are some gift ideas that can benefit the recipient, the person doing the giving and a third-party group as well.

Real estate

Donating real estate can be an option for the person who has a piece of property or a home they no longer need. Rather than face taxes on the property once it's been sold, donating it to an organization or individual represents a charitable offering, and in some cases, may be eligible for a tax deduction equal to the fair

market value of the real estate. Giving a plot of land or transferring a deed to a home to someone worthy can make for a memorable, life-altering gift.

Educational bequest

A donation to a university or other school may help pay the tuitions of future students. Some philanthropists like to fund particular renovations at their alma maters or fund scholarships for students looking to work in a particular industry.

Charitable trust or stocks

A charitable trust is a great way to transfer wealth to heirs or simply provide a stream of income over the years. Individuals can establish a period of time during which the assets are held in a trust and when those assets can be accessed.

A tax-efficient way to give is to contribute to long-term securities in a person's name. Recipients of such gifts can choose to cash in their stocks at a later date.

Charitable giving rises during the holiday season. Providing opportunities for friends and loved ones can make a wonderful gift. Find out which options are best for you by speaking with a financial advisor or tax professional.



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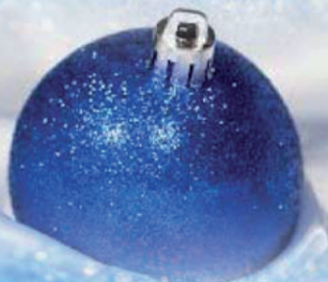
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Great gifts for seniors

Every holiday shopper ends up with at least one loved one on their shopping list who they can't seem to find anything for. Some people seem to have it all, while others may be less than forthcoming with regard to items they may need or want. Many seniors tend to fall into the latter category. Shopping for holiday gifts for seniors can be difficult if shoppers don't know what seniors want. But the following are a handful of gift ideas that might make this holiday season that much more special for seniors.

Books

A 2015 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 69 percent of adults age 65 and over acknowledged reading at least one book in the previous 12 months. That makes books a good bet for shoppers who don't know what to get their 65-and-over loved ones this holiday season. But shoppers might want to opt for more traditional print books rather than e-books, as the survey found that only 15 percent of readers age 65 and over had read an e-book in the previous 12 months.

Gym membership

According to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, more than 80 percent of adults do not meet the guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities. That can be especially troubling for seniors, who are at greater risk for osteoporosis, a medical condition in which age-related tissue loss contributes to brittle, fragile bones. Physical activity, including muscle-

strengthening activities like weight training, can help combat osteoporosis. Family members stuck on what to get aging loved ones may want to consider gifting a membership to a local gym. Many gyms offer heavily discounted memberships to seniors, and such gyms may even offer senior fitness classes at no additional cost.

Travel gifts

Many retirees love to travel, but not every senior has the means to take off for parts unknown. A 2013 survey from the Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies® found that 25 percent of retirees admitted they wished they would have saved more for retirement travel. Holiday shoppers can light up seniors' smiles by gifting travel gifts this holiday season. One idea is to transfer airline miles to an elderly loved one so he or she can get a free or discounted flight. If that's not a possibility, some new luggage or a Global Hotel Card™ sponsored by Orbitz®, a gift card that can be redeemed at 70,000 hotels across the globe, is sure to please.

Family time

Shoppers who are especially stuck on what to get seniors for Christmas can just resolve to spend more time with their elderly loved ones. Many seniors genuinely have everything they need, and such men and women may only want to spend more time with their children and grandchildren. Make a New Year's resolution to spend more time with the special seniors in your life if the perfect gift is eluding you.



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Films contribute to cherished holiday traditions and inspire great gifts

Tradition plays a pivotal role during the holiday season. While each family has its own unique holiday traditions, certain traditions are embraced and shared by families far and wide.

The tradition of watching holiday films together as a family is one custom that has endured for generations. Grandparents may have their favorite films, while moms and dads no doubt have their own must-see holiday movies as well. And no holiday film session is complete without including at least one movie that celebrates the magical impact that this time of year can have on youngsters. This year, holiday shoppers can even draw some gift-giving inspiration from some classic holiday films that appeal to family members of all ages.

