



25 Tips to Save Money This Christmas

If you want to keep rocking around the Christmas tree without racking up the Christmas debt, be more thoughtful in your spending and saving this season. How? Good question. We've got 25 answers for you right here. Keep reading for money-saving Christmas tips.

Christmas Tips to Save Money

1. Develop a gift-giving philosophy.

Normally, our first suggestion in every instance of life is to budget. And we'll get there. But before you budget, our very first Christmas tip is this: You've got to create your Christmas gift-giving philosophy.

What does giving mean to you? Is it about finding the perfect presents? Do you hope to impress others with how much you spend on them? Or do you feel obligated to buy for

people? These motivations (and others like them) can really shape how you view the season.

Be honest with yourself and think about *why* you're buying presents before you think about how you're going to pay for them all.

2. Budget.

Now, the way you become the hero of the holidays is by [budgeting](#). That's right—if you want to stay on Santa's nice list, set a limit for how much you're going to spend and *stick to it*. Use our [Christmas Present Planner](#) as a guide, and account for it in your [EveryDollar budget](#) to help.

3. Track your spending.

So, lots of people spend like crazy throughout December and never check in on their budget. They just think, *I'll worry about it in January*. Future you has some advice here: Don't. Do. That. Track your expenses as you go so you don't end up overspending and ruining this month's *and* next month's budget.

And you know what makes that easier, right? EveryDollar's bank connect feature, so transactions stream straight in. You just have to drag and drop them into the right budget line. It's simple *and* it gives you more time to do the things that really matter to you, like whipping up a batch of figgy pudding.

4. Rein in other spending.

Last year, Americans spent \$936.3 billion on Christmas.¹

First of all, you don't have to spend that much. We want you to know and own that truth. Don't spend outside of your comfort zone this season or any season.

But what about [the money you do need for Christmas](#)? If you've been shopping all year or stashing cash into your Christmas sinking fund, you might be set. But if not, you'll have to find that money somewhere else. The first step here is to move money around in your budget—spending less on some categories in December to make up for the extra Christmas celebrations.

Christmas Tips to Save Money on Gifts

5. Choose time over money.

There's an old saying that goes, "It's the thought that counts." For some people, the thought of spending time together really is better than the joy of a physical gift. You can save money this year by being intentional about being together—in whatever way you can, whether that's in person or virtually. This year, value experiences over accessories and conversations over clutter.

6. Shop early.

Don't wait for Black Friday to start Christmas shopping—look for sales all year long. Grab that stuffed Sasquatch on clearance in July for your bigfoot-loving nephew. When you're mindful of your list throughout the year, you'll spread out both the spending and [the stress](#) (and maybe even get rid of the stress altogether).

If you missed the chance to jump on the early shopping train this year, remember it in January when you're budgeting for the *next* Christmas season!

7. Give fewer gifts.

As you're in the spirit of trimming the tree, trim down that Christmas list while you're at it. Of course, you do have a bit of holiday-induced obligation to deal with. You can't pass around gifts at family Christmas and be like, "Uh, sorry, Cousin Scott . . . You're the only person I couldn't find anything for."

But not everyone needs a gift—this year, send your tidings of comfort and joy to some people on your list through a thoughtful card.

And if you want to save even more money, have a kind chat with your family members. Are you all giving just to give? Do you all want to cut back? A clear conversation about skipping presents this year for a shared meal (if you're able) and stocking stuffers instead could be just the thing both your family and your finances need.

8. Resist retail marketing.

Friends. Remember how we said Americans spent \$936.3 billion on Christmas last year?² That's a lot.

Don't let yourself get wrapped up in all the sales and spending. You may think these retailers are posting deals from the goodness of their hearts to help you—but their real goal is to get in on a part of that \$936 billion holiday “magic.” Stick with your budget—and shop wisely.

9. Use old gift cards.

Think about all the money you have left on old gift cards, as well as the cards you'll never use because they're to places you never shop, eat or visit. Consider the partial cards as discounts and use them to buy presents. Regift (which is not a dirty word, as we'll explain later) the other cards to people who'll appreciate them. Don't let those little pieces of plastic go to waste this Christmas!

10. Order online early.

Ordering online means shopping from the convenience of your very own couch as you roast chestnuts on an open fire. That's the kind of multitasking we're all about. Cross-check the price on that plush puppy across multiple stores without ever putting on real pants.

But make sure you do this early enough to get the cheapest online shipping options—and remember shipping is taking way longer this year. The last thing you need is a budget ruined by all those additional rush order costs. (Prancer doesn't deliver in a day without a hefty fee, after all.)

11. Combine your orders.

Speaking of shipping, plenty of stores offer it free of charge if you spend a minimum amount. So, do that! If you see the perfect superhero-themed sweatshirt you know your dad would love, but you're below the minimum amount for free shipping, keep shopping inside that store. Is there anything for your brother or cousin on that same website? Don't buy just to buy—but be thoughtful and combine orders to lower shipping costs.

Also, here's a quick Christmas tip: Check out that ship-to-store option. A lot of retailers offer this free and don't even require a minimum order. You'll have to brave the cold to grab the gift, but if you ship several things to the store together, you'll just need to bundle up in your hat and gloves once.

12. Live by the list.

There's a reason Santa checked his list twice, and it's not because he's absent-minded. When we go off the list, we overspend. Now, if you realize you forgot a friend, of course you add them in! But once you've got your philosophy and budget set, don't get swept up in the Christmas spirit and start buying every snowflake-themed item you find for every person you've ever met.

