

Secondhand Gift Guide

Where

There are many ways to buy pre-owned goods, and it can sometime feel overwhelming. This section breaks down some of those options so you can spend your time and energy more effectively.

Thrift Stores and Charity Shops:

Going to a typical thrift store can be like a treasure hunt; you may really have to dig before you find something great. It can be quite fun, but if you get overwhelmed by the large stores like [Ohio Thrift](#) or [Volunteers of America](#), you may want to try a smaller, well maintained charity shop like the [American Cancer Society Discovery Shop](#) or [Out of the Closest](#).

Resale/Consignement Shops:

These shops offer a more curated thrifting experience. The prices are usually higher than regular thrift stores, but the selection is often higher quality. Resale shops also usually focus on a particular category like women's clothing ([Clothes Mentor](#)), sporting goods ([Play it Again Sports](#)), or kid's clothing ([Once Upon a Child](#)). This can make it easier to find exactly what you're looking for.

Yard/Garage Sales:

Like going to a thrift store, yard-saling can be a real treasure hunt, with a wide variety of goods at a wide range of prices. Visit a [community yard sale](#), check out [GSALR.com](#), or drive around your neighborhood on any given warm weather weekend to find local yard sales.

Tip: When shopping second-hand, it can be hard to find a specific item on short notice. If you want to buy secondhand gifts, it helps to keep a mental or actual list throughout the year of everyone you want to get gifts for and any specific items you may be looking for. This way you'll be ready when you discover a perfect gift!

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Estate/Tag Sales:

Estate sales are a great place to find vintage treasures and the prices are usually cheaper than an antique store (especially if you go on the second day of a sale when items tend to be marked down). Some of my favorite local estate sale companies are [Sales by Holy](#) and [Tag Sales by DeeDee](#). Like yard sales you can often find estate sales by looking for signs posted at intersections. Unlike yard sales, estate sales happen year-round, not just during the warmer months.

Vintage and Antique Sellers:

This is where you'll find the most highly curated selection of second-hand goods that have stood the test of time. You can find a wide range of antique and vintage home goods and clothing at numerous permanent antique stores throughout the city, [Magpie Market](#) or [Eclectiques Antique Mall](#). In addition, you can often find smaller vintage sellers at popup craft markets that happen around the holidays and year-round. The [Atomic on High](#) market is specifically focused on vintage goods.

Used Books:

Books can make great gifts and they're easy to find secondhand. You can always find used books at the [Friends of the Library](#) book sales here at UAPL and at many other public libraries. Another good source for used books games and other media is [Half Price Books](#).

Online:

There are many places to buy vintage and pre-loved goods online. You can buy clothing and accessories on platforms like [Poshmark](#), [Depop](#), or [ThreadUp](#). [The RealReal](#), [Vestiaire Collective](#), or [Grailed](#) is where you'll find designer and luxury goods. For clothing, home goods and more check out [Etsy](#), [eBay](#), [Vinted](#), or [Mercari](#). [GEM](#) is a new platform that allows you to search for clothing on all of the above platforms from one place. For used books and other media check out [ThriftBooks](#). The number of options online can be overwhelming, but it's a great place to turn if you know exactly what you're looking for.

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What

Here are just a few ideas of what you can look for when buying secondhand gifts. Many of these gifts could be found at almost any of the secondhand shopping options discussed above, but it's easier to find specific items at certain locations. I note this in each description below.

Timeless Clothing & Accessories

CASHMERE & WOOL KNITS: You can often find luxurious cashmere and hardy wool knits at higher-end resale shops and estate sales. If you can't find the fabric contents on the main tag at the top of a shirt or skirt, check for a tag at the inner side-seam near the bottom of the item.

VINTAGE DENIM: The look of vintage jeans and denim jackets is so popular that many fast fashion brands sell cheaply made imitations of these styles. However, to the discerning eye these imitations just don't have the same look and feel. It can be difficult to find high-quality vintage denim in regular thrift stores due to the high demand, but you can find sellers who focus on vintage denim at many antique malls and some craft fairs or flea markets.

