

# Being a smart Santa with your gift budget



When you're under pressure to give that perfect present at Christmas it can be much harder to stick to a budget. Find ways to make your gift budget go further with our top tips for giving generously without going overboard on spending.

## When giving gets expensive

According to comparison website [finder.com](#), the average Aussie is planning to spend \$464 on Christmas gifts in the lead up to 25 December 2018. However, around this time last year, the [Commonwealth Bank reported](#) that collectively we're likely to overspend by \$625 million. This isn't so surprising when the same survey shows seven million Aussies don't keep track of how much they spend over Christmas.

But in their 2018 predictions, Finder also report that many Aussies are aiming to save on Christmas spending by doing things like making gifts or buying wrapping paper in bulk. With these budget-friendly ideas in mind, we've put together six of the best ways you can spend less on gifts, without ending up feeling like a Scrooge instead of a jolly Santa.

# 1. Be prepared

More than half of people surveyed by Finder said their strategy for staying within budget is based on setting a spending limit in the first place. Taking time to plan how much you'll spend on each person is a good start if you want to keep gift spending reasonable. And there's no harm in being open about this with family and friends, so nobody has to be anxious about what others might be expecting.

When discussing spending limits and making things fair, it's worth keeping in mind that everyone has differences in their income, financial commitments and number of people to buy for. So it's not necessarily a case of agreeing on the same budget per gift for everyone.

# 2. Secret Santa

A Secret Santa or Kris Kringle approach to buying gifts can be the ideal way to make your budget achievable, without leaving anyone feeling like they lost out in the gift department. Agreeing a set amount for everyone to spend on a single person can work just as well for colleagues, friends and family. It's just a case of making sure everyone is comfortable with the budget and that no-one gets left off the list!

# 3. Be kid-wise

Another approach larger families often take is to limit gift-giving to kids only. After all, they're usually the ones who lack the spending power to buy what they want and get extra excited about the chance to receive gifts as a result.

However, managing kids' expectations at Christmas is also an important way to stop spending getting out of hand. If everyone gets used to seeing a huge pile of presents under the tree year after year, it can get stressful and expensive to keep making this happen. Younger kids often won't care about how much their gift costs as long as it's something they're excited to receive. And if older kids have let go of the idea of Santa, you can choose to be completely honest with them about your budget. They may get more excited by being involved in deciding what to spend it on from their current wish list.

## 4. Vouchers

Although some might write them off as a gift that hasn't taken thought and effort to choose, gift vouchers can be the very best way to make sure friends and family get the gift they want. Spending money that's been given rather than earned allows people freedom to treat themselves and it's the ideal way to avoid giving something that's not welcome or useful.

## 5. Give time

Another welcome voucher could be one that offers help with something you know a friend or family member struggles to get around to. Whether it's babysitting, a DIY project or stocking the freezer with enough meals to last a week, the promise of your time and energy can often deliver a more valuable gift without costing you a single dollar.

## 6. Pre-loved

Buying gifts second-hand from Gumtree, eBay or your local Facebook marketplace can be better for your wallet and the planet too. Not only does it save you money, it could also give a new home to something that would otherwise end up in landfill. It's also worth doing an inventory of your own possessions for possible re-gifting treasures. There may be some unwanted or unused gifts from birthdays and Christmases past that could be a far better match for someone else you know.

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