

SHOP LOCAL FOR THE HOLIDAYS | GIFTS WITH LOCAL FLAIR

A Chance to Get Quirky

If you're looking for something quintessential about your hometown or area, hitting a local shop is probably your best bet. The nearest big box retailer probably won't be carrying jewelry from a local artist, or T-shirts for the local football team. Shopping local for the holiday opens up a whole new arena for gift-buying, outside the usual hustle and bustle of cookie-cutter catalog options.

CHECK OUT THE ART

If you look close enough, many towns have local art shops — or at least an artist or craft guild — that organizes things locally. Track down the nearest one and see what the creative minds in your community have to offer. From mixed media art to paintings, buying from local artists helps support their work, while also offering a gift that is one of a kind and truly unique to the area. Some can even do work on commission, if you're looking for something extra personal.

THE SAME THING GOES FOR JEWELRY

With the rise of platforms such as Etsy and Pinterest, there are more small-town artists than ever just trying to make a living and offer up something unique. If you're shopping for jewelry, check around for local jewelry makers, and you could find the perfect, quirky gift for your loved ones. If you're looking for something with a local tie, too, this also could be your best bet.

DON'T FORGET THE TOYS

Locally made toys are a bit harder to pull off, but many local shops stock toys — and the offerings can be very different from what you'll find in the toy aisle at a big box retailer. From toy train sets to vintage toys that have been around since the 1950s (but may not be in easy circulation these days), local shops often carry a much more diverse set of toy options. Take a risk and go for something old school this year.

