

THE ULTIMATE *Holiday Gift*

Stumped on what to get your friends and family for the Holidays this year? Don't fret, as you've come to the right article! The perfect gift means something different to everyone. It could be an object, an idea, or simply a feeling. Year after year, the holidays become a time for people to find that perfect gift, yet it isn't always the easiest task. A list to inspire, here are ten holiday gifts ideas that are bound to excite anyone.



2020 Agenda

The old agenda days are gone, but they don't have to be. Let your friend relive the good old days with a reliable, customizable planner for the new year. Life is only going to get more adventurous, and an agenda is a perfect way to keep track of it all.



Reusable Straws & Take-out Cups

Out with the old and in with the new. Trendy, practical and pro-environment, a reusable cup is a perfect gift. Ideal for that friend who always dashes out to a nearby restaurant, why not even make it a travel mug for their favourite hot beverage?

Netflix Gift Card

For all those friends missing out on streaming, a Netflix gift card is the perfect way to give them a taste of movies and shows at their fingertips. Want to go the extra mile? Pay for a Disney+ subscription, because let's face it. It's worth it, even if Disney doesn't have gift cards yet.

Fill-In-The-Blank Books

A personal favourite, Fill-In-The-Blank books are the perfect heartfelt gifts. Developed by the company Knock Knock, these pocket-sized books are filled with prompts for the sender to write to a friend, a lover or a family member. These books are the perfect way to express just how much someone means to you, or simply to take a trip down memory lane!



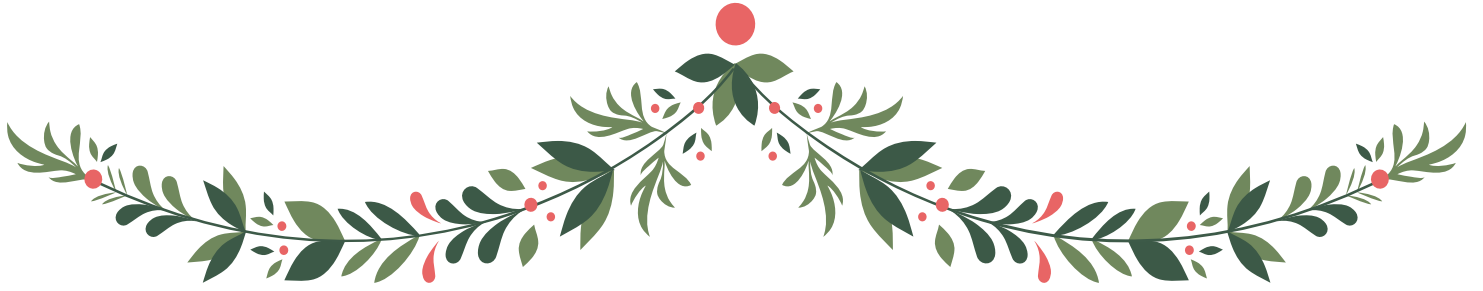
Customizable Socks

The classic pair of socks with a wacky twist. Great for a hilarious gift, many services like Amazon offer customizable socks where you can add your own text or images. A fun and practical item, you can be sure that such a gift would be one to remember.



Blankets and Blanket Scarfs

A soft, cozy blanket is a gift that never gets old. Who doesn't love to get comfy with a nice throw in this chilly Canadian weather? Or for those who like braving the cold, try a nice, stylish blanket scarf from their favourite retail store.



Muji Stationary

Muji stationary is popular for good reason. If your friend already collects their sought-after pens and pencils, try personally engraved notebooks or digitally printed clothing. These services and many others are available in their downtown flagship store in the Atrium on Bay, 20 Dundas Street West.



Echo Dot - Third Generation

Brought to you by Amazon, the Echo Dot is a great, affordable piece of technology going for a shockingly low price of \$22. It is a smart speaker that your friend can use to play music, listen to the news, ask questions, and do hundreds of other tasks to make their lives just that much more blissful.



Diffuser

A diffuser is always a good route to go. Relaxing, serene and scented to preference, this is the ideal gift for someone's home. With a variety of brands and forms, a diffuser is easily personalizable to perfection. As an added bonus, it provides a gateway to future holiday gifts with the hundreds of essential oils to choose from.



If all else fails, just show up for your loved ones. Whether it be through a video call, a text message or simply wishing them a Happy Holidays can make a world of a difference. Although the holiday season is popularly dubbed as "the season of giving", it's also a time for you to spend surrounded by loved ones. It isn't a matter of who can get the best or most expensive gift, it's about appreciating and creating stronger relationships with loved ones, and maybe accompanying that with a gift.

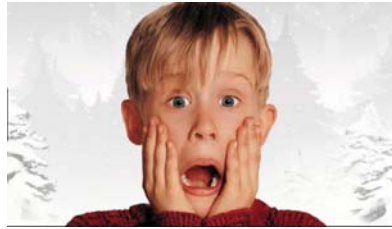


MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR WINTER BREAK!

JACK A. & JOYCE L.



So, What can I do over my Winter Break?



During the stress-inducing school year there comes a time where it seems as if you can put everything on hold and take a break. Everyone looks forward to the winter break as it can behold a multitude of wonders and activities that you would have trouble gaining access to any other time of the year. Though a lot of people may wish this time to last an eternity, it is better to just make the most out of the time you have off. Toronto is a wide and open city where you will be able to find a multitude of activities that will help to contribute towards you having one of the most memorable breaks of your earthly existence.

While the weather can lead to fun activities, you should not forget the true meaning of this season. Winter is the season of giving and what better gift is there than the gift of your own time for the ones you care about. There are lots of specific activities you are able to perform in duos, trios, and even as a family including the ones mentioned before. One option can be to simply watch a seasonal film of your choosing. Though simplistic, both you and the people around you will find enjoyment surrounding themselves near a television screen only to be watching specific holiday flicks while drinking hot chocolate. Why not get ready with a wave of nostalgia with some classic Christmas movies like the Home Alone series, The Nightmare Before Christmas, or The Polar Express? All childhood movies I'm sure we all remember watching when we were younger. If you are looking for something a bit more modern, you can also visit your local movie theater and watch the latest movies out now which include the much anