



# HOLLY JOLLY CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

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# MERRY CHRISTMAS



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'TIS THE SEASON TO BE

# JOLLY!





# Create Christmas magic with gifts from Bargain Supply Warehouse

**RACHEL AUBERGER**

Staff Writer

Christmas comes with lots of warm, fuzzy feelings and magical moments. But it's no secret that it can also come with a lot of stress as Christmas shopping lists are often long and price tags can exceed budgets, making it hard to make all those magical moments happen and keep everyone smiling without feeling overwhelmed.

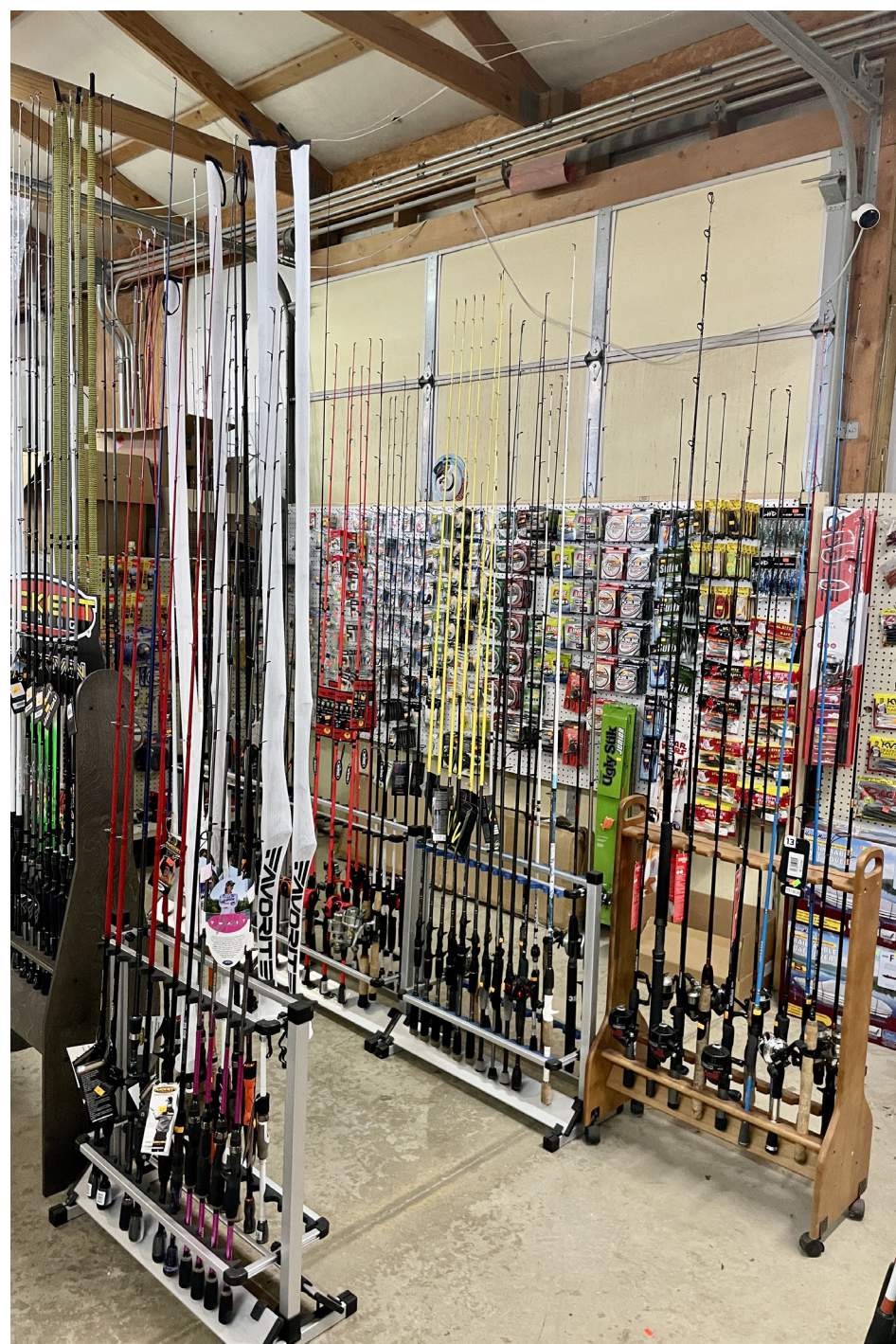
The Bargain Supply Warehouse, located at 1680 Roberts-Matthews Highway, is a great way to make the money in that budget stretch to include all the special people in your life and make sure everyone - including you - feels some Christmas magic.

