



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Staff List: The best gifts to give a college student

If you were to ask me what I wanted for Christmas, the first thing that would pop into my head would be socks. Now, socks don't seem like the most exciting gift to give, but they deceptively are. A nice cozy pair of socks will do the trick in the winter—especially since we go to Wash. U. and it's already snowed—and they'll do the trick year-round on a lazy day during the school year. If warm fuzzy socks aren't exactly what you're going for, then quirky crew socks are even better. Fun patterns and designs can and will jazz up any outfit. Socks are the most versatile gift you could give a college student, next to an Instant Pot.

—*Subrina Spence, Senior Cadenza Editor and Social Media Director*

Rarely do I find the time to read a book for fun during the school year, but those times

when I do consistently serve as highlights when I reflect on semesters past. Getting a college student a book—one that they will read, not one that YOU find interesting or just the top of the New York Times' bestsellers list—is a sign that you care about them and that you know them well. It doesn't have to be an expensive book (thrifbooks.com is a cool way of getting them cheap), but something that you think they'll enjoy. Maybe the book refers back to a discussion you had a few weeks ago or about a shared interest. Maybe it's something you read recently that made you think of them. Gifting a book could give you something new to talk about, a fun way of furthering a friendship. It can also be a great way to get a book you want for yourself—you tell your friend it's for them and then "borrow" it weeks later once

they've finished it. Voila.
—*Matthew Friedman, Senior Sports Editor*

Money. Stop playing games with me. If I need socks, I'll buy them. I'll pirate books online. I can't eat the warmth of your presence. Save the money you were going to spend on buying me a new sweater and give it directly to me.
—*Dorian DeBose, Senior Sports Editor*

An invitation. The best gift you can give a friend or significant other is saving them the stress of planning the kind of adventure that we all want to have. Surprise them with a text—"Do you want to go rock climbing with me next Thursday?" "Let's do an escape room this weekend." "We're going to stay up all night, watch 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind' and then watch the

sunrise. Grab candy and I'll bring the popcorn." Take the initiative and handle the logistics, so that your recipient just has to know where to be and when, and you're well on your way to giving them an experience that they (and you!) will appreciate and remember for the rest of their life.
—*Jonah Goldberg, Copy Chief*

Just ask what they want. Getting a surprise gift you really want is nice, but getting a surprise gift you don't want is unpleasant at best. Any particular college student is going to want different things—some of us want socks (I do), some of us want money and some of us (me) want an incredibly specific pair of shoes no one is going to know about unless they ask. Money is always useful, but if you want to give a non-monetary gift the student really wants, it's best not to guess. I promise it doesn't ruin the anticipation and happiness of getting a gift, or the gratitude they'll feel.
—*Isabella Neubauer, Senior Cadenza Editor and Copy Chief*

Get them something small and meaningful. Most likely, your friend doesn't have a lot of room in their place for a giant stuffed bear or that old footstool that you don't use anymore. They're going to be moving within the next four years anyways, and they don't need an extra thing to transport in that process. So find them a fun poster, a new charm to add to their bracelet or buy them a disposable camera (I hear those are all the rage these days). Or, if you want to be creative and clever, make them a video of all of your favorite memories compiled in one place so that they can digitally transport your friendship into the next phase of their life.
—*Danielle Drake-Flam, Managing Editor*

Get them something practical. Once I made the move from dorms to an apartment, I realized that I did not have any kitchen stuff besides one singular spoon, two bowls and one plate. I could not exactly equip a kitchen and unfortunately I like eating. I got lots of pots and pans for the holidays and had never been happier to open a gift. Just ask what they need, what is essential that they have not been able to get themselves yet. Be it kitchen stuff, winter gear or school supplies, they will use it constantly and think of you every time.
—*Lauren Alley, Managing Editor*

I'm a big fan of a practical gift. At the moment, my winter boots are in the process of falling apart, so that's going to be my recommendation: a nice, warm pair of waterproof boots. It's getting colder and it's getting wetter, so what could be better than a good pair of boots. Last year I wore those boots day-in and day-out and every day, despite the cold outside and the ice and slush on the ground, I spent my time on campus with warm and dry feet. I lived without fear. If there was a puddle on my way to class, I walked straight through it. Never in my life had I felt more powerful or secure. If you want your friend/family member/significant other to live their life to the fullest this winter, you'll get them a good pair of boots.
—*Josh Zucker, Associate Editor*

