



Buy the Numbers

Already deep into America's gift giving season, most people are starting to think about who they want to gift and what those gifts should be. Gift cards are about as personal as an I.R.S. audit; fondue sets are passe; most of us can't afford to buy a private island. Everyone has a different budget, so we present this year's Gift Guide in terms of price range.

We look at the quality of the gifts, feedback from customers who own them, the products' defect rate, and how the manufacturer solves your problems (should you have any). We may be omitting a popular brand or two which are major companies. Just because a product is highly advertised and promoted does not make it a good value.

\$10 or less

- A framed 4x6 photo of something meaningful to the recipient. This simple, inexpensive gift will be appreciated every time it is looked at.
- A small photo album with several photos you've taken or that have a mutual interest.
- A microfiber cloth for keeping optical glass clean and dust free.
- Rain Sleeves to keep a camera or camcorder dry during bad weather use.
- Every lens should have a lens cap - if one has been lost, gift a replacement.
- A charging cable or adapter for a smart phone.
- A package of blank CDs for archival photo storage.
- 50 sheets of 4x6 photo quality ink jet paper.

\$20 or less

- A framed 5x7 enlargement.
- A leather (or leather-like) photo album or archival scrapbook. We do not recommend the magnetic, peel & stick albums. They will sooner or later ruin photographs.
- An album for storing CDs and index prints.
- A wireless remote control for an iPhone or Android phone.
- A pocketable tripod for a compact camera.
- 8.5x11" photo quality ink jet paper.
- A USB card reader for new, higher speed SDXC and micro SD memory cards.
- A weatherproof, static proof memory card case.
- Shady Sam (a magnifying outdoor LCD screen shade for phones and cameras).
- LCD panel screen protectors.
- A comfortable neckstrap

\$50 or less

- Memory cards
- "Selfie Stick" for camera or phone
- Ultrapod II - lightweight, very sturdy, tabletop tripod.
- L.E.D. 30 - very small, shoe mount video light.
- Dinkum Systems ActionPod - industrial strength flexible camera support.
- Private photo lesson.
- Portable pop out reflector for filling in shadows.
- Framed custom printed Prestige Fine Art enlargement.
- Custom designed 2015 calendar using 13 of your own photographs.

\$100 or less

- Your photo printed on real canvas, stretched and gallery wrapped.
- Portable tabletop photo studio.
- Green screen and background kit.
- HGX UV filter.
- Vertical grip (for most SLR cameras).
- Ringlight for close-up photography.
- Multi-function RF remote control.
- Spare camera or camcorder battery.

\$100 - \$250

- 20x30" wrapped canvas print.
- HGX circular polarizing filter (the price is diameter dependent).
- Samsung WB350F compact 21X long zoom WiFi camera.
- Fujifilm Finepix XP70 waterproof, drop-proof compact WiFi camera.
- High powered, bounce capable, accessory electronic flashgun.
- High speed, high capacity memory card.

Over \$250

- The first few items below are superior products without consideration of price. Due to special limited time promotions by the camera manufacturers they are listed first.
- Olympus OM-D E-M10 mirrorless SLR type camera with standard zoom lens and a free 80-300mm (equiv. angle of view) and \$100 savings.
 - Fujifilm X30 compact zoom camera with a free 2nd battery and remote battery charger.
 - Samsung NX30 SLR type mirrorless camera with standard zoom lens.
 - Sony a7 full fame mirrorless camera with standard zoom lens.



- Fujifilm Finepix S1 long zoom (24-1200mm equivalent) weatherproof midsize camera.
- Tamron 70-200/f2.8 professional quality zoom lens - ideal for sports and nature photography.
- Tamron 16-300mm zoom lens. (This is becoming the new standard for all-in-one lenses for DSLR cameras.
- Sony a6000 camera with standard zoom lens.
- Fujifilm X-T1 SLR type mirrorless weatherproof camera with standard zoom lens.

Holiday Photo Tips

Instagram Holiday Photo Tip

People snap away during the holidays – the store décor, the outdoor lights, the park displays designed to stop you in your tracks to behold their splendor. Applying filters to your favorite holiday photos will help them stand out even more in your photo feed, but don't choose just any filter. For example, the filters you use for beach or summer shots (think Kelvin, for example) won't adequately highlight holiday lights because the color cast doesn't create the correct mood. Consider choosing filters that increase contrast, showcasing the difference between darker backgrounds and holiday lights.

You can also enhance your photos by choosing filters that soften the image, creating a dreamy atmosphere. Post a photo each day and alternate your themes – one day can feature downtown holiday lights while the next post can be about your evening spent with friends. Mix up content and mix up filters for a memorable Instagram photo feed sure to rack up likes and add followers.

Foodie Photography

Nothing showcases holiday festivities like food photos, and for foodies across the country, December offers nonstop picture-taking opportunities. For those who want to show off the festivities and feasting, here are a few tips to showcase your favorite dishes:

Check Details in Advance: The focus should be on the food, so don't let detrimental objects or reflections compete with your mouth-watering subject. Keep serving dishes simple and elegant. Check your composition for stray items like serving pieces or napkin corners that might make their way into the frame.

Try a Tripod: Handholding your camera or phone decreases sharpness. A tripod will provide stability and allow you to experiment with your settings based on your lighting conditions and other factors. Your shutter speeds may be longer for these shots, so a tripod's stability along with a remote release will help retain sharpness.

Frame Tight & Try Angles: Shoot closer than you normally do and experiment with different camera angles. Most successful food bloggers create their fabulous foodie photos by shooting from unusual angles. Experimenting is part of the fun and you may discover some new tricks.

Incorporate Holiday Lighting:

Choosing how to light your subject can impact your pictures in dramatic ways. Be willing to experiment with position, ambient light and aperture to construct a successful photo session.

You can use small, flashing lights, tea lights or candles to make your pictures more festive. You may want to 'burn in' your lighting, which simply means using a slower shutter speed for your lens to capture the proper lighting effect. Minor changes in shutter speed, aperture and lighting can create major changes. Take the time to play and decide which combinations work best for you.

Snow Shooting Tip

If you'd like to capture winter's wonderland around your neighborhood, try including another element that can contrast Mother Nature's white blanket. An entirely snowy scene may not provide enough visual interest, but shadows can create a compelling vision to the composition. When you shoot early or late in the day, the sun's low angle will cast long shadows and add contrast to other aspects of the image. By adjusting your camera's angle based on the sun's position, it will change or impact your final composition. This serves as a major asset when experimenting with different approaches to your landscape photography.

During sunny weather, using a polarizing filter can dramatically deepen the blue of your sky and eliminate most reflections. This technique often has viewers go, "Wow!"



We all have holidays this time of the year. The closer we get to it, the faster time seems to evaporate. Then we finally get to exhale and time seems to slow down. We can finally assimilate all that transpired in the past several months. There is no better way than through the marvel of photographs. We relive not only our own lives, but those of our forebears and people close to us.

With photographic prints we can share memories more intimately than with any other type of communication. We are visual animals living in a photographic society.

We're also very lucky because photography is so much fun!

We thank you for your patronage and trust. We wish you and your families the happiest of holidays and a healthy 2015.

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