“The Polar Express” (2004)

Children love this tale of a young boy who lives out many kids’ holiday fantasies by embarking on a magical, unpredictable journey to the North Pole. Along the way, the boy becomes a true believer in the spirit of Christmas when he picks up a loose sleigh bell that falls off of Santa’s sleigh. Santa ultimately entrusts the bell to the boy, referring to the bell as “the first gift of Christmas.”

Parents who want to make the tradition of watching

holiday films together with their children even more special for kids can give the First Gift of Christmas Sleigh Bell Gift Set (<https://www.etsy.com/shop/LilyDeal>), providing their youngsters with the same sense of magic and wonderment the boy feels when Santa gives him the sleigh bell in the film. The set includes a large sleigh bell, a red- and snow white-striped gift box, forest green ribbon, and large bow. A leather strap connected to each bell allows kids to hang the bell to include as part of their home holiday decor, or kids can carry the bell with them during the holiday season and show it off to friends and family alike. Each bell comes in a velvet gift bag, making the set an ideal memento for shoppers who want to give kids something they can unwrap and enjoy each Christmas for years to come. In addition, each bell comes with a Certificate of Authenticity that is signed by Santa and lists the name of the elf who inspected the bell, the reindeer name and the location of the bell on the reindeer’s harness.

Shoppers looking for stocking stuffers for young fans of the film can opt for the Polar Express Round Trip Train



Ticket. At 8” by 3”, the ticket fits easily into standard Christmas stockings and can be customized to say “BELIEVE” or any word up to eight letters.

“National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation” (1989)

A holiday favorite among a slightly older crowd, “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation” continues the tale of lovable family man Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase). Clark is determined to provide a traditional family Christmas for his wife, children and their large extended family, only to have his dream holiday derailed by a stingy boss. When shopping for gifts for fans of this holiday classic, shoppers can scour an array of homemade items on Etsy.com, from coffee mugs to T-shirts to home furnishings and more, celebrating Clark Griswold and all the mayhem his family hilariously endures en route to enjoying a merry Christmas together.

“It’s a Wonderful Life” (1946)

Grandparents are no doubt very familiar with this beloved holiday classic, which tells the tale of frustrated businessman George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart). Contemplating suicide on Christmas Eve, George is saved when his guardian angel, Clarence (Henry Travers), intervenes and shows him what life would have been like for George’s loved ones had he never been born. Holiday shoppers looking for something special for a parent or grandparent who loves the story of George Bailey can peruse Etsy.com to find a host of items and replicas that recall some of the film’s most memorable scenes.

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- **Check your keys with the host** – This is an effective strategy for giving the host some control over inebriated guests.
- **Keep the number of a taxi company handy** – A good tip for both party guests and hosts alike.
- **Offer to drive a guest home** – Start the New Year off right by performing a good deed and help keep drunk drivers off the road.
- **Appoint a designated driver** – Use the buddy system and you can return the favor next time.
- **Provide lots of snacks to party guests** – Drinking on an empty-stomach rapidly increases the potentially destabilizing effects of alcohol.
- **Post transportation info on party invites** – Include information for public transportation, carpools and taxi company phone numbers.
- **Don’t let a friend drive drunk** – Take the car keys away or use one of the strategies above to see your friends safely home.



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Die Cast Farmall® 1206
Narrow Front Pedal Tractor



ZFN14992
Die Cast Magnum™ 380 CVT
Pedal Tractor



ZFN44063
Lil' Tractor and Wagon Battery
Operated 6-Volt



ZFN14845
Sit N Scoot Tot Tractor



ZFN44065
Magnum™ Pink Battery
Operated 12-Volt



ZFN44062
Plastic Pedal Tractor
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Equip your young farmer with high-quality Case IH ride-on toys! Pedaled, pulled, or battery-powered, these vehicles will have your kid cruising the neighborhood in style!

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Inventory may vary from items pictured above

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