At Bargain Supply Warehouse, the shelves are restocked daily with items that come into the shop on pallets of returned or overstocked items from Target, Lowe's,

Home Depot, Amazon, and Walmart.

With everything from toys to clothing, from power tools to furniture, from appliances to patio furniture, and now with a whole new fishing section stocked full of rods, reels, bait, and other fishing essentials, there is sure to be something for everyone on your list. You can even snag some great deals on things like laundry detergent and cleaning supplies, because, let's face it, dishes and laundry still have to be done even if it is the most magical time of the year.

With all items guaranteed to work and be in good condition, you can rest assured that your gifts are sure to bring smiles to your friends and family, and, with all items priced at 50 percent to 60 percent less than retail cost, you can smile, too, as you check off the items on your list, while feeling a little Christmas magic helped to keep your budget intact.





# Last-minute holiday shopping tips

Some people thrive by doing all of their tasks early. Others seem to do their best work when faced with a time crunch. The methods individuals use to manage their time at work and play may extend to the ways they approach holiday shopping as well.

There's no right or wrong way to handle holiday shopping tasks, though Christmas Eve crowds at malls and throughout shopping districts suggest that there's more late comers than there are early birds. The following tips can help those who typically wait until the last minute to check names off their lists.

- Utilize free shipping services. Shoppers who shop for gifts online at the last minute run the risk of gifts not arriving on time. Many online retailers charge a premium for expedited shipping. Try to stick to shopping at online retailers that offer free shipping even in the eleventh hour.

- Create a budget. When rushing around from store to store, it may be easy to spend more than you want to. Make a list of how much you want to spend on each person, and stick to that limit for each per-

son. Move on to the next store if you didn't find what you need in your price range.

- Establish a time limit. Stores have strategies in place to keep shoppers in their establishments longer, hoping you'll make impulse buys. These tricks include scenting the air with inviting aromas, putting necessities at the rear of the store, failing to display the time, and putting discounted items by the registers or door to attract shoppers. Set an alarm on your watch or phone for each store so you get what you need and get out on time.

- Subdivide bulk gifts. Think about purchasing bulk gifts like gift baskets from wholesale clubs and then breaking them down into individual gifts. This way you can gift several people on one purchase and save time in the process.

- Choose one-size-fits-all gifts. Think about a gift that can be purchased for multiple people so you can save time shopping for individualized gifts for everyone. For example, print a personalized photo calendar for several members of your family. You also can purchase multiple subscriptions or memberships to



## Stop by for last minute gifts, stocking stuffers or gift cards!!



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zoos or magazines for people on your list. Streamlining gifting in this way may save money as well as time.

- Choose in-store pickup. Rather than scouring various aisles, you can shop a retailer's website and then pick up items in

the store. You'll save on potential shipping fees but still benefit by avoiding crowds.

Some people wait until the last minute to do their holiday shopping. A few tricks of the procrastinator's trade can make last-minute shopping go smoothly.

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# Factory Connection helps make Christmas gift-giving easy and affordable

**RACHEL AUBERGER**  
Staff Writer

For nearly 15 years, Factory Connection has been bringing name brand clothing at affordable prices to shoppers in White County, and now, just in time for Christmas, the clothing store has half of its merchandise marked down to make gift-giving even better this season.

Sparta's Factory Connection is one of over 300 stores, all strategically placed in small towns and communities across 16 states. The placement of the Sparta's Factory Connection, at 219 Mose Dr., in Sparta, means the store, like the others across the country, does not have to compete with other name brand clothing outlets and, therefore, is able to offer great clothing at prices far below those found at department stores.

While Factory Connection is known for their denim, offering a variety of trending styles of jeans for both men and women, they also have plenty of other items, all in the latest fashions. Band t-shirts, jackets, and accessories, including belts, bags, and jewelry all make great Christmas gifts for those teens and adults on every list.

