



# Holiday

## Gift Guide 2011

November 16, 2011

Times Community Newspapers  
of the Hudson Valley  
Wallkill Valley Times  
Mid Hudson Times  
Southern Ulster Times

# Setting a plan of attack for Black Friday shopping

Black Friday is one of the busiest shopping days of the year. Every year thousands of shoppers flock to area malls and shopping centers in the wee hours of the morning attempting to get the best deals on their holiday gifts. Because shopping with the crowds and sales can be confusing, setting a "Black Friday" shopping strategy can add some organization to the chaos.

Visions of Black Friday shopping may call to mind frenzied shoppers beating down the doors of area stores to get heavily reduced prices at the register. This day of bargain basement deals certainly will bring out scores of people, but there is a way to manage the mayhem.

- Make a shopping list. Think ahead of time about what to look for. Knowing what will be bought can help shoppers determine which stores to visit. It helps to only choose one or more stores at which to shop instead of traveling all over and getting caught in traffic.

- Preview ads a week in advance. Many stores will start advertising their Black Friday hours and some sneak peaks at sales a week or more in advance. There

could also be some "spoiler" Web sites that leak information about Black Friday sales. Shoppers can know what's available and plan their shopping accordingly. Also, some stores have "rules" to follow, such as wristband dispersal or a numbering system, for shoppers to avoid crowds rushing the doors.

- Start saving early. While deals are to be realized on Black Friday, that doesn't mean it's wise to blow the entire budget on this day alone. Save months or weeks in advance to be prepared for shopping this day. Set a limit on what is to be spent -- heading home after the money is gone.

- Get rest. Set an early schedule for Thanksgiving revelry so that it's possible to head home early enough to rest. Those who plan to do Black Friday shopping should head to bed early enough, considering many sales begin at 4 a.m.

- Eat a hearty breakfast. Shoppers should be sure to eat breakfast so they'll have enough energy to survive the morning shopping.

- Pack a lunch or snack. Chances are



fast food restaurants and food courts will be mobbed on Black Friday. Avoid some of the crowds by packing food in a bag and bringing it along. It will save time and money. Why not make a sandwich of that leftover turkey?

- Wear comfortable clothing. Crowded stores tend to be hot and chaotic. Dress in layers so that outer layers can be removed. Try to leave bulky coats at home because they can be a nuisance while shopping. Shoppers should also wear very comfortable shoes for long hours of walking.

- Be sure to know stores' return policies. Even the best-laid plans may result in one or two gifts that need to be returned. It pays to know what stores will take back discounted items bought during Black Friday.

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# Planning the holiday meal

Perhaps the most anticipated aspect of the holiday season is the lavish holiday meal. Many people look forward to the food just as much as they look forward to the festivities. This could be why the average person gains a pound or two from the period of Thanksgiving up until New Year's Day.

- Create a meal concept. Holiday meals can be traditional or avant garde. There are many options from which to choose, but one thing to keep in mind is to select foods that go together. Those new to holiday hosting may want to stick with items that are well known and expected, such as turkey and trimmings. Those who want to experiment may want to introduce one or two new dishes into the mix. Food choices should be about what your guests will want to eat and not about which items will ensure a spectacle.

- Keep preparation time in mind. Another thing to consider when planning the meal is the amount of time you have for food preparation and cooking. The holidays are a busy time of the year, and work and social engagements may continue up until

the eleventh hour. Choose foods that can be prepared in advance and heated on the holiday if you're time-pressed. Or simply choose easy-to-make dishes that won't take much time.

- Compile a shopping list. Once foods are selected, review all recipes and make a list of the ingredients you will need. This will serve as a shopping list to take to the store. Also see which items you have on hand in the pantry. Look at expiration dates and be sure that everything is top quality. If in doubt, add it to your shopping list. Make a list of things that can be bought in advance (paper products, coffee, linens, etc.) and other items that need to be checked off closer to the actual holiday. Cross off each item once it is purchased.

- Create a timetable. Make a schedule or use a calendar to schedule when each component of the meal and other preparations will be made. This way you ensure you will stay on track and have everything done by the actual holiday.

- Ask for help. If you find that time will be short, delegate some jobs to others.

For example, if a grandmother or aunt is known for her prized potatoes or pies, ask her to make that item. Some hosts and hostesses turn the holiday meal into a pot luck where everyone is encouraged to bring one item and the host simply provides the main dish. This can cut down on the work involved and make others feel they've contributed to the sentimental holiday meal.

- Go easy on yourself. While not everything will work out exactly as you expected, chances are little glitches will not even be noticed by guests unless you point them out. And even if they are noticed, these are close friends and family who will not judge small mistakes.

