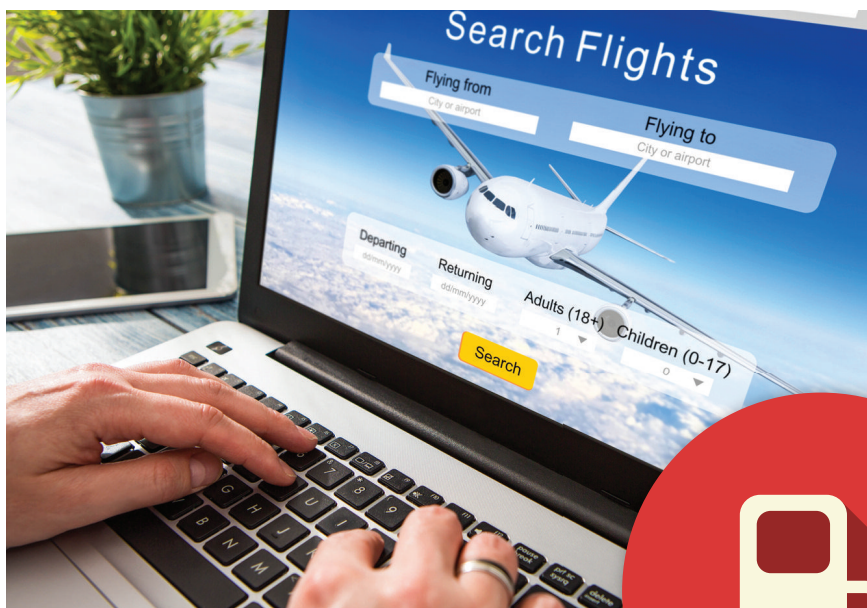


# Unique ways to give the experience of travel



Many people have a passion for traveling. Whether a traveler can't resist sleeping under the stars at a local campsite or refuse the call of a bustling city overseas, travel beckons people from all walks of life.

Perhaps no country's citizens better illustrate the allure of travel more than China's. According to the China Outbound Tourism Research Institute, Chinese overseas tourists totaled 10.5 million in 2000. By 2017, that figure had grown to 145 million, with the COTRI estimating that it would reach 156 million in 2018.

The travel experience is unique, and it's an experience that holiday shoppers can provide for their loved ones who can't wait to dust off their passports or simply get in their cars and drive to a favorite destination near or far.

- **Airline miles:** The cost of airline tickets can be prohibitive and has deterred many a would-be traveler from visiting a dream destination. However, holiday shoppers with ample airline miles on their credit cards may be able to transfer those miles to a loved one. Such a transfer can dramatically reduce the cost of an airline ticket, opening the door to a wonderful travel experience for a friend or family member who otherwise might not be able to afford a trip. Rules about transferring miles vary depending on the airline, and transfer fees may apply. But this is a unique way to give the gift of travel.

- **Gas card:** Of course, flying is not the only way to get from point A to point B. The gift of free gasoline can help road warriors explore their passion for the open road without breaking

the bank. Gas prices tend to rise during spring and summer, so make sure gift cards purchased during the holiday season won't expire before the weather warms up.

- **Camera:** Many people feel the experience of travel is best documented through photography. A brand new camera that can create better photos than a typical smartphone camera can help travelers more effectively document their trips while creating vivid memories they can enjoy for the rest of their lives.

- **Ancestry kit:** While an ancestry kit might not qualify as a traditional experiential gift, knowing one's ancestry might open doors to future travels. For example, many countries' citizenship rules allow people born overseas to apply for citizenship if they have a relative, such as a grandparent, who was born in the country. Earning foreign citizenship and ultimately obtaining a foreign passport can simplify overseas travel by helping them avoid long lines at customs. That can inspire more people to travel overseas. In addition, people often learn new and surprising things about their ancestry after submitting ancestry kits, which can prompt trips to destinations people otherwise may never have considered.

The experience of travel can make for a great holiday gift that recipients may cherish for the rest of their lives.

Give a sightseeing treat



The search is on for thoughtful holiday gifts. While items under the tree may evoke memories of holidays past, experience gifts are unique and thoughtful ways to show loved ones and friends they are appreciated.

The number of experiences that can be offered are only limited by one's imagination. And great experiences can be had right in one's own backyard. In fact, many people may take local history and offerings for granted. Experiences that showcase history or local character can make for great gifts.

Treat gift recipients to activities they may not think to do in their own cities. For example, a Manhattanite may have never climbed to the top of the Empire State Building or visited Ellis Island. These are experiences not reserved for tourists. Chicagoans can tour the sites of Navy Pier and residents of Phoenix may get a kick out of the Musical Instrument Museum. Gift-givers can investigate top attractions and little-known haunts and offer sightseeing and tours as gifts.

While walking and trolley tours can be great ways to experience a city on the ground, sightseeing experiences can be taken to an entirely different level as well. Helicopter tours are popular in cities or landscapes offering impressive views. Imagine seeing the Space Needle from the skies of Seattle or soaring over Toronto or Niagara Falls?

Duck boat tours, riverboat cruises and sailing excursions can make for unique on the water experiences.

Tours and sightseeing adventures can be great gifts for shoppers looking for clever ways to show loved ones how much they're appreciated this holiday season.