



HOLIDAY

Gift Guide III



Get kids excited to learn with these gift ideas

1. With the Magic Adventures Microscope, young biologists can explore tiny worlds full of huge discoveries, zooming in on flowers, animals, food, minerals and more using eight double-sided smart slides that activate amazing BBC videos and images. Inquiring minds can discover answers to curious questions like: How do leaves change colors? What do plant cells look like? What is sand made of anyway? They can also make their own discoveries by finding things around the house and getting a closer look using the reusable slides or large sample tray. With up to 200x magnification on this real microscope, kids will be amazed by what they see. A capture-and-save feature allows for documenting findings, and included games and quizzes add to the fun and let kids put their knowledge to the test.

2. Reading enthusiasts will love a subscription to a book of the month club offering selections for their reading level and interests. This is a great way to promote a lifelong love of literature.

3. Explorers can travel the world with the Magic Adventures Globe from LeapFrog. Using the stylus, children can tap on the interactive learning globe and experience new places, languages, cultures, animals, geography, habitats and more through high-quality BBC videos. Featuring an integrated video screen, animations and live-action videos immerse kids in the curriculum to provide a better understanding of the world through more than five hours of videos. There's also interactive games to explore the globe, challenge a friend and solve mysteries.

4. Encourage kids to become informed citizens of the world with a subscription to a news magazine designed just for them, such as "The Week Junior." This is an excellent way to build vocabulary, while engaging kids on a wide range of subjects -- from culture and arts to science and government -- in a way that's appropriate for their age.

5. Foster a love of fine arts by gifting kids an all-in-one sketching, painting and coloring set complete with everything they need to unleash their inner Picasso. Pencils, markers, acrylic and watercolor paints, along with brushes, paper pads and canvas boards, will give artists of all ages the foundational tools they need to try their hand in various mediums.

(STATEPOINT)

Holiday gift ideas for grill masters

Thoughtful holiday gifts are often those that show your loved one you support their hobbies and passions. To brighten the season for grilling enthusiasts, check out the following gift guide:

A Grilling Thermometer

Even the best cuts of meat can be compromised when they aren't cooked to the ideal temperature. To help your gift recipient achieve perfectly grilled steaks and other meats every time, take the guesswork out of the equation for them with a grilling thermometer. Beyond all the features you'd expect in a grilling thermometer, today's high-tech options also connect to apps, so that enterprising cooks can step away from the grill to attend to other food prepping tasks.

A Personalized Apron

Whether you go for a standard monogram, a full name or include a catch phrase or other design, a personalized apron makes a great gift for home chefs and grill masters. Just be sure your choice is made from a material that conducts

heat poorly and is durable, stain-resistant, low-maintenance, and features pockets of various sizes to stash mitts, tools and other kitchen supplies. An adjustable neck strap and back tie can also help ensure the apron fits as intended.

A Tool Rack

High-quality grilling tools are only useful when the griller knows where they are. For easy organization, deck out your gift recipient's deck or patio with a stylish mounted tool rack where they can keep their tongs, spatula, grill brush and other supplies handy.

A Portable Grill

Let your recipient take the show on the road with a portable grill. Great for camping, tailgating and other adventures, handy lightweight designs travel well and set up in a snap. With charcoal and gas varieties available, you are certain to find a model that fits your recipient's needs and preferences.

(STATEPOINT)







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Tax benefits of buying local

Small businesses pay sales taxes to the city and county where the business is located, which means a significant amount of the money spent at local businesses is ultimately going to the community at large.

In addition, local businesses tend to hire local residents, who pay taxes on their incomes. Those taxes also benefit the towns and cities where workers live and work. This ripple effect of supporting local businesses is one reason why the Small Business Administration estimates that, for every \$100 consumers spend at a small business, \$48 remains in the community.

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Create the perfect holiday party charcuterie board

Are you hosting a holiday party and looking for a simple way to impress your guests?

