

Outdoor-inspired ideas for holiday gifting



The Bureau of Economic Analysis revealed that the outdoor recreation industry contributed \$412 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product in 2016. The industry also employed around 4.55 million people, highlighting just how popular outdoor recreation has become.

Millennials are helping drive the growing interest in the great outdoors, as this demographic now accounts for 38 percent of the 75 million active camper households in the United States, according to an independent 2017 North American Camping Report.

When shopping for the outdoor enthusiast on their list this holiday season, shoppers can consider these gifts that cater to avid campers, hikers and explorers.

Camping surprises

People who can't resist sleeping under the stars will appreciate gifts that make camping excursions even more special. Kampgrounds of America offers gift cards that are accepted at any of their many campsites, which helps cover the fees for the site and camp store purchases.

Any new gear, whether it be sleeping bags/pads, water filtration devices, tents, fuel, or cooking supplies also make great gifts for campers. A high-quality cast-iron skillet or Dutch oven is a gift that can last for years.

Hiking adventures

The right gear can make a hike even more enjoyable. A durable hiking pack, compass or GPS tracker, comfortable



hiking shoes, polarizing sunglasses, collapsible hammock, and/or hiking food packs make great gifts for seasoned or even novice hikers. Tickets for transportation to Appalachian Trail trailheads, or other notable trails across the country, also can be fitting gifts.

Cycling treats

Cycling can be a recreational pursuit, a means of commuting or a great way to shed a few pounds. Research from Breakaway Research Group for People for Bikes found that 100 million Americans bike each year. Statistics Canada indicates that around 41 percent of Canadians ages 12 and older cycle each year. Gifts focusing on cycling can appeal to cyclists of all ages. Gifts can include cleaning and lube kits, a mini tire inflater, portable repair tools, a bike phone mount, a wearable bicycle cable lock, and a bicycle storage rack.

The great outdoors beckons many people. Shoppers have numerous options at their disposal when looking for gifts for the outdoor enthusiasts on their shopping lists.

Eco-friendly gift options

There's many ways to reduce trash, if that's a goal of yours this holiday season.

The saying "the more the merrier" certainly applies during the holiday season. But during a season of big gifts, extra food and travel, "more" can exact a heavy toll on the environment.

According to Stanford University, Americans generate 25 percent more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve than during the rest of the year. While no one wants to take anything away from the spirit of holiday season, everyone can take steps to make the holidays more eco-friendly. In fact, there are various eco-friendly gifts that can make great presents and benefit the environment at the same time.

Purchase experiential gifts

When making holiday shopping lists, think of gifts that offer experiences rather than material goods. Gifts that involve experiences, such as going to a sporting event or attending a play or musical, decrease reliance on wrapping paper. Such gifts also reduce clutter in the recipient's house and conserve the resources otherwise used to manufacture alternative items that would have been purchased. Experiential gifts that also tap into environmental pursuits, such as touring with an animal rescue group, or accommodations at a carbon-neutral hotel can be an added bonus.

Opt for locally made gifts

Select gifts made by local artisans or companies that operate domestically. This cuts down on the carbon emissions from having to ship products from long distances or even overseas.

Give climate-friendly stocking stuffers

Companies like Cool Effect offer gifts for those looking to offset carbon emissions through clever funding. People can buy and offer gifts that correlate to packages like Costa Rican wind power or the "poo package," which funds biogas digesters for family farms in India that capture methane emissions from cattle dung.

Get crafty

Gifts from the kitchen or ones made by the giver can be crafted from sustainable materials. They also show how you care by taking the time to customize a gift for the recipient.

Avoid gag or useless gifts

Select gifts only with utility in mind. Skip purchases that are made only to beef-up the look of presents under the tree or to make it appear that gifting was more generous. Items that a person cannot or will not use will ultimately be relegated to the trash, which is wasteful.

Wrap in reusable materials

Fancy wrapping paper certainly looks nice, but choose other materials that can be reused. Look for decorative tins, boxes, fancy gift bags, and other items that can be reused for years to come. Sustainability is possible during a season of excess when gift givers shop and wrap gifts with the environment in mind.