FINE JEWELRY: You can find fine jewelry sectioned out at many estate sales, resale shops, and antique stores. If you're looking carefully, you can also find it mixed in with cheaper jewelry at thrift stores or yard sales. It's like striking gold! (sometimes literally) Look for 3-digit purity stamps on jewelry that looks like it may be silver or gold. Common stamps include 925 (sterling silver) and 375 (9 carat gold). Other numbers may indicate higher purity or other precious metals.

100% COTTON SWEATERS: Chunky sweaters are a current cozy style staple for many people. You'll find 100% cotton sweaters in charming vintage styles at most thrift stores (make sure to check both the men's and women's sections).

SILK SCARVES: These can make great gifts for the fashion-conscious people on your list. You can find genuine silk scarves in a wide range of colors and prints at many estate sales and resale shops.

GENUINE LEATHER GOODS: Boots, handbags, and other items made of high-quality genuine leather that has stood the test of time can make great gifts. You can find these at thrift stores, estate sales, and resale shops. Leather products will either say that they are made of leather or will have some version of this symbol: 

FINKY COSTUM JEWELRY: You can find tons of statement jewelry in many different styles at thrift stores, estate sales, and yard sales. This is one of the easiest things to find when shopping second hand, the trick is knowing the style of who you're buying for.

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Unique Home Goods

GLASSWARE & CHINA: Whether you're looking for delftware, depression glass, or fine China secondhand is the way to go. There's such a wide selection of these items across thrift stores, yard sales, estate sales and antique malls that you should be discerning with what you choose. Only buy the cup, dish, or table set if it's really a perfect fit for the style and needs of the person you're buying for.

SILVER & PEWTER: Silver or pewter, bowls, dishes, or pitchers are classic items that also fit with on-trend home décor. You can find these at many thrift stores, estate sales, and antique malls.

CAST IRON COOKWARE: A cast iron skillet is a timeless cooking essential for anyone building their kitchen collection, and you can find these at thrift stores and estate sales. Note: depending on the condition old cast iron may need to be cleaned and/or re-seasoned, but there are many helpful guides for how to do this online.

Classic Books & Toys

BOOKS & GAMES: collections of books or games can make great gift bundles. Fill a basket with cozy mysteries, or bundle up a sophisticated selection of classics. You can find books and games galore at the Friends of the library book sales and Half Price Books, as well as at most thrift stores. Just make sure, if you're buying a previously opened game, that it still has all the necessary pieces.

BUILDING BLOCKS: Whether it's Legos, Lincoln Logs, or colorful wooden blocks, keep an eye for a nice set of building toys at the thrift store and at yard sales. Building toys foster imaginative play, they're easy to mix and match with other toys, and it doesn't really matter if a few pieces are missing.

NOSTALGIC TOYS: Old school toys that have stood the test of time can make fun gifts that bring joy to kids and parents alike. (To limit the risk for lead exposure, avoid toys made before 1978 or manufactured outside the United States and check for toy recalls on the Consumer Product Safety Commission [website](#))

Easy DIYs

FRAMED PHOTO OR ART PRINTS: You can find a wide range of picture frames at many thrift stores or estate sales. Create the perfect personalized gift by adding a personal photo or an art print from your favorite artist to a thrifted frame.

HOT COCO OR TEA MUGS: find a unique mug at any thrift store and fill it with hot coco or tea packets and accompanying goodies for an adorable ready-to-make drink kit. This gift can be customized for your recipient, but it can also make a great generic gift for those obligatory exchanges, like a workplace white elephant.

CREATIVE GIFT BASKETS: There's no shortage of fun and unique containers you can find second-hand. Create a gift "basket" with any cute container you find by filling it with a themed collection of smaller gifts.