



Ways to Give Without Giving “Stuff”

*Gifts Outside the Box
Skip the Mall, Save the World*

Ideas in this resource are meant to help you think about gifts that:

- have a minimal environmental impact
- help people lessen their environmental impact
- enrich our communities
- support our local economies

For the **foodie** in your life...

- Give the gift of fresh, nutritious vegetables! Community supported farms accept members in advance and then provide the harvest throughout the growing season (and sometimes even through the winter). To learn more and find a CSA in your area, visit: www.localharvest.org/csa.
- Dining at designated farm-to-table restaurants is another way of supporting local agriculture and lessening environmental impact due to transportation of food. Check out www.dinegreen.com for a list of green-certified restaurants in your area.

For the **do-it-yourself person** in your life...

- Find a local artisan on Etsy; most of the handmade goods are constructed with recycled or vintage materials. Learn more here: www.etsy.com/shop_local.php?ref=fp_nav_local.
- Look for retailers that transform discarded materials into useful products; these gifts alleviate the strain on landfills and breathe new life into what would otherwise be deemed as waste.

For the **home owner** in your life...

- Consult Viva Terra for eco-sensitive gift options: www.vivaterra.com.
- Ten Thousand Villages, a fair trade retailer, offers a wide array of recycled home goods such as lamp shades, fruit bowls, and coasters, all constructed from magazines and newspapers: www.tenthousandvillages.com.

For the **arts enthusiast** in your life...

- Give a membership to an area museum. In addition to free admission, memberships come with access to select exhibitions, subscriptions to magazines, and discounts on special programs. For more information, visit: www.massvacation.com/arts.

For the **outdoor aficionado** in your life...

- Dedicate a city tree in your friend’s name at TreePeople, a nonprofit organization offering sustainable solutions to urban ecosystem problems. Learn more here: www.treepeople.org/tree-dedications.
- Help others see our country’s beauty through a Federal Recreational Lands Pass, which allows the recipient free entrance for one year to America’s National parks and other public lands. Check it out at: www.nature.nps.gov.

- Several organizations tasked with preserving ecologically significant land offer the opportunity to contribute to their efforts to sustain wildlife and maintain habitats by making gift donations.

For the **park lover** in your life...

- Look online to see if there is a local parks organization that offers memberships.
- Several state and national organizations also serve as stewards of conservation land and offer memberships that provide discounted access for park visits.

For the **commuter** in your life...

- Consider offsetting carbon emissions incurred while driving. Several organizations offer passes that offset your greenhouse gas output by investing in alternative, clean energy sources to help spur those markets.

For the **bicyclist** in your life...

- Help promote health and safety. How about a gift card to a local bike shop to keep the bike operating in good condition?
- Help connect your bicyclist to fellow bicyclists with a membership to a biking organization such as Mass Bike, which offers workshops, discounts, and group rides. www.massbike.org.

For the **activist** in your life...

- Some loans really can change lives—what to you may seem like a small contribution can actually fuel an entire enterprise abroad. Micro-lending involves providing unique entrepreneurs with the startup funds to get their businesses off the ground.
- Similarly, some web sites aggregate opportunities for giving so that you can identify the ideal project you'd like to support. These organizations also offer gift cards so that friends and family can pick out the perfect gift.
- Volunteering is perhaps the most important gift you can give to your community. This year, make a point of donating your time not just on the holiday, but in the weeks and month afterward, too. To find an opportunity near you, visit: www.volunteermatch.org.
- Certain organizations make it possible to help struggling communities end hunger and poverty through the gift of livestock, bees, seeds, farming tools and the know-how to reap a sustainable harvest from them.
- There is also the chance to purchase gifts that really give twice. Unique charitable contributions can be designated to go to communities in need and work to create long-lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and social injustice.

For the **animal lover** in your life...

- Make a symbolic animal adoption in your giftee's name.
- Help save endangered species and endangered flora and fauna with a donation to a conservation agency.

For the person in your life who **already has everything**...

- Bake your family heirloom recipe or a batch of your friend's favorite cookies.
- Knit a hat, scarf or mittens to ensure your friend stays warm through the winter months.
- Give an IOU for a free babysitting session.
- Offer to help organize a friend's cluttered closets and donate any unwanted clothing to local community coat drives, thrift shops, organizations that outfit low-income people for job interviews, or other charitable organizations that help the homeless or others in need.