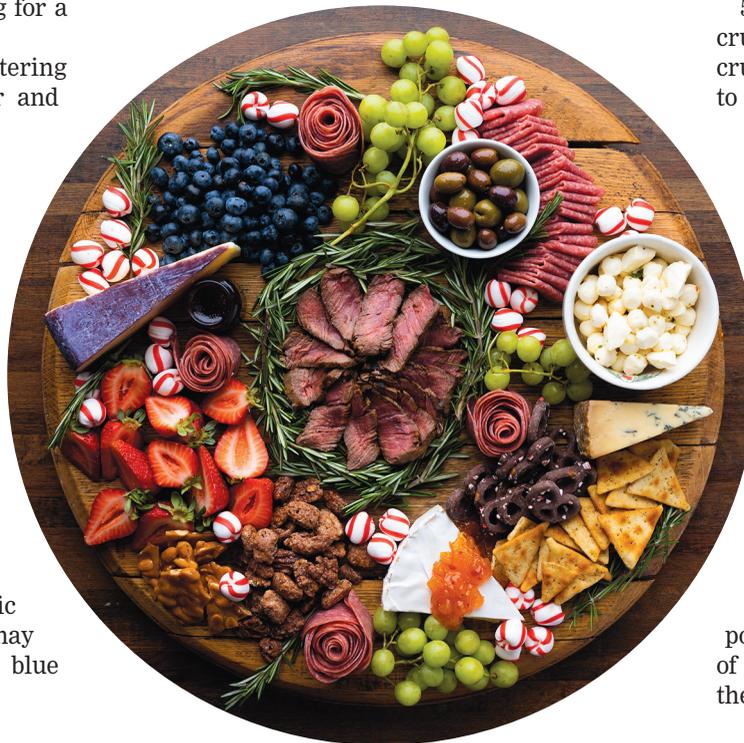
Building an eye-catching and mouth-watering charcuterie board that will add color, flavor and variety to your holiday table.

1. Grab a platter or surface to display your charcuterie. Anything will work, even a simple cutting board. Just be sure to choose a size that you can fill completely.

2. Use dishes or ramekins of mismatched sizes, shapes and colors to hold dressings, toppings and sauces. This will keep your board clean and add fun visual details to the display.

3. Include two to four cheeses of contrasting flavors and textures to please all palates, and to complement other elements of the board. The varieties you select should represent these basic categories: hard cheese, (such as Chardonnay Bellavitano) soft cheese, (such as brie) and blue cheese (such as French Roquefort).

4. While a traditional charcuterie board typically sticks with cured meats, the holiday season is the perfect occasion for adding depth and richness to your feast with grilled meats, such as filet, sliced into strips.



Whether you are firing up the grill or preparing on a cooktop, allow any cooked meats to rest well before adding them to your board.

5. No charcuterie board is complete without some crunch. Add two to three options like pita crackers, crusty breads or toasted baguettes that will stand up to the weight of your meats and cheeses.

6. Now, add some brightness and sweetness to your board. Fresh fruits like blueberries, strawberries and green grapes, and preserves such as peach pepper jam, will add contrast to rich, salty meats and cheeses. Don't forget seasonal sweets and treats like soft peppermints, peanut brittle, chocolate dipped pretzels and candied nuts.

7. You'll want your charcuterie board to look as if it's overflowing. So, as you're building it out, start with the largest elements like the cheeses and meats first, followed by smaller items like crackers, fresh produce and sweets. Fill in any holes with sprigs of aromatic rosemary for trimming, along with additional portions of the smaller items. The various elements of the board should pair well together, so it's okay if they touch.

To wow your guests and their tastebuds, take your charcuterie board to the next level with seasonal treats, grilled meats and a cornucopia of sweet and savory flavors.

(STATEPOINT)

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Unique and notable gift ideas

Stumped for holiday gifts for kids? Brighten the season for little ones by checking out these great gift ideas below:

them on an outdoor adventure where you can hike the trails and spot real-world flora and fauna.