- Make time for socialization. Too often holiday hosts and hostesses worry so much about impressing guests with lavish foods and festivities that they fail to enjoy the actual day with their guests. Leave time to sit and chat and, most importantly, relax.

The holidays are a time of enjoyment. Ensuring the meal can be as stress-free as possible will go a long way to helping hosts and hostesses enjoy the season as well.

## Holiday program at Washington's Headquarters

Winter winds are far from comforting, unlike a house where holiday cheer abounds. Join us for an Open House at Washington's Headquarters, in Newburgh. "Warm Up At The Washingtons" on Sunday, December 11th, from 12 PM until 4 PM. Admission is free, sponsored by the Friends of the State Historic Sites of the Hudson Highlands.

Chat with historic interpreters, enjoy seasonal music performed by the Salmagundi Consort, and snack on hot cider and cookies by an outdoor fire. Enjoy an afternoon that recreates the mood of warmth and hospitality the Washingtons extended to their war-weary guests.

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# Turkey Talk

When November rolls around, turkey becomes more than just another option at the deli counter. For some, turkey becomes an obsession around this time of year, with ponderings just how much to buy, how to cook it, and the ways leftovers can be turned into delicious treats. Tom Turkey certainly takes on icon status, and that's understandable considering the turkey was once suggested as the national bird of the U.S. (the bald eagle won, however). Turkey is tasty, and it's more than just a Thanksgiving menu item. Check out these other facts about turkey.

- Wild turkeys were nearly wiped out in North America by 1940. It took the efforts of preservationists to rekindle the numbers of wild turkeys out there.
- Turkeys do more than gobble. They have been known to make up to 20 distinct vocalizations, according to animal experts.
- People are not the only ones getting fatter. Turkeys are getting larger, too. The weight of the average turkey has increased 57 percent, says the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Most birds now average 28 pounds.
- U.S. federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones in turkey feed.

- The best time to see a wild turkey is on a warm clear day or in a light rain.
- Domesticated turkeys do not fly but the wild ones can. They spend their nights in trees, flying to roosts around sunset.
- Turkeys are a billion-dollar industry. Annual totals are around \$3.6 billion and the companies Jennie-O Turkey Store, Cargill Value Added Meats and Butterball, LLC are industry leaders.
- At least one turkey will not make it to Thanksgiving dinner this year. That's because every year the President pardons one turkey to go on and live to see another November.
- Only male turkeys display the ruffled feathers, fanlike tail, bare head, and bright beard commonly associated with these birds.
- Adult males are known as toms, young males as jakes, and all females as hens.
- Many people blame 'ol Tom Turkey for making them drowsy after the Thanksgiving meal. The truth is that other foods on the Thanksgiving table may have as much or even more of the amino acid L-tryptophan that's linked to sleepiness. Plus, you need carbohydrates to work in concert with the tryptophan for it to reach the brain and produce the sleepy effects.

## Turkey leftovers the family will love

**Turkey chili:** Combine the meat with kidney beans, red and green peppers, onions, pureed tomato and a package of chili seasonings from the supermarket. Let simmer and serve with corn bread or over rice.

**Turkey kabobs:** Thread turkey on skewers with apples, pears or pineapples. Bake until meat is reheated and fruit is soft.

**Turkey gyro:** Top pitas with turkey meat, lettuce, onion, and fresh tzatziki sauce. Tzatziki is made by mixing chopped cucumber, garlic and lemon juice with a thick Greek yogurt.

**Turkey omelets:** Chop up turkey and add it to the egg mixture when making omelets. Serve with toast spread with cranberry sauce.

**Turkey pot pie:** Line a pie tin with homemade or store-bought pie crust. Add the turkey, half a can of cream of chicken soup, a package of thawed mixed vegetables, and the remaining pie crust. Bake until the pot pie is bubbly and hot.

**Turkey Mexican-style:** Replace the meat in tacos, fajitas or enchiladas with leftover turkey.

**Buffalo turkey pizza:** Toss leftover turkey with melted butter and hot sauce. Use the seasoned meat on top of a homemade or pre-made pizza. Bake and enjoy.

**Turkey-tossed pasta:** Add strips of turkey to a dish of pasta, topped with a favorite sauce.

**Turkey panini:** Slice a thick, crusty bread and spread the outsides with butter. Add layers of turkey, cheese and cooked bacon. Cook on a griddle, using a heavy pan to hold the panini flat while cooking. Flip over and continue to cook until panini is golden brown and cheese is melted.

