

Creative Low-Cost Gift Ideas

By Melanie Dabb

As you are planning out your holiday budget, look for ways to lower your cost on gifts. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Homemade Gifts-Even if you're not the creative crafty type, there are still gifts you can make at home that cost little or no money. Some ideas are to create scrapbook pages with family photos for grandparents or other relatives, use your children's artwork to decorate cards, create a wall calendar with family photos or compile a book of your family's favorite recipes. Baking a loaf of homemade bread or other treat are always an option. And, if these ideas don't really fit your style, Utah's online public library has a free resource that anyone with a library card has access to called Creative Bug. You can check it out at this website: <https://onlinelibrary.utah.gov/> and get lots of ideas and tutorials for creative homemade gifts.

Another idea for creative low-cost gifts from the Michigan State University Extension is putting together kits. Especially for children, these kinds of gifts can spark curiosity and imagination and generally cost less than big ticket items. If you have a loved one who is interested in art consider putting together an art kit with a sketch pad and pencils. If you know someone who loves to cook maybe you can create a kit with your favorite recipe and the non-perishable ingredients for that recipe. Some of Michigan State's other kit suggestions are an outdoor kit with a field tracking book and binoculars or a beauty kit with soap and lip balm. Another advantage of giving a gift like this is the focus is on the person receiving the gift and encouraging them to pursue their interests.

Give your time and attention. One gift idea that can be especially meaningful is to make gift certificates that entitle the receiver to service or quality time from you. For example, you could give a child a night off of chores or a one on one activity with a parent. The possibilities are endless and these are gifts that are completely free that can mean so much.

This holiday season, as you navigate your budget, consider these ideas not just as cost-effective alternatives but as meaningful expressions of care and thoughtfulness that can transform the act of giving into a truly memorable experience. May your celebrations be filled with the joy of creativity, personal connection, and the true spirit of giving.

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