Unique Experiences

One-of-a-kind experiences can expand a child's worldview and help create lifelong memories. There are numerous ideas to consider that will appeal to a broad range of interests. For a sports enthusiast, consider a one-on-one outing to a major or minor league game. Many teams host special theme nights for fans, so you may want to do a little research so you can dovetail your plans with an event geared toward kids.

For a budding musician, consider a gift certificate to a local music center that could be put toward the instrument of their choice or lessons with an instructor.

Finally, if your gift recipient loves exploring the natural world, gift them tickets to the zoo or aquarium, or take

Notable Toys

When it comes to selecting the best toys, you can take some of the guesswork out of the equation by referring to the Toy Foundation's Toy of the Year Awards (TOTY). Toys nominated for this distinction represent the best of the best, and are beloved by kids and parents alike.

Nominated for the Infant/Toddler category this year is the VTech Level Up Gaming Chair. Boasting a swivel chair, joystick and pretend headphones, this preschool game station gives little gamers an opportunity to be just like big-kid gamers. With no Wi-Fi required, the interactive gaming tablet teaches letters, numbers, animals and music with gaming sound effects, and progresses with kids to teach words and meanings. The tablet even detaches from the tray to be taken on-the-go.



Nominated in the Plush toy category is the LeapFrog My Pal Scout Smarty Paws, a cute, cuddly and customizable friend. Little ones can touch his front paws, ears and back paw for silly reactions, music, lullabies, games and mindfulness exercises. You can even personalize the play and learning across more than 15 activities by programming Scout with your gift recipient's name and their favorite food, color and animal. Scout introduces first words, counting, feelings and emotions, and even teaches kids how to spell their own name.

Caddy, which shows kids that cleaning can be all fun and games with boogie-down dance breaks and silly directions like, "Hop while you mop! Now dance to the left and dance to the right!" The cute face on the bucket lights up and sings as kids pretend to clean, with a press of the pedal the mop spins, and as you pump out imaginary soap it makes funny squirting sounds. To shop these and other TOTY-nominated toys, visit amazon.com.

A third TOTY finalist you'll want to consider putting on your gift list is the LeapFrog Clean Sweep Learning

From tailored experiences to this year's best toys, you can have all your gifts for kids covered and avoid some of the usual stress of the holiday shopping season.

(STATEPOINT)



We can support our local communities, together.

Each year, Sawyer Savings Bank asks the community to help with our community giving activities by inviting people to nominate their favorite non-profit organizations they would like us to support during 2023.

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*Donations are restricted to non-profit organizations located in the communities where Sawyer Savings Bank is active. Sawyer Savings Bank does not provide funding to individuals, political groups/parties. Other restrictions may apply. Organizations need to complete the online grant application on or before January 31, 2023. Decisions will be made and announced on or before March 31, 2023. Donations will be awarded throughout 2023.



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POP UP SOME HOLIDAY FUN!

Strings of popcorn and cranberries add a nostalgic touch to the tree and popcorn trees add whimsy to the table. Before stringing popcorn, let it sit out for a day or two as freshly popped popcorn may be too fragile to thread without breaking. Push a threaded needle through the center of each kernel then pull the kernel to the end of the knotted thread, add an occasional cranberry.



Festive trees can be made using popcorn mixed with melted marshmallows then shaped and finished with sprinkles.

Pop up some popcorn balls and place them in pretty jars or neatly wrap them then finish with a bow. For an added touch,

include the recipe and popcorn kernels in a separate container for your guests.

Freshly popped popcorn is a simple and delicious snack to share. These treats are perfect for popping up in the morning and storing in an airtight container.

Easy, elegant holiday popcorn

Yield: 8 cups

- 8 cups popped popcorn
- 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips
- candy sprinkles



On serving platter, spread popcorn in thin layer. Over double boiler or in microwave, melt milk chocolate chips. Drizzle over popcorn.

