

**TIMES LEADER** MEDIA GROUP

2018 LEGACY BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Saturday, December 22, 2018

Last-

Minute

Gifts

**GO! GO! GO!**

*Before it's too late!*

# Great last-minute gift ideas



**T**radition is a hallmark of the holiday season. Religious services, family gatherings and trips to see Santa Claus are just a few of the many traditions people adhere to during the holiday season.

Many holiday shoppers also adhere to the time-honored tradition of last-minute shopping. The perfect gift can sometimes prove elusive, especially as the sand in the holiday hour glass keeps dwindling. These last-minute gift ideas may be just what shoppers need to put smiles on the faces of their loved ones this holiday season.

## Books:

Books are often overlooked, especially now that so many readers use e-readers. But books can be an ideal gift and especially convenient for last-minute shoppers, who can even gift e-books. For example, Amazon, which has thousands of e-books in its online library, makes it easy for shoppers to gift e-books to

Kindle users, who will simply receive an email on Christmas morning informing them that their books are ready to be downloaded to their devices.

## Experiences:

A 2017 survey by the global research firm NPD Group found that roughly 40 percent of holiday shoppers planned to give experiences as gifts last year. Experience gifts open up a host of possibilities for last-minute shoppers stuck on what to give those loved ones who seemingly have it all.

## Food/beverage:

Television channels such as The Food Network have changed the way many people look at food. When gifting the family foodie, last-minute shoppers may not need to look further than the latest hotspot restaurant or specialty grocery store for the perfect gift. Take them out for a night on the town or give

a gift card they can use at their convenience. The craft beer boom has created a host of devoted and knowledgeable beer drinkers, so a gift card or growler from a local craft brewery is sure to please people who love hoisting frosty pints.

## Streaming service subscriptions:

Many people are cutting the cord with their cable companies in favor of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. Subscriptions to such services can make ideal and affordable holiday gifts. A six-month or yearlong subscription likely won't break shoppers' budgets and will provide months of entertainment to loved ones.

Last-minute holiday shopping is easier than ever, especially for shoppers willing to think outside the box.

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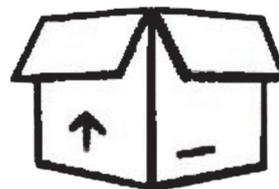
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# Get gifts there on time



**T**hanks to families being more spread out than ever before, today's holiday shoppers must figure out ways to get holiday gifts to their destination on time. The holiday season tends to be the busiest time of year for many delivery services. The following tips should help shoppers ensure their loved ones' gifts arrive on time.

## Ship directly.

Adobe Analytics reported that online shopping hit a record high of \$108.2 billion in the 2017 holiday shopping season, and all indicators suggest online shopping will only increase in the years to come. Holiday shoppers who want to ensure their loved ones will receive their gifts on time can rely on online shopping. When checking out, have gifts shipped directly to loved ones' homes. Many online retailers will even wrap gifts for a nominal fee.

## Research shipping options.

In 2018, Christmas falls on a Tuesday. Shoppers who plan to rely on two-day or overnight shipping should keep that in mind. Some delivery services may be open throughout the weekend before Christmas, while others may only be open on Saturday. Last-minute shoppers, whether they're shopping online or in-person, should confirm their shipping options well in advance of Christmas. Because Christmas is on a Tuesday this year, getting gifts to their destination on time may require shoppers to purchase and ship them earlier than they otherwise might.

## Purchase package insurance.

*Consumer Reports* notes that UPS and FedEx shipments automatically come with declared-value coverage of up to \$100. (Note: Declared value is the carrier's maximum liability.) Purchasing additional insurance can

ease shoppers' concerns about lost or stolen packages. Just be sure to keep all invoices and receipts in case claims must be filed. Shoppers also should ask for tracking numbers on all packages so they can confirm when packages are delivered.

## Properly secure the package.

Many delivery services now have off-site drop-off boxes that can make it easy to send gifts. This is a convenient service, but shoppers who use them won't be able to have a company employee provide in-person confirmation that their packages are secured to company standards. Poorly packaged items may never be shipped. Visit the shipping company's website for packaging guidelines, and include a business card and duplicate label inside the package just in case it is damaged after being dropped off.



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# MACKENZIE-CHILDS

# Get to know your favorite wines for giving

A glass of wine makes a nice accompaniment to a meal or something to enjoy and sip while conversing with friends in social situations. Many people have a favorite style of wine, and some even have a favorite vineyard. In addition, the popularity of wine makes it a versatile gift for the holidays or something to bring along to a holiday party as a hostess present.

Novice wine enthusiasts may be interested in learning more about wine so they can choose their wine selections for gifting and enjoyment more readily. According to the experts at *Wine Enthusiast*, learning to taste wine and differentiate between flavors is similar to appreciating art or music. Understanding the varietals can simplify the process of selecting wines.

## Cabernet Sauvignon:

This is a full-bodied red grape heavily planted in the Bordeaux region of France. Cabernet generally has high levels of alcohol and tannins.

## Merlot:

The smoothness and mild flavor of this red wine make it a great option for those who need an introduction to red wine. This wine is lower in tannins than Cabernet Sauvignon, and it tends to have a more fruity flavor profile as well.

## Cabernet Franc:

This is a light- to middle-weight wine that features a high acid content and savory flavors.

## Malbec and Carménère:

Similar to Merlot, these grapes originated



in France but then made their way to other regions of the world. Malbec is most popular in Argentina, while Carménère is grown in Chile.

## Zinfandel:

Although mostly associated with the rosé wine, White Zinfandel, Zinfandel is actually a medium-bodied red wine that originated in Croatia.

## Pinot Noir:

Soft tannins and high acid give this light-bodied red wine its appeal. The grapes were first widely planted in France but can now be found elsewhere.

## Chianti:

Chianti is the most famous Italian red wine in North America. It's a dry red that pairs very well with food. Chianti, which comes from the Chianti region in Tuscany, is made exclusively with Sangiovese grapes, or at least 80 percent of them and other blends.

## Chardonnay:

This is a medium- to full-bodied dry white wine. The Chardonnay grape is a white grape from the Burgundy region of France.

## Sauvignon Blanc:

Citrus-driven and often light-bodied, Sauvignon Blanc is another dry white grape planted widely in France. It also is a parent grape to Cabernet Sauvignon.



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