



## Cut Costs and Make Holiday Memories

If holiday gift giving is part of your culture and traditions, there are many ways to show your fondness for friends and loved ones without breaking your budget. With a little planning, you can reduce the added pressure that comes with holiday gifting, and make sure you start 2025 without added debt.

NerdWallet's 2024 [Holiday Spending Report](#) shows that consumers expect to spend an average of \$925 on gifts during the holiday season. While 32% of shoppers think it's important to purchase gifts for others, 10% plan to dip into their emergency savings to pay for them, and 28% who used a credit card last year still haven't paid off that debt.

If you've planned ahead, you might have a closet full of gifts that you bought on sale or paid for throughout the year. Or you may have opened a [Christmas Club Account](#) that helped you save in advance. If not, you can still find great deals on new products before December. Better yet, if those you're exchanging gifts with are also thrifty, suggest a spending limit and consider "almost new" sources such as consignment shops and online resellers where you can stretch your gift-giving dollars a little further.

Review your total expenses during the holidays. Beyond gifts, there are decorations, gift-wrap, entertaining, and travel to consider. Food costs are still high, so if you generally host holiday get-togethers, consider providing the main course and dessert, and ask guests to bring appetizers or side dishes.

Check out the following tips to help you focus more on the people who will share your holiday than the money you spend on gifts.

**Set a Budget.** Know how much you can afford to spend on each person and do not exceed that limit. You don't want to have to choose between paying your bills and buying gifts. Keep your shopping list and a tally of what you've spent with you as you shop.

**Look for Sales.** Black Friday has become a week-long event for some retailers, kicking off before Thanksgiving and extending through Cyber Monday. Have your gift list ready and compare prices at multiple retailers. Some online retailers even offer a notification service that will alert you when a price has dropped.

**Maximize Discounts.** You can often add an item to your online cart and wait to purchase it. Many retailers will email you a coupon the next day to entice you to complete the sale.

**Repurpose.** Make a vow not to buy any new decorations. Consider taking apart wreaths and reworking them for a fresh look. You can find pinecones and greens in the woods, along with other natural items to use, or visit a dollar store for accessories. You could also host a "decoration swap" with friends and neighbors to exchange items. Secondhand is still new to you.

**Be Crafty.** Consider making gifts instead of buying them. A homemade scarf or favorite baked good may mean more than something you bought, and it comes with the added gift of your time and talents.

**Draw Names.** If you have a large family, consider drawing names instead of buying gifts for everyone. This not only saves money, but you can get a larger item tailored to the individual instead of buying for everyone.

While gift-giving may be fun, some of the best memories are made by spending quality time with those who are important to you. People typically don't really remember much about the food that was served or the gifts they received. What matters most is the spirit behind the gathering.