13. Say no to random gift exchanges.

Here's a hot Christmas tip: Put an end to the white elephant or junk-for-junk gift exchanges at your work, small group or book club. Christmas is expensive enough without these social pressures. Be kind, but just say no (thank you).

14. Go in on a group gift.

A bigger, more expensive gift doesn't have to be off the table just because you're on a budget this year. Just go in on it with someone else. Get all your siblings to chip in and buy one big gift for your parents. Ask teammates to go in for a nice gift card for the coach. Email all the parents in your kids' class to donate small items for a gift basket for the teacher.

They say sharing is caring, after all. And sharing the cost of one big present is a great way to give well—while still caring for your budget.

15. Regift.

Regifting has a bad reputation, but it's time to move away from that. Maybe you should say you're working in the "present relocation program." It isn't catchy—we'll work on the title while *you* work on the concept.

Seriously, it's okay to regift! But there are ground rules. You don't want to hand Dad the motivational poster your great-aunt gave you. Mostly because she's his aunt too.

But the brand-new slow cooker your well-meaning in-laws gave you when you already have two could easily be regifted to your newlywed bestie. Be smart, but there's nothing wrong with this kind of thrifty regifting. It saves money and keeps a gift from going unused.

16. Make presents.

If you want to give something personal, memorable and one of a kind, [make it!](#) Seriously. Pinterest has a ton of ideas and instructions. If you aren't super crafty, try baking a sweet treat, putting together a gift basket of someone's favorite things, or whipping up some DIY sugar scrubs. Nothing says Happy Christmas like something homemade.

Christmas Tips to Get More Money

17. Sell your stuff.

It's almost that time again—time to get more stuff. So, why don't you get rid of some of your old stuff? Not only will you make room for new things, but you'll also make some money to buy other people stuff.

Yes, we're making a little light of it. You know the season isn't supposed to be about stuff. But really—try clearing out some things you never use and make some money in the process!

18. Make more money.

If you're able, make extra cash to cover the extra costs of Christmas. We're talking [side hustles](#) like driving for Uber or Lyft, delivering food, picking up holiday hours at a seasonal job, dog sitting while people are traveling for the holidays, or wrapping gifts in your community. Seriously, offer that last service on your Facebook neighborhood group or work forums. Have people drop off their gifts, and you can wrap them for a fee!

But remember, if money's tight this year, and you're having income issues already—don't put pressure on yourself to make more or spend a lot. And do *not* fall into the temptation of going into debt. That's making this year's spending next year's problem. It isn't worth it.

Instead, know that Christmas is *not* a competition, and focus more on the other joys of the season.

Christmas Tips for Other Holiday Spending

19. Spend less on traditions.

Why do you send Christmas cards to everyone you've ever met? Oh, because your mom always did? Why do you purchase the overpriced, annually released Waterford Crystal ornament? Oh, because your grandmother always did?

You can save money this Christmas by cutting extras—starting with expensive traditions that don't actually mean much to you. We aren't suggesting you stop making paper chains or going around the table sharing your favorite Christmas memories. Those sound like beautiful traditions. But making a 20-layer, authentic German chocolate cake for Santa? Maybe drop that. Santa doesn't need the extra calories anyway.

20. Get thrifty with stocking stuffers.

The stockings are hung from the chimney with care in hopes that you'll fill them so they don't stay bare. Yikes. That would be a Christmas catastrophe. You definitely don't want to leave your stockings bare, but there are easy ways to fill those oversized socks without spending all your holiday budget.

Buy your candy on sale. And don't feel pressured to fill the stockings with expensive gifts. Hit up the dollar store for gel pens, coloring books and those character-themed washcloths that are folded up into tiny circles until you just add water. Hold the excess spending and give the people what they (affordably) want and need.

21. Donate to charity.

What can you get for the hardest-to-buy-for people on your list? Nothing.

Instead, give money in their honor to their favorite charity. Create a card or get one from the organization explaining the donation. If it feels a little off to not give something, find a charity that specializes in selling fair trade goods that give jobs to people in developing countries. That way, everyone is blessed.

22. Have a virtual party.

If you can't get the time off or get it in the budget to travel home for Christmas this year, a virtual party is a budget-friendly way to still celebrate the season. So, put on that ugly Christmas sweater and group call your friends and family, because 'tis the season to be jolly, in person or online.

23. Don't shop at the mall.

Avoiding the mall means also avoiding every single pushy kiosk salesperson. Plus, you won't have to worry about the millions of distractions, including (but not limited to) creepy mall Santa, the delicious scents of cinnamon-sugar pretzels, and all those tempting retail window displays. Oh, and the parking lot jams. And the crazy crowds. Save money, stress and time—don't go to the mall.

24. Wrap gifts creatively.

You don't have to spend half of your December income on colorful or character-covered wrapping paper—it's just going to end up torn to shreds in piles on your floor Christmas morning anyway. Get creative! Pick up some reusable bags at the dollar store, and you'll be giving a gift inside a gift. Or try wrapping presents in newspaper and topping them off with red twine. That's eco-friendly, wallet-friendly and festive.

25. Be a sentimental spender.

Be sentimental as you spend. Don't grab Cousin Scott a random, ugly ornament (unless that's something he specifically collects). Get presents that line up with the interests or needs of those on your list.

Or give them a gift that can make a real difference in their life—something an ornament just can't do. Budget, spend and give with intention—and enjoy good tidings for

Christmas and a happy new year!



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