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Pretty And Frugal Gift Wrap Ideas

By Abigail Beal

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Sometimes gift wrapping can be so expensive — once you've bought the paper, tissue and the card you've spent just as much as you did on the gift. Here are some pretty and frugal gift wrap ideas to help you save more so you can spend more on your gifts and your loved ones.

When saving money on gift wrapping materials the most important thing to keep in mind is your own needs — and everyone's needs are different. Think of what type of occasions are likely to come up during this year. If three of your friends are now pregnant, you are likely to go to three baby showers in the near future. If two other friends have engagement rings on their fingers, you will probably be invited to bridal showers and also a wedding within the next year. You can't plan for everything life has in store for you — but try to look at what is a strong possibility and plan for that.

The next thing to keep in mind is your style. If you are a crafty person that likes to make things you may be happiest buying supplies where you need to create some of your gift wrapping materials. But if you are not a crafty person at all and you just want to wrap your gifts and make them look pretty, focus on finding pre-made gift wrapping materials. There's no reason to re-invent the wheel and it is really apples vs. oranges if you make your own gift cards or buy them — you are probably spending about the same amount of money.

A great place to go is The Dollar Store. There is one in most communities and usually they carry gift wrap. Sometimes gift wrapping paper can be two rolls for one dollar and other times it can be one roll for one dollar (depends on the store). The Dollar Store is also a great location for other basic gift wrapping items such as tissue, tape, scissors and even traditional cards. The key to buying gift wrapping paper and cards at any dollar store is to try to plan ahead for special occasions and holidays that will occur within the next six months to a year — because stock at every dollar store changes over quickly and it may not be there in a month or so.

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Consider gift wrapping your item in non-traditional paper. There are so many different kinds of paper out there that we use in our daily lives that are attractive. You can use something fun like the Sunday paper comics or even the crossword section for someone who likes good puzzles. A musician or composer would appreciate a gift wrapped in music sheets; these can be found at any music store. For a very artistic look try wrapping your gift using magazine pages -- such as from a high fashion magazine or even a scientific discovery magazine. A gift wrapped in National Geographic Magazine pages would be perfect for someone who cares about animals and the environment. For someone who is learning a foreign language, wrap their gift in a newspaper or magazine of that language -- you can find this at a large bookstore or even an airport. Try to match the gift wrapping paper style to the tastes of the person that you are giving the gift to.

We all know that the day after every holiday, the gift wrapping paper goes on sale. This is a wonderful time to stock up but do so in a reasonable fashion. Look for gift wrapping paper that you can use year-round because even if you do hold the gift wrapping roll for a year, chances are you are going to want to use several gift wrap rolls for a large holiday or occasion. Your best bet at after holiday sales

are solid colors and patterns that you and your friends like. Everyone's tastes are different -- so for one home that would just love polka dots, another home would really love to use a roll of paper that had a plaid pattern. If the pattern or color on the gift wrap roll doesn't appeal to you, don't buy it, even if it is on sale, there is just too much gift wrapping paper out there. Also remember if you are shopping at a chain store to visit the chain stores that get less traffic because they will have more of a variety of gift wrapping paper. Store your gift wrapping paper in a sensible place, somewhere cool and dry and where you will be able to find it easily like a coat closet. This is probably one of the top ways to save money on gift wrapping and it works like a charm.

Another choice is to consider using very basic craft white or brown paper and then to add some fancy finishes to this. Add a large bow and a nice card. Or take a rubber stamp and stamp a design on it. Do something that is easily when you are doing this do something that comes naturally. If it is Christmas then buy some inexpensive Christmas ornaments and tie one on each package with the ribbon. If it is springtime, pick some flowers and tuck them under the ribbon to show spring's bounty. This will make your gift look very special, but it is still keeping your gift wrapping very frugal.

With a little planning and some creativity you can easily find inexpensive ways to wrap gifts for any holiday. Happy wrapping!

Abigail Beal © 2004 Abigail Beal a.k.a. "the Gift-wrap Goddess" teaches gift wrap in suburban New York. She is the author of 2 ezines: GiftWrapGoddessWraps and CreativeCraftsTeachers. To subscribe:

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Book Review: "Frugal Living for Dummies"

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Book Review: "Frugal Living for Dummies"
Reviewed by Deborah Shelton

"Frugal Living for Dummies"
by Deborah Taylor-Hough
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Whatever your reason for wanting to save money (job loss, suddenly single-income, another child on the way, rising college tuition costs), arm yourself with Frugal Living for Dummies for super saving success.

This book details so much more than coupon-clipping. Some of the chapter topics include ideas for frugal family fun, thrifty cooking tips, ways to cut utility bills, setting a budget and lots of inexpensive gift ideas. And that's just the beginning! Frugal Living also provides icons in the margins that alert readers to important reminders, tips, super savers, special warnings, great ideas and handy checklists.

Each section is jam-packed with cost-cutting ideas for baby showers, back-to-school needs, dinner parties, gift giving, auto maintenance, home cleaning, dining out, laundry, family trips.... Basically, Deborah Taylor-Hough offers money-saving solutions for every aspect of your life.

Frugal Living for Dummies is an essential reference for your family collection. This book will make a practical and thoughtful gift for young couples just starting their lives together, college students on their own for the first time, single-income families, new parents, and anyone who needs

proven ways for cutting costs while keeping their sanity.

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A must-have guidebook for the novice penny pincher as well as the seasoned dollar stretcher.

About the Reviewer: Deborah Shelton is a mother, freelance writer, and author of the brand new book, "The Five Minute Parent: Fun & Fast Activities for You and Your Little Ones." Visit Deborah's website for more family-friendly ideas: <http://www.fiveminuteparent.com>

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