

DO YOU NEED ANY HELP WITH YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS?



How can I make my presents more thoughtful?

We all start December with the intention of demonstrating our love with that one perfectly chosen present that will make the recipient weep with joy. And yet we end up giving everyone under 20 cash, and a bottle of booze.

The most thoughtful gifts celebrate a connection only you have with that person. For example, a special place or a song. Try some framed vintage maps, or a print of a soundwave from a much-loved piece of music.

I'm on a budget this year

If you don't want to go overboard, but don't have a craft-loving bone in your body, step away from the glue gun, because there are other ways to be creative. "If you can show that you've put time and thought into a gift, the monetary value doesn't matter," says McEntee.

"Maybe they've just turned vegan, so you seek them out some vegan doughnuts. Maybe you print out and frame a forgotten but much-loved photo, or write them a beautiful handwritten card saying how much they mean to you. Opt for smaller tokens with a personalised twist – one of the best presents I've ever received was a mug with an illustration of my dog on it."

Should I get my child's teacher a present? And if so, what?

While it's definitely not obligatory, it can be lovely to show your appreciation if you want to, maybe a hamper or a tin of personalised biscuits. You also can't go wrong with stationery: a beautiful notebook – perhaps customised with their initials – is practical and thoughtful.

What can I buy for my office Secret Santa?

Get advice about what their interests are from another colleague who they're close to, or look at their social media feeds for clues as to what they enjoy doing outside of work.

Help! It's 8pm on Christmas Eve and I've not bought any presents

Experiential gifts have become really popular in the past few years and are a great option if you've left it until the very last minute," says McEntee. "Something like a tour of a gin distillery or an urban beekeeping course goes down really well and you can draw up your own 'voucher' or 'ticket' to gift them with on the day." The main thing is to go on what you know they like (be it gin, honey or insects) and give them something a bit different.

I'm going to my in-laws for Christmas for the first time, how can I impress?

Finding a present that says: "I am definitely the appropriate person for your son/daughter".

Look for something universally loved, such as a cheese board with some special cheeses you've picked out, or, even better, something that keeps on giving, like a cheese subscription. Best check they're not lactose-intolerant first.

How can I get better at wrapping presents?

Think about the passions of the person you're giving to – if they love jazz, use old sheet music, if they're into food, use pages from a vintage recipe book. And if you're wrapping something huge, use paper tablecloths, not rolls of paper – it's more flexible and won't rip as easily."