



Wrap it Up: Unique and Creative Holiday Package Ideas

As we prepare for upcoming holidays, let's discuss some interesting ways for wrapping your gifts this year.

First of all, insure that you have the necessary items available and in one place: wrapping paper, gift bags, ribbons, bows, tape and scissors are absolute necessities. Other options include a hole punch, pens in assorted colors, and special embellishments. If possible, keep everything out on a card table, or stowed in an extra large box or basket, so that they are readily available for everyone in the family to use. Rolls of wrapping paper can be stored upright in a wastebasket or other cylindrical container.

Commercial gift wrap, curling ribbon and ready made bows are colorful, festive and functional, and we all need to have them on hand. If you have the time and inclination, however, consider using more creative everyday materials for your gift wrapping this year.

Besides wrapping paper, other possibilities include brown packing paper, white butcher paper, newsprint or comics, and old maps or posters. Plain white paper or brown paper bags can also be painted with a child's artwork or handprints, or decorated with rubber stamps. Texture can be added with strips of corrugated cardboard, yarn or raffia, and gift bags can be topped off with colorful shredded tissue or foil. Strips of netting, colorful shoelaces or strands of cord can be saved through the year and added to the collection. Wire-edged ribbon is perfect for creating beautiful hand-tied bows, so buy it in quantity when you find a good deal.

Attempt to wrap each gift with the recipient in mind: snowmen or Santa patterned paper for a little boy, a lime green Christmas tree print for a teenage girl, or fancy flocked paper with lots of gold ribbon for a mature woman, for example. Whenever you shop, keep your eyes open for paper, ribbon and tissue that is attractive and affordable, and soon you will have a nice variety to choose from. Consider buying large rolls of paper and ribbon, so that they will easily get you through this season, and maybe next year, as well.

Some people like to wrap all their gifts in coordinating colors, so that they will look complimentary and cohesive under the tree. Using one color scheme also simplifies the wrapping process, as all your paper, ribbons, bows and tags can be easily matched. Red and green are traditional holiday colors, but you can also find many examples of wrapping materials in burgundy, blue, gold, or silver, as well.

Save the holiday cards you receive and use them next year as colorful gift tags, or create your own by using rubber stamps to decorate strips of card stock or plain name tags from an office supply store. Other ways to personalize a gift with the recipient's name: write on a small glass bulb with fabric or acrylic paint, or use permanent marker on an ornament made of clay, fabric, metal or wood.

Sometimes the wrapping is as unique as the gift itself: every container can be embellished with things like small toys, candy canes, pinecones, small photo frames, jingle bells or cinnamon sticks tied with ribbon, a holiday ornament, or a simple sprig of holly, eucalyptus or evergreen.

For the young child, a simple gift can be wrapped in paper covered with colorful winter scenes. You might tie a pair of mittens or a small toy snowman to the ribbon, or simply cut a snowflake from white paper and dust with silver glitter.

For an outdoorsy type, use a natural material like burlap or butcher paper, and tie with rough string like rope or raffia. Attach hand warmers, a personalized tree ornament, or a small bundle of pinecones and greenery. The name tag could creatively be fashioned from a rock or small piece of wood.

For a very feminine lady you might use an ornate box or glittery wrapping paper, and attach a beautiful gold or silver ornament to the thick ribbon with a coordinating piece of cord.

Small hostess gifts or other tokens of appreciation can be presented with some extra embellishment, which can make the simplest gift feel special and thoughtful. Tie a decorative wine stopper to the neck of a bottle with beautiful ribbon. Tuck a gift certificate into a pretty box filled with shred and tie it with a bow, finished off with a bit of greenery from the yard. Bundle three taper candles together and tie with a thick ribbon, then tuck in a sprig of mistletoe. Add a decorative box of matches to a votive candleholder, and tie with a wire-edged ribbon. Nestle a simple ornament into a clear box filled with tissue, and add a coordinating bow and unique gift tag.

After all, it's not so much the gift itself, but the attitude with which it is given. Most of us do not need a lot more things, but we definitely appreciate feeling valued, so make a little extra effort to wrap your gifts with an extra touch of love this year.

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