Over double boiler or in microwave, melt white chocolate chips. Drizzle over popcorn.

Sprinkle candy sprinkles over warm, chocolate-coated popcorn. Allow drizzles to set until firm.

White chocolate peppermint popcorn bark

Yield: 1 pound

- 5 cups popped popcorn
- 12 ounces white chocolate baking chips, chopped white chocolate or white candy coating
- 1 cup crushed hard candy peppermints

Cover baking pan with foil or wax paper; set aside. Place popcorn in large bowl; set aside.

In double boiler over barely simmering water, melt chocolate, stirring until smooth, or melt according to package directions.

Stir in crushed peppermints after chocolate is melted. Pour chocolate mixture over popcorn mixture and stir to coat. Spread onto prepared pan; cool completely.

When chocolate is cooled and set, break into chunks for serving.

Store in airtight container at room temperature. (FAMILY FEATURES)



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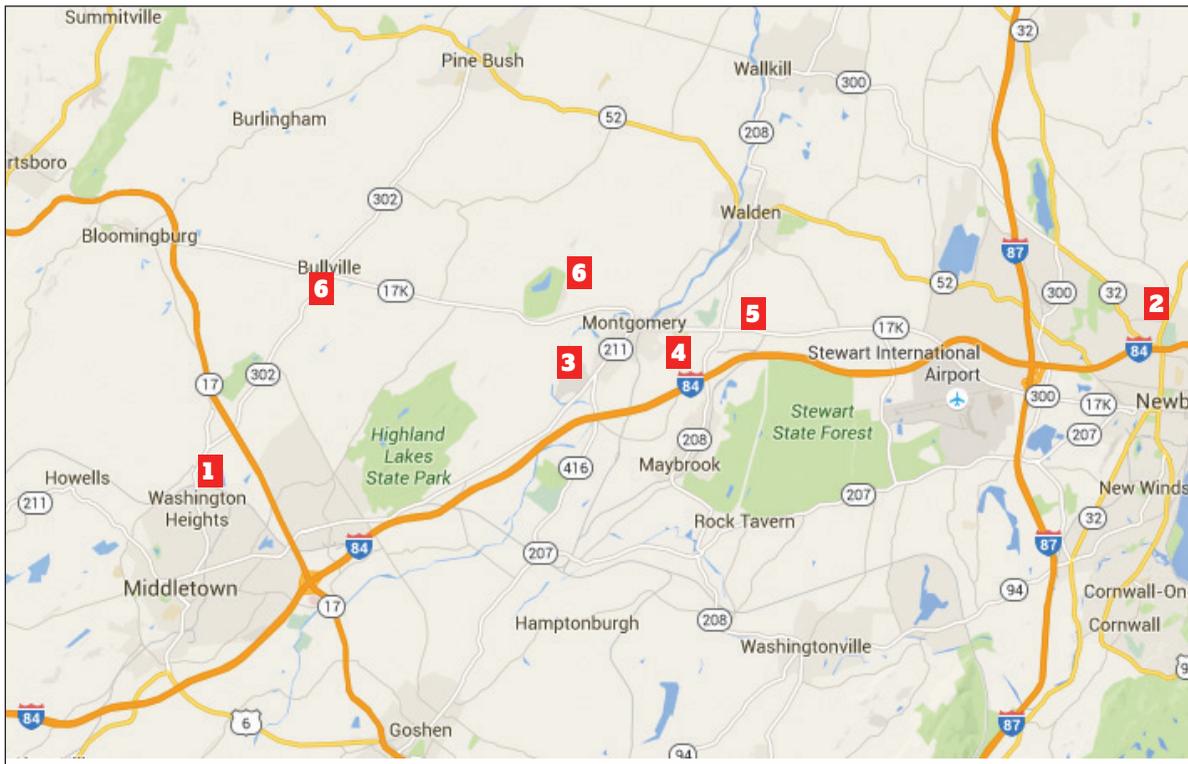
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