**Pulled pork-style turkey:** Chop up or pull apart leftover turkey meat. Toss with your favorite barbecue sauce. Serve on soft sandwich buns with a side of cole slaw.

**Turkey salad sandwich:** Mix chopped turkey with mayonnaise or salad dressing, diced celery, onions, and shredded carrots for a refreshing cold sandwich filling.

**Turkey and vegetable stir-fry:** Heat a wok or skillet with a little oil and saute onions, garlic and favorite stir-fry vegetables. Add the turkey to heat and season with soy sauce or teriyaki. Serve over steamed rice.

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# Centennial Christmas ornament and hand-made decorations

## Crafts from around the world commemorate

### 100 years of The Maryknoll Society

To commemorate the centennial of foreign mission by the U.S. Catholic Church, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, more well-known as the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, has issued a commemorative centennial Christmas ornament and offers a variety of holiday ornaments and crafts made by people from countries where Maryknoll serves in mission.

The centennial ornament (\$6.50) is a sturdy and unbreakable red heart with a satin finish. The Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers insignia appears on one side and the Society's centennial logo appears on the other side. The centennial logo is an image depicting a tablet that identifies the centennial theme - The Gift of Mission

The Maryknoll Journey - along with the years 1911 and 2011. It includes the Greek letters "chi" and "rho" that are the first two letters for the Greek spelling of the word "Christ." The design features a path or river that travels to the horizon, illustrating this unique opportunity to reflect on the mission work during the Maryknoll Society's first century while looking toward the future and the new mission projects that will be required during the next 100 years.

Ornaments and other decorations from around the world include:

Angel ornaments from Africa are made with banana

leaves and sisal. Each angel is less than \$10.

Zebra ornaments are hand-crafted and hand-painted by Nairobi's Maasai tribesman. Each zebra is less than \$10.

A rainbow of colorful ornaments from Cambodia are made from traditional hand-woven silks with an ancient process blended with contemporary designs that include birds, reindeer, fish, a moon with three stars and a single large star. Each ornament is sold separately and the price range is \$2 - 5.

A marquetry wood nativity scene from Bolivia. Marquetry is the art of inlaying different woods, or other natural materials, to create a picture. The nativity scene was crafted by a Bolivian artist and can be held in the palm of the hand. The three-panel scene (\$29.95) can be placed on a table or on a sturdy Christmas tree branch.

all Humankind.

A package of 10 cards costs \$10. Other styles of Christmas cards also are available.

A variety of pashmina shawls and scarves (\$15-49) from Nepal are made from cashmere from a special breed of Himalayan goat. Colorful painted wood crosses of various sizes (\$3.50 - 20) were hand-crafted in El Salvador. For a gift suggestion, Maryknoll's publishing company, Orbis Books, offers A Maryknoll Book of Inspiration. The collection of readings, one for each day of the year, is inspirational and enriching. The book price is \$15 after discount (all Orbis Books are discounted 40 percent at the Maryknoll Gift Shop).

Most of the items made in Maryknoll mission lands were brought back to the U.S. by Maryknoll priests and Brothers. Items only are available at the Maryknoll Gift Shop located at the Maryknoll Mission Center, 55 Ryder Road, Ossining, New York. Regular hours are Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

A Maryknoll book of Inspiration also is available online [www.maryknollsocietymall.org](http://www.maryknollsocietymall.org), as are all Orbis Books, but discounts apply only for purchases at the Maryknoll Gift Shop.

For more information about the Maryknoll Gift Shop, see the video at [www.maryknollsociety.org](http://www.maryknollsociety.org).

### Cards and Gift Ideas

Maryknoll's centennial card displays a winter scene of the Maryknoll Mission Center in Ossining, New York. Started during the 1920s, the Maryknoll Mission Center is one of the largest fieldstone buildings in the country. The card greeting reads: May the Light, Hope, & Joy of Christmas Continue to lead us on the Journey to Peace for

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# Try shopping outside the big box store

**A**lthough many think big box retailers offer competitive prices, they may not be the best option for consumers trying to stay on budget or close to it. Boutique shops, local merchants and independent online retailers often offer competitive prices and better overall service than bigger chains.

## Good things come in smaller packages

Price is a major factor in where people shop. Millions of people turn to big box retailers thinking they will get the best prices, but a little research can yield other findings. While some bigger chains may offer doorbuster sales luring customers in in general, prices on most everyday items are the same or higher than other retailers. All it takes is an online comparison of a certain product to show the similarity in pricing.

It's common to find similar pricing on most items in many big box stores. Therefore, these retailers use big-ticket items to attract customers, who then just stay in the store to get the remaining higher-margin items and accessories on their lists.

