



Skip the mall madness with these gift ideas

Robyn Spizman, author of 'Make It Memorable,' offers some fun online holiday shopping hints to help you avoid the stress on the streets

Updated: 12:24 p.m. ET Dec. 9, 2005

If you're one of the many people who don't like to shop. Or if you're just tired of fighting the crowds, then worry not. Now it's easier than ever to find unique gifts without leaving the comfort of your home. Robyn Spizman, author of "Make It Memorable," was invited to appear on "Today" to offer some great ideas for gifts you can order online. Here are her suggestions:

Personalized Gift Wrap

\$15-\$33

1-800-241-2890

www.namemaker.com

Order your very own personalized gift wrap, bags and ribbons from Name Maker, Inc. Select one of their designs, which range from chic to trendy, then add your own customized message, choosing from a huge selection of imprint colors and fonts. Personalized gift wrap, 12 feet, \$24; bags, 10 for \$33; ribbons, 10 yards, \$15 and up; plus shipping and handling. Your gift will be the one they remember! Order by December 12 for the holidays. Rush orders can be taken through December 15 for an additional fee.

Self-Ink Stampers

\$29-\$45

1-866-Studio2

www.TheStationeryStudio.com

TheStationeryStudio.com features one of the largest online collections of adorable personalized items, with over 5,500 custom products. You'll be a hit with the custom monogrammed Self-Inking Stampers (\$38). Select from over 20 designs with coordinating stationery. Orders must be received December 9 for holiday delivery. Also find fantastic gifts for the younger set, such as the Games Series (\$29), the kid's Ka Doodle Kit (\$37), the kid's Carry Tote (\$45) and the set of eight Mini Puzzle Pads (\$34). Shipping and handling is additional.

Sweet Elise European Treats

\$68-\$140

1-866-993-5473

www.sweetelise.com

Exquisite signature packages include a cake pedestal in your choice of colors, a delicious pound cake and fresh flowers, presented in a handmade hatbox with your choice of dessert toppings. As an alternative to the cake pedestal, you may choose from a variety of designer dishware. Prices range from \$68 (for the cake in a hatbox) to \$140 (also includes cake plate) plus shipping. \$12 for 2-day express. \$25 for Fed-Ex overnight. Accepting orders through Friday, December 23 for Saturday arrival.

Personalized Baseball Bat

\$21-\$77

1-877-7-SLUGGER

www.sluggergifts.com

Order a personalized bat from Louisville Slugger — the official bat of Major League Baseball. All the great players have had their names on a Louisville Slugger — Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson and today's stars like Derek Jeter, Manny Ramirez, and Andrew Jones. You can put the name of your favorite baseball fan on a Louisville Slugger. Or you can do their signature or a special message. You can even add the logo of a favorite team, or the World Series logo if you're buying for a White Sox or Astros fan. Personalized Louisville Slugger bats come in a variety of finishes and sizes and prices range from \$21 to \$77. Orders must be placed by December 20 for Christmas delivery.

Rhinestone T-Shirts

\$29.90

310-541-4545

www.justjen.com

A gift they'll tell you is t-riffic! Rhinestone t-shirts with dazzling Swarovski crystals for all occasions. Your choice! Create your custom design or shop their boutique. \$29.90 & up. Order by 2/18 by USPS, 12/20 by FedEx for holiday gifts.

The Sweet Machine

\$29.95

1-800-678-MORI (6674)

www.moriluggage.com

How about some arcade fun to your home or office? Fill the Sweet Machine with your own sweets or little gifts and use the claw to grab the prize — if you can! Work the three joysticks to capture the treats before the music stops. Requires three D batteries. \$29.95 plus shipping. Order by December 20. As of that date, customers must choose 2nd Day Air to guarantee pre-Christmas/Hanukkah delivery.

Monogrammed Soaps

\$32

1-877-733-3683

www.RedEnvelope.com

RedEnvelope is offering free standard shipping on all purchases through the holiday season. Order by December 16 for holiday. Spoil them with one of life's finest pleasures — a boxed set of triple-milled, vegetable-based soaps. Choose green tea, lavender mist, vanilla almond or freesia as a matching set or an assortment; each soap is embossed with up to 10 characters.

Photo End Table

\$169

1-800-453-9333

www.photowow.com

Turn your favorite non-copyrighted photo into a fun and beautiful end table; measuring 18" x 23" wide. Image is made of 25 ceramic tiles in a square design. Choose from a black or maple wood base. \$169 plus mailing costs which range from \$28 to \$37. Order by December 12.

Gift Bag Boutique

\$30-\$300

1-800-GIFT-BAG

www.GiftBagBoutique.com

The Gift Bag Boutique features over 100 styles of handbags, purses, and more, all of which can be filled with a selection of gifts from their collection of over 130 fun accessories. They offer top designers like Kenneth Cole, Betsey Johnson, Cynthia Rowley, Lulu Guinness, and

others. Every gift is delivered in a fun, purse-shaped shipping box with free lip conditioner and a personalized gift card. Prices range from from \$29.95-\$300. Order by December 13.

Tips for mail-order shopping:

1. Keep a copy of your order on file, in case you have to track it.
2. Print out the return policy.
3. Have the customer service number on file. If something arrives broken, you should handle it, not the recipient of the gift.

What should you do if a gift arrives broken? Send it back?

Reputable companies guarantee and stand behind their work. Shoppers should print out a copy of their order and the contact number for the company and keep a file. It's a good idea to always know a mail-order/online company's return policy since they differ. Some companies will issue a recall tag and handle the entire pick-up and return for you, while others will not. If you are in doubt, call the company and ask how they handle returns before purchasing. Some companies offer product replacement and others offer money back, but it's important to do business with companies that you can also talk to if there's a problem. Also, save the box it came in. Most companies want the original packaging to see what went wrong, so the original box is helpful to them.

Best advice: Before shopping online — if in doubt, check it out!

© 2005 MSNBC.com

URL: <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10385299/>