Hot cocoa packets! Hot chocolate simply makes everything better. Dreading writing a big final paper? Now imagine yourself sipping on a warm cup of cocoa while you do it. Granted, the thought is still painful, but maybe just a bit less than

before. It's a simple, cheap, dorm-friendly and practical gift that will keep the receiver feeling warm and loved throughout the holiday season.
—*Jaden Satenstein, Senior Scene Editor*

Food gift cards. We're always hungry. We walk a lot, we study a lot and honestly, sometimes we're just too busy or tired to cook. We're surrounded by restaurants and coffee shops, bakeries and boba shops. These places entice us, as they're so convenient. It's easy to order a pizza or go buy a smoothie instead of cooking, which can become so tiresome after a long day of classes, work and meetings. However, there's a price for convenience, literally; the constant eating out adds up, but we're bound to keep going back. Thus, food gift cards always come in handy. Nothing shows more care and concern than a delicious meal that I didn't have to spend time or money on.
—*Kya Vaughn, Senior Forum Editor*

My grandmother has a tradition of sending me and my family members cards or notes on the backs of old family photos. While most of the family memories I keep with me are digital, I make a point to save these photos from her. The process of her combing through family photos and selecting one that might be special to us is an incredibly thoughtful thing to do, and something anyone can do. Particularly if the college student in your life lives far from home, having a physical memento to have that reminds them of a warm memory is a meaningful gift that they can hold onto for years to come.
—*Emma Baker, Editor-in-Chief*

How to give gifts in college: Host a holiday party

KYA VAUGHN
SENIOR EDITOR

Just as quickly as the semester began, it is on its way to coming to a close, with the holiday season coming just around the corner. Soon, after gorging on turkey and pie, we will be thrust into the beginning of winter, which marks the beginning of the gift-giving season. A time of delight—with the exception of the stress of finals upon us—we will begin our hunt for gifts for family and...friends.

Now this, this is a different source of stress, one not born out of a textbook. How do you pick which friends to

give gifts? Should you give them all gifts? Where will you get the money to do so? If you're like me, these thoughts have crossed your mind once or twice as you've strolled down the aisles of Target looking for the perfect gift for each special friend. However, I'm sure you, like me, have realized the cost of doing so as you approach the checkout line with 12 different gifts stacked high in your cart.

But this is not the only way to shop for a large group of friends, or even the most effective way. There is an option that is both affordable and feasible for every friend within your group to receive

a gift for the holidays, and that option is a gift exchange like a Secret Santa party.

Prior to coming to college, I was aware of the concept of a gift exchange party. I had seen people do them, usually my parents and their friends or co-workers, but I didn't have the opportunity to partake in them until I began attending Wash. U. In high school, your pool of friends is smaller; there simply aren't as many people as there are in college. Thus, coming to college allows the opportunity for the growth of a friend group, which brings its own sort of pressures.

Gift exchange parties helped to alleviate these

pressures for me around this time of year, and they made the gift-giving season much more enjoyable. Each year, my friends enter all of our names into a random name generator online, which assigns each person someone to give a gift to. From there, we set up a shared document with our names and below them, gifts within a \$10 range that we would like to receive. This ensures that everyone gets a gift that you know they will enjoy, and one that is decently affordable.

Once the gifts are purchased, we pick a date and a location, and the party festivities begin. At the event,

we each bring a dish or two, set up games and blast holiday music. We get to enjoy each other's company and the satisfaction that comes with knowing that you gave a friend a gift that they'll enjoy.

Although these parties alone are fun, there are ways to spice things up to make your gift-giving experience more of an interactive activity. Thus, you can upgrade your gift exchange party to a White Elephant party.

White Elephant parties make for a more interesting experience, as you can steal gifts from friends. The catch? You can only steal the gifts based off of the packaging; you have no way

of knowing the contents of the gifts, which could benefit you in the end. Or, you could be left with something you weren't entirely expecting. Either way, the concept of White Elephant parties provide a competitive twist that can make your parties more fun.

These parties have allowed for me to become closer with my friends, as gift exchange has become a part of our tradition, and this party can become a part of yours, too. You don't have to break the bank or choose between friends this holiday season. Instead, opt for a gift exchange party. It's sure to brighten up your holiday.

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