

# 10 WAYS TO SAVE MONEY & TIME DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Let's face it—this time of year often involves a tremendous consumption of 'stuff.' And while I don't want to rain on anyone's parade, like most binges, the crash that follows is seldom pretty and involves a lot of unnecessary negotiations—where the stuff will live; what, if anything, it will replace; what will be returned to a store or re-gifted; etc.

But the holidays don't need to be about accumulating stuff—they can be about family and fun and adventures and experiences and fires and good food and singing and dancing and possibly even snow! So here are a few alternatives to spending hours shopping for gifts and running around like a crazy person. If you want. I'm just sayin'. Happy Holidays!

1. Instead of shopping for stuff, give memorable experiences, like tickets to cultural, athletic or community events. If you're afraid to commit someone else to specific dates, a gift subscription allows them to select their own dates.
2. Organizing closets, drawers and other spaces may uncover hidden gems that would make great gifts.
3. Organizing closets, drawers and other spaces may reveal something valuable and forgotten that could be sold to expand your holiday budget.
4. Like With Like! When you finally gather all your arts and crafts supplies together, you can MAKE holiday cards and artwork. Consider sending handmade postcards as well—less postage! Bonus if you get the kids to help and are still speaking when you finish.
5. Bake or cook something as a gift. More bonus points for getting children involved, especially when it comes to decorating. Nothing says love or thoughtfulness like a hand-decorated plate of cookies or cake!
6. Give the gift of time and help someone else unstuff their life! Offer them an amount of time and schedule that time before excuses pile up and the excitement dissipates.
7. Be the gift yourself by committing to a regular event, such as tutoring or childcare, for a period of time, say three months or a year. You have tremendous skills and resources and passing them on can be a vital experience for everyone.
8. Give the gift of adventure—from a hike or a cruise to a yoga retreat or tea ceremony. Take them someplace neither of you would have gone alone.
9. Pass along a 'legacy' item now. Why not enjoy sharing a piece of family history with someone while you're still here to enjoy it with them?
10. If you must shop, shop with a list – for meals and for gifts!
  - Knowing what you have in the pantry or gift closet means more creative menus or personalized gifts
  - You won't buy duplicates
  - You'll have time to prepare more foods in advance
  - You'll actually enjoy the holiday since the menu and schedule will be planned
  - No wasteful last-minute trips to the store for one forgotten item
  - Your efforts when gift-shopping will be focused so you'll make fewer trips to fewer destinations

**BONUS:** Unearthed jigsaw puzzles and board games can make great gifts. They can also be a perfect way to get your family to sit down and spend some time together over the holidays. And who doesn't love Candyland and Life?!

**DOUBLE BONUS:** You may find fun, funky things to bring for Secret Santa or Grab Bag swaps. Why buy a 'gag' gift that isn't

funny and that no one wants when you probably have something amusing lying around the house.