Factory Connection has added a shoe department to their store, so outfitting the fashionista or trendsetter on your Christmas list is easier than ever before.

Whether purchasing gifts or getting a new outfit for that next Christmas party or memory-making outing, making a stop at Factory Connection any time Monday- Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., or on Sunday, 1-6 p.m., is sure to help you check items of your list.





# 5 great gifts for tweens and teens this holiday season

Children often marvel at the world around them. They're delighted to receive just about any toy, and play with items that others may not see as fun — including everything from mixing bowls to cardboard boxes. Slowly that cherubic toddler turns into a school-aged wonder, and later into a young adult trying to find his or her place in the world. With each passing year, the task of finding gifts for tweens and teenagers becomes that much more challenging.

While most parents and other relatives may never seem “cool” in the eyes of their teens, they can gift the tweens and teens they love with presents that will earn them a few extra brownie points. The following are five gift ideas that are tailor-made for tweens and teens.

## 1. LED strip lights

Both girls and boys may enjoy customizing their rooms as they see fit. Teens can utilize LED strip lights to create a



unique ambiance that reflects their style. These often self-sticking ribbons of lights

adhere right to walls. They come in a variety of lengths so they can be used to frame the perimeter of the room, if desired. Complete with multicolored options and a remote control, teens can set their room colors as their mood dictates.

## 2. Gift cards

Teens try to keep up with the latest styles. A gift card or clothing gift from one of their favorite retailers can help them build their ensembles that much quicker. Aeropostale, Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, Forever 21, Zumiez, American Eagle, and Tilly's are just some of the stores popular among today's tweens and teens.

## 3. Wireless earbuds or headphones

Wireless headphones are used on a daily basis by tweens and teens. They rely on them for listening to music, watching movies on their devices and even during remote learning sessions. There are many brands to choose from, and Beats by Dre and Apple AirPods are among the most popular.

## 4. Sneakers and shoes



Sneakers have long been popular gifts for teenagers, but they tend to be costly, especially for trending styles and brands. Vans Slip-On™ Core Classics, Converse Chuck Taylor All Star High Top Sneakers, Reebok Club C 85 Vintage, Nike Air Force One, and Adidas Sobakov are popular among today's tweens and teens. In addition, thanks to the resurgence of 1990s style, Dr. Martens boots are once again in demand.

## 5. Video game consoles

Each gamer has his or her preferred platform for gaming. From the Nintendo Switch to the Xbox Series X to the Sony PlayStation 5, these systems are in high demand. Due to that demand, these products may be harder to find the closer you get to Christmas Day. Grab them while you can and soak in the smile on your favorite tween's or teen's face.

Teens and tweens are notoriously challenging to shop for. However, with some knowledge, loved ones can find gifts tweens and teens are more likely to use and enjoy.

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# Unique and practical gifts are in stock at Fragrant Mushroom

**RACHEL AUBERGER**  
Staff Writer

If handmade, functional, works of art are on your shopping list, or if you drew the name of that family member who already has everything, or the friend who has no hobbies and is a homebody making choosing a gift that will be loved difficult, stop on by Fragrant Mushroom.

From hand-thrown pottery like mugs and bowls and pitchers and platters and wine chillers to handcrafted necklaces and earrings and bracelets, from cutting boards to checkers boards, from walking sticks to sculptures, from candles to works of art to place on your wall, the Fragrant Mushroom showroom is full of gift ideas.

While some of the traditional gifts the shop has to offer, things like coffee mugs, are running low on inventory, there is still plenty to buy. However, the artists, whose creations fill the shelves, warn shoppers they need to come quickly if they want to get those special gifts that can make even

the toughest person on their Christmas list smile.

Creating works of art is a process and not something that happens overnight. So, while the artists are working long hours to keep up with demand and keep the shelves full, they are finding that many items are selling as fast as they can make them. With only 24 hours in a day and just a short time before the biggest gift-giving day of the year, time - and therefore quantities - are limited!

