Save 25% | Ends in 2 days 2:00:00 | Limited Time Offer | Not a member? Join today | Sign up for a free trial

AARP | Search | Sign In | Membership & Benefits | Shop | Join | Renew | AARP Services | AR | AR Español | Ayuda | Help

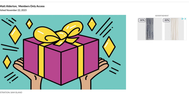
Home | News | Money & Jobs | Social Security | Medicare | Caregiving | Games | Travel | More...

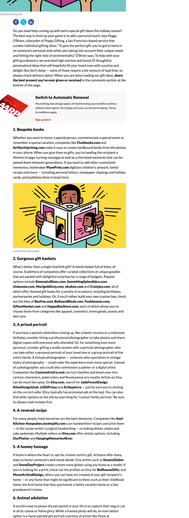
WANT TO GET MORE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP?
Unlock your exclusive member benefits today!
Sign Up | Log In | Not Now

25 Great Gift-Giving Ideas

Thoughtful, personalized presents for everyone on your list

By Heidi Mitchell, Members Only Access
Updated December 21, 2020





Do you need help coming up with extra special gift ideas this holiday season? The best way to stand out given its sold-out personal touch, says Peggy O'Brien, cofounder of Peggy Gifting, a San Francisco based service that creates personalized gifts for clients. O'Brien says it's easy to stand out with an unusual, personal-touch drink while also taking into account their unique needs and hitting the right note of sentimentality. O'Brien says, "It helps with your relationship with the person you are giving to, and it shows that you have personalized ideas that will hopefully fit his or her needs more with surprise and delight. But don't delay — some of these require a fair amount of lead time, so always check delivery dates! When you are done reading our gift ideas, **share the best present you've ever given or received** in the comments section at the bottom of the page.

SAVE

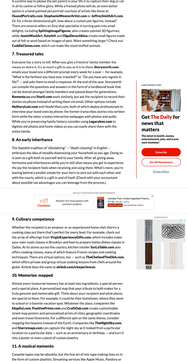
Switch to Automatic Renewal

Pay nothing and enjoy your exclusive member benefits continue as usual. Cancel anytime. We charge each year current rate applies. Terms & Conditions apply.

Sign up today >

1. Bespoke books

Whether you want to honor a special person, commemorate a special event or just celebrate the holiday season, there's a custom book for that. **ArtifactUprising.com** makes it easy to create hardbound books from the photos in your phone. When you give them as gifts, you're handing the recipient a beautiful, personalized keepsake that will last for years and become part of your family's cherished holiday traditions. If you want to add other customized memories, bookmark **PlanetPrint.com** digitizes children's artwork, family recipes and handwritten personal letters, newspaper clippings and holiday cards, and publishes them in a book.



2. Gorgeous gift baskets

What's better than a single heartfelt gift? A whole basket full of them, of course. A plethora of companies offer curated collections of unique goodies that are packed with delightful surprises for a range of budgets. Popular choices include **Harvestbox.com**, **Mouthwatering.com**, **Gifts.usps.com**, **HarryandDavid.com**, **dollarclub.com** and **Crateandbarrel.com**, which offer themed gift boxes for a variety of occasions, including birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day and holidays such as the Fourth of July, **Hanukkah.com**, **Kwanzaa.com**, **Christmas.com**, **GiftsforHalloween.com** or **HappyBeginnings.com**, each of which allows you to customize a gift basket from categories like apparel, cosmetics, home goods, snacks and gourmet.

3. A prized portrait

If you have a special celebration coming up, like a family reunion or a milestone birthday, consider a custom portrait. Artists from all over the world create digital copies with everyone who attended. Or, for something more more personal, consider gifting a studio session with a portrait photographer who specializes in family photos. Photographers who specialize in family photos are in every city. Photographs — or someone who specializes in vintage styles of photographs — could make the experience even more special. Instead of a photo session, consider a family portrait painted by a local artist. Companies like **CustomArtGallery.com** can turn families and loved ones into cartoon characters, watercolors and Renaissance-era royalty. Artists on Etsy also specialize in family portraits. Check out **Etsy.com/Portraits**, **EtsyGeorgeGirl**, **LISOPhoto** and **Artbyjenn** — just be sure you're clicking on the correct artist. Etsy typically has promotional ads at the top. You can also find other options on the site by searching "custom family portrait" for sure to always read reviews first.

4. A mineral recipe

For many people, food memories are the best memories. Companies like **Food52.com** and **Amazon.com** offer cookbooks with recipes from all over the world — in the case of the original handwriting — including dishes, plates and cake pedestals. Multiple sellers on **Etsy.com** offer similar options, including **EtsyPlaster** and **EtsyingtheHouseOutFast**.

5. A homey homage

If home is where the heart is, opt for a home-centric gift. Artisans offer many ways to honor someone's well-loved abode. Etsy artists such as **DreamGiftsbyJen**, **EtsyCustomCanvas** and **EtsyCustomCanvas** offer custom, hand-painted signs including for a price, check out the photo on Etsy by **BoilbeanaGifts** and **HenandcrickDesigns**, where you can have a crooked of your gift recipient's home, pet or family. Or, if you want to go the extra mile for a family with a beloved home, the site frames that they purchased, a family vacation home or a deceased grandparent's home.

6. Animal adoration

A surefire way to please the pet parent in your life is to capture their dog or cat in all its canine or feline glory. Within a framed photo will do, an even better option is a hand-painted pet portrait courtesy of artists like those at **CustomPetPortraits.com**, **PetPortraitsbyMaggie.com** and **PetPortraitsUK.com**. Or, for a more dimensional gift, how about a custom pet figurine, instead? There are several sellers on Etsy that specialize in turning pets into small figures, including **EtsyCustomPetFigurine**, **EtsyCustomPetFigure**, **EtsyLittleBeanBeanS**, **EtsyBeanbeanbean** and **EtsyBeanbeanbean**, which could figure made out of felt or wool based on images of pets. Want something larger? Check out **CuddleClones.com**, which can make the cuddly stuffed animal.

7. Treasured tales

Everyone loves to be called an "avid reader" or "bookworm" and to hand-feed the means to share it, it's as much a gift to you as it is to them. **Storyworth.com** makes it easy to record memories and publish them in a book. Or, for a more "What is the hardest year you ever travelled?" or "Do you have any regrets in life?" — and asks them to email a response. At the end of the year, Storyworth prints the responses in a book. Or, if you want to make a book of your own, you can find custom, well-written memoirs and passed down for generations **Ronnieruss** and **BookLuxe** are worth checking out, but are the recipient to record their own memories, consider a gift of a voice recorder. Popular options include **AudioRecorder.com** and **Amazon.com**. Both of which offer options for microphones or interview your loved ones by phone, the former creates stories into written form while the latter creates interview webpages with photos and audio. While you're preserving family history, consider using **Legacyboxes.com** to digitize family photos, videos and home movies and create a family website.

8. An early inheritance

The beautiful tradition of "distributing" — "death cleaning" in English — embraces the idea of steadily downsizing your household as you age. Doing so is seen as a gift to be passed off to your family and friends. After all, giving away your belongings ensures that they don't end up in landfills or in storage, where they can be a pain to deal with when you pass. Instead, consider giving your loved ones a gift of a lifetime, such as a vacation home or a gift of a lifetime, such as a vacation home or a gift of a lifetime, such as a vacation home or