Shopping in smaller stores or independent online retailers also may be preferable to many consumers. The trend is to revitalize "Main Street America" by shopping smaller retailers and Mom & Pop establishments. Some companies actually offer incentives to do so. During the 2010 holiday season, American Express credited a portion of customers' accounts on items purchased at small businesses on the Saturday after Black Friday. There is a new initiative to rename that day "Small Business Saturday" in an effort to encourage more consumers to shop small businesses, specialty and boutique retailers.

## Better service, low prices

Many shoppers, particularly younger shoppers with less disposable income, are under the mistaken impres-

sion that big box retailers are the best way to shop due to widespread advertising by these retail giants. This type of shopping, however, could come at the expense of poor customer service or limited selection. Many independent retailers, offer price matching to remain competitive with the larger merchants in the area, and it's hard to beat independent retailers on customer service or the availability of a wide selection of distinct items.

## Small crowds, few hassles

Another advantage to shopping smaller retailers or even online is that shoppers don't have to drive long distances, fight crowds, endure long lines, or hunt for parking spots, making for a stress-free shopping experience that's also smart from an environmental standpoint.

Because of a more specialized selection, dedicated product specialists also may be more knowledgeable about the stock and functionality of certain items.

## Local gives more back

A September 2009 study in Civic Economics titled "Thinking Outside the Box: A Report on Independent Merchants and the Local Economy," reviewed financial data from 15 locally owned businesses in New Orleans and compared these stores' impact on the local economy to that of an average Target store. The study found that only 16 percent of the money spent at a Target stays in the local economy. In contrast, the local retailers returned more than 32 percent of their revenue to the local economy.

In many cases, local businesses also shop local, equipping their stores and building their Web sites with resources from other local companies. This means more money is being kept in the neighborhood and in the country.

Customers who normally shop bigger retailers may want to experience the benefits of shopping outside the box and support the local economy as well.



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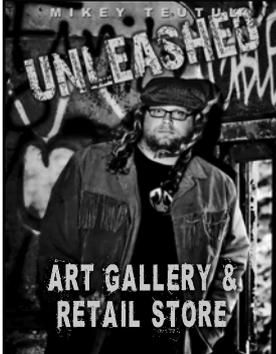
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# Holiday shopping minus the crowds

For serious shoppers and hardcore bargain hunters, battling the crowds and enduring the endless lines on Black Friday are simply traditions that usher in the holiday shopping



season. For the rest of us, the idea of rising at 3 a.m. on the morning after Thanksgiving and heading out into the night to compete for gifts and assorted holiday goods with thousands of zealous consumers is nothing short of a

nightmare. But for the truly squeamish, whose goal is to avoid even the hint of a crowd, there are indeed ways to purchase every gift on your list without encountering hordes of holiday shoppers.

The most obvious strategy for avoiding the masses is to shop online. According to surveys in 2010 nearly 64 percent of American adults did at least a portion of their shopping on the Web. Increasingly, people of all ages are opting to shop online not only to find better prices, but because purchasing via the Internet is convenient, fast and enables consumers to perform quick and accurate product and price comparisons. And with so many online retailers offering free shipping during the holiday season, many consumers see little reason to step inside a brick-and-mortar establishment.

However, even diehard e-shoppers recognize that there is something to be said for choosing a gift on site and in person; for taking the time to see and touch an object to determine its suitability. Whether you're heading out in search of a dazzling diamond or a set of new dishtowels, here are some tips for avoiding shopping crowds:

\* Shop all year round. It's harder to sidestep the throngs of holiday shoppers during the peak season between October and late December. By picking up gifts throughout

the year, you can take advantage of sales and avoid full parking lots and long lines. What's more, year-round holiday shopping means that your gift budget gets spread out over the course of an entire year.

\* Shop when the crowds are elsewhere. The busiest holiday shopping periods are in the late afternoon or early evening and, of course, on weekends. If you can shop at lunchtime or take a few hours off during the workday,

chances are good that stores will be far less crowded. Other good times to shop are during popular televised sporting events or television shows.

\* Shop with purpose. If you know what you're shopping for and have a good idea where to get it, there's a greater likelihood that you can get in and out of the store quickly -- and without blowing your budget on unnecessary items that catch your eye.