But, even if the perfect mug in the boldest color to bring the brightest smile on the face of the recipient isn't in stock, there are still plenty of gifts to be bought. There are still plenty of intriguing works of art on the shelves and walls. There are still plenty of those gifts that make you sigh with relief when you realize that you finally found that perfect gift for that hard-to-buy-for person on your list this year.

The Fragrant Mushroom Gallery, located at 12 W Bockman Way, just across from Liberty Square, is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Saturday.





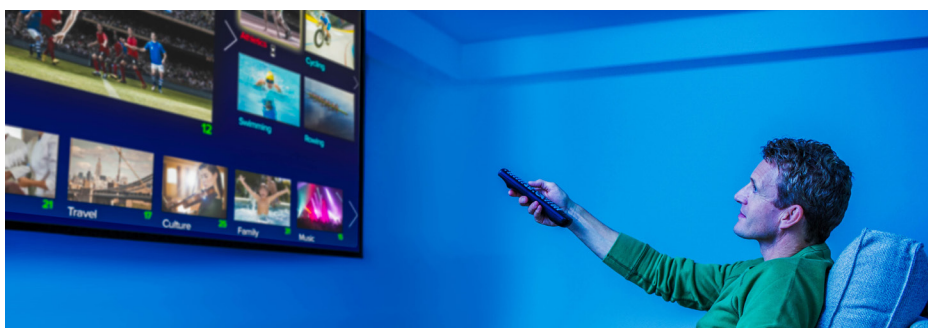
# Great last-minute gift ideas

Tradition is a hallmark of the holiday season. Religious services, family gatherings and trips to see Santa Claus are just a few of the many traditions people adhere to during the holiday season.

Many holiday shoppers also adhere to the time-honored tradition of last-minute shopping. The perfect gift can sometimes prove elusive, especially as the sand in the holiday hour glass keeps dwindling. These last-minute gift ideas may be just what shoppers need to put smiles on the faces of their loved ones this holiday season.

•**Books:** Books are often overlooked, especially now that so many readers use e-readers. But books can be an ideal gift and especially convenient for last-minute shoppers, who can even gift e-books. For example, Amazon, which has thousands of e-books in its online library, makes it easy for shoppers to gift e-books to Kindle users, who will simply receive an email on Christmas morning informing them that their books are ready to be downloaded to their devices.

•**Experiences:** A 2017 survey by the global research firm NPD Group found that



roughly 40 percent of holiday shoppers planned to give experiences as gifts last year. Experience gifts open up a host of possibilities for last-minute shoppers stuck on what to give those loved ones who seemingly have it all.

•**Food/beverage:** Television channels such as The Food Network have changed the way many people look at food. When gifting the family foodie, last-minute shoppers may not need to look further than the latest hotspot restaurant or specialty grocery store for the perfect gift. Take them out for a night on the town or give a gift card they can use at their convenience. The craft beer boom has created a host of

devoted and knowledgeable beer drinkers, so a gift card or growler from a local craft brewery is sure to please people who love hoisting frosty pints.

•**Streaming service subscriptions:** Many people are cutting the cord with their cable companies in favor of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu. Subscriptions to such services can make ideal and affordable holiday gifts. A six-month or yearlong subscription likely won't break shoppers' budgets and will provide months of entertainment to loved ones.

Last-minute holiday shopping is easier than ever, especially for shoppers willing to think outside the box.



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Happy Holiday Season  
and prosperous New Year



# Miss Marenda's Tea Room and Upstairs Treasures is the place for those special Christmas gifts

**RACHEL AUBERGER**

Staff Writer

If you are looking for something unique, something to bring back memories of joy and happiness and days long gone, something that says you really, really know the recipient and want them to feel as special as they make you feel, Miss Marenda's Tea Room and Upstairs Treasures may be where you need to shop.

The little gift shop that sits above the tea room on the south side of Liberty Square, in downtown Sparta, and spills down into the entrance and surrounds guests with nostalgia, is stocked by a dozen different vendors, each with their own unique taste and ideas.

From home décor to floral arrangements and Christmas decorations, from clothing to quilts, from collectibles to old cameras and musical instruments, from dishes to furniture, from vintage toys to vintage luggage, from jewelry to purses, every gift is unique, meaning you won't need to worry about duplicating someone else's idea or needing to stand in lines to return gifts in a few weeks.



After shopping, and scoring that one-of-a-kind gift, you can stop in the tea room and enjoy a home cooked lunch, fruit tea, pastries, and hot spiced apple cider.

Lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday-Friday, but shopping in the Up-

stairs Treasures begins at 10 a.m. and continues until 4 p.m. on the same days. So, take your time, stroll around, browse, shop, eat, and maybe shop some more after you've thought how that super intriguing, guaranteed-to-be-unique item you saw be-

fore lunch took you back to a time and feeling from the past or brought a certain someone to mind – go ahead, get that extra gift, share those feelings, spread the happiness, and bring home the treasures this season.



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# Gifts to excite the family athlete this holiday season

Holiday shoppers know that few things can match the joy of finding the perfect gift for a loved one. Whether that loved one is a tiny tot who can't wait to unwrap this year's must-have toy or an adult hoping to find the latest gadget under the tree on Christmas morning, the thrill of giving a great gift is part of what makes the holiday season so enjoyable.

Friends and family members may fall into certain categories, and that can make holiday shopping a little easier. For example, loved ones who can't wait to sit down with a good book would no doubt appreciate a new e-reader or the latest bestseller. When it comes to gifting the family athlete, the following ideas can provide the inspiration shoppers need to put a smile on the face of fitness-minded friends and family members.

- Weighted vest:** Weighted vests have gained popularity in recent years. Available from a variety of manufacturers and for athletes of varying skill levels, weighted vests can be ideal for athletes who want to burn more calories and build strength during their workouts. This can be an especially useful gift for endurance athletes who want their training sessions to mimic the challenges posed by nature or difficult competitive terrains.

- Noise-canceling headphones or earbuds:** Many athletes relish their workouts not only as opportunities to zero in on their fitness goals, but also as chances

to block out distractions and clear their heads for an hour or two each day. Noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds effectively block out external noises, allowing athletes to direct all of their focus on their workouts and training sessions.

- Energy drinks:** Though it might not seem like the most exciting gift to unwrap on Christmas morning, energy drinks are vital to many fitness enthusiasts' athletic endeavors. For example, endurance athletes may appreciate a tub of Osmo Active Hydration Performance Drink Mix, which contains an optimal ratio of sucrose, glucose and electrolytes, helping athletes improve their endurance and power while reducing instances of cramping and fatigue. Energy drinks make for a perfect stocking stuffer.

- Home gym equipment:** Pandemic-related gym closures turned athletes into their own personal trainers, and some may not want to return to local fitness facilities even now that they've safely reopened. Home gym equipment can help athletes continue to build their own private home gyms, making items like kettle bells, dumbbells, weight benches, and resistance bands great items to put under the tree this holiday season.

It's never been easier to shop for the family athlete during the holiday season. A heightened focus on fitness ensures there's something for every type of athlete on your holiday shopping list.





# Sew Charmed is full of Christmas gifts for family and friends

**RACHEL AUBERGER**  
Staff Writer

Tucked in the corner behind Floyd's Cash Saver grocery store and in front of Ben Lomand's Sparta office sits a little shop full of unique, personalized gifts ready to be wrapped up and placed under a Christmas tree or given during a best-friend gift exchange.

Sew Charmed, located in Suite C at 7 Cook St., is run by stay-at-home moms who like to create things and share their art with the world.

The shop has a variety of tumblers, mugs, candles, and ornaments along with caps, ear warmers, and hand towels all with Christmas, country, or other fun designs, ready for shoppers to take home. They even have a few cast iron skillet pot holders in stock, although the popular

item is selling quickly during the holiday season.

While the pre-made gifts with fun, sweet, or sassy designs are ready to be go, Sew Charmed, which also sells items created by Norris Designs and Decorations, specializes in custom orders and personalized gifts, and the good news is that it's not too late to get that special gift that will be sure to tell someone you were thinking of only them when you chose it.

The creators and designers at Sew Charmed said that any item chosen from their store front, including sweater beanies, scarves, and t-shirts, can have a personalized design or monogram added via embroidery, sublimation, or vinyl and be ready in time for Christmas Eve.

Sew Charmed is open 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Friday, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m., on Saturday.





