



How to Stay Stress-Free While Shopping for the Holidays!

All the Christmas songs say it's the most wonderful time of the year, but you know the real deal: the holidays are a crazy time and shopping for presents can be an absolute nightmare!

Thousands of people in the mall (you know us Filipinos) and each store is a mad rush to the racks. Small children are almost underfoot, whining for toys and goodies. Parking your car is virtually impossible, and you can forget about getting anywhere near the malls. You know you should feel good about buying gifts for your loved ones, but there has to be a better way around this.

Well – there IS a better way! Read on to learn more about how to stay stress-free while shopping for the holidays!

Plan ahead -

- Never go shopping without a list.
- Know how much you are willing to spend on each person/item .
- Have a clear idea of what you want to a person and alternatives.
- Schedule shopping trip geographically.
- Start from the top floor or the farthest.
- Keep the shopping list for next year- in this way you know what you have gotten them already to avoid repeat gifts!

Avoid the stores -

- How much is it worth to not deal with crowds? Go online shopping; or call shopping assistants to arrange items for you already to choose from or pick up.
- Shop through catalogues when possible
- Be careful of paying too much for shipping and convenience
- Start at the earliest opening time - 9am for most stores
- Bring a bag big enough to put all items

Gift alternatives -

- Food (baked items; mixes; spices; wine; candy)
- Events (tickets; season passes)
- Gift certificates
- Flowers, plants
- Personal services (cleaning; image consultants)
- Craft items

Create your own gift-wrapping station

- If you plan to have gifts wrapped, leave them and pick up at the end of the day or come back and pick up everything gift wrapped.
- Keep all ribbons, wrappers, cards in a storage box labeled and keep a good stock throughout the whole year.
- Have a nook in your house and place all your essential tools there – scissors, wrapper, ribbons, tape, and cards
- Wrap presents while listening to your favorite Christmas music!

Shop for gifts throughout the year

- Don't wait until December to shop – you can do it the whole year round!
- Keep an eye out for sales throughout the year
- Shop for unique gifts while traveling
- Pick up specific and generic gifts
- Set aside a storage bin or closet for holding gifts

Start a Christmas Account

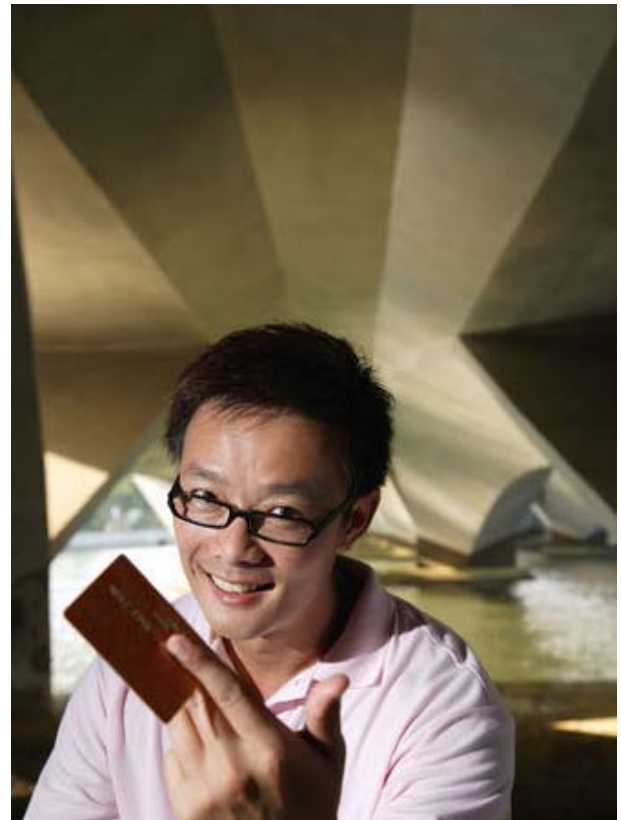
- Make a holiday savings account – plan on how much you want to spend for the holidays.
- Put aside a small amount to use for gifts.
- The easiest way is to plan ahead, avoid debt and stick to the budget!

Keep a list of gift ideas -

- Pay attention to items people have mentioned they want.
- Keep a running wish list items of people in your life.

Evaluate your gift list -

- A huge shopping list is impossible to finish in one day.
- Start with the closest/immediate member of the family.
- Buy many of the same item to give to several people in your list. Examples would be gym buddies, officemates, etc.
- Make an agreement to skip gifts this year or make a donation on their behalf.



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