## Shopping by the numbers

- 41 percent of consumers are planning to spend less on holiday and Christmas-related activities, which marks an increase over the percentage of people who planned to scale back for the 2010 season. (Alix Partners)
- Retail sales are expected to rise just 3 percent, which is less than the 4.1 percent gain of last year. (International Council of Shopping Centers)
- Consumers will shop online more and use their mobile devices rather than stepping into malls and other brick-and-mortar stores. (Shopper Trak)
- 12 percent of survey respondents said they will use social media to find and share good holiday deals. (Steelhouse Marketing Consultants)

- Internet sales are estimated to grow by 12 percent in 2011, despite the uncertainty of the economy. (Emarketer)
- Shopping on smartphones and tablets is expected to be significant for this holiday season. (National Retail Federation)
- Purchasing a real Christmas tree can be less expensive for consumers. The average dollars spent on a real tree is about \$37, while the average artificial tree costs roughly \$60. (National Christmas Tree Association)
- Many people plan to shop the day after Christmas. Roughly 20 percent did so in 2010. (International Council of Shopping Centers)

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# Orange County Land Trust 2012 calendar on sale now

The Orange County Land Trust's 2012 calendar is now available for sale online and at several local retail stores, in time for holiday gift giving. As in past years, all proceeds from the Orange County Land Trust's annual calendar sale help the nonprofit land trust fulfill its mission of preserving the county's natural areas, wildlife habitats and working farmland.

The 2012 calendar features the award winning photography of nationally acclaimed Sugar Loaf artist Nick Zungoli, a past recipient of the Orange County Arts Council's Individual Artist of the Year award. The 2012 Orange County Land Trust Calendar features twelve new seasonal images by Zungoli that capture Orange County in all its evocative natural beauty. For several years, the nationally acclaimed photographer has donated photographs of distinct Orange County scenery for inclusion in the Land Trust's annual calendar.

Sponsors for the 2012 calendar are

Jacobowitz & Gubits, LLP, Counselors at Law, Hometown Bank of the Hudson Valley, Lehman & Getz Engineering, PC of Warwick, Mainframe Custom Framing Gallery of Middletown, and Frontier Communications.

The cost of the 2012 Orange County Land Trust Calendar is just \$12.00 and can be ordered by calling the Land Trust at (845) 343-0840, x12 or ordering securely online at [www.oclt.org](http://www.oclt.org). Calendars are also available for purchase at the following retail shops and farm markets in Orange County: The Exposures Gallery, Sugar Loaf [www.exposures.com](http://www.exposures.com).

Clearwater's Jones Farm Store, Cornwall [www.jonesfarminc.com](http://www.jonesfarminc.com). The Dairy'O Ice Cream and Dessert Café, Westtown, [www.thedairyco.com](http://www.thedairyco.com). Goshen Gourmet Café, Goshen [www.goshengourmetcafe.com](http://www.goshengourmetcafe.com). The Historical Society of the Town of Warwick, [www.warwickhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.warwickhistoricalsociety.org).

Mainframe Gallery, Middletown [www.mainframecustomframing.com](http://www.mainframecustomframing.com).

Nature's Pantry, Newburgh [www.naturespantryny.com](http://www.naturespantryny.com)  
Newhards - The Home Source, Warwick  
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Warwick Valley Winery & Distillery [www.wvwinery.com](http://www.wvwinery.com)

Since 1993, the Orange County Land Trust has helped preserve nearly 4,000 acres of land in communities throughout Orange County and one in Sullivan County. These lands include working farms, ecologically important wetlands, old growth woodlands, scenic ridgelines and wildlife corridors. For more information on the Orange County Land Trust and for volunteer opportunities and ways of giving, please call (845) 343-0840 or visit the website at [www.oclt.org](http://www.oclt.org).

## Tips for shipping gifts

- Ship through an online retailer. Billing address and the shipping address are two different categories when buying from an online retailer, and holiday shoppers should take advantage of a retailer's willingness to package and ship gifts for you. Many online retailers will even gift-wrap items for you and include a personal note as well.
- Protect the gift. For those who won't be using an online retailer, be sure to protect the gift, especially if it's fragile. Use bubble cushioning and packing peanuts when sending fragile items through the mail. If sending multiple items, wrap each item tightly in bubble cushioning but leave some space between the items for peanuts.
- Carefully pack perishables. When sending perishable items, always send them via next-day delivery and never ship them near the end of the week, such as a Friday or Saturday. Items shipped on Friday and Saturday should be able to withstand a few days of being in transit. But when sending cheeses, fruits or any other perishable items, it's best to do so early in the week and choose next-day delivery.
- Insure more expensive gifts. Don't skimp on insurance when sending expensive gifts such as jewelry through the mail. Shipping companies typically only insure items up to a certain amount, so insure more expensive items through your own insurance company so their full value is covered.
- Comparison shop when shipping. Shipping companies, including the post office, compete for business come the holidays, and you can likely find a good deal to reduce the cost of shipping holiday gifts, costs that can add up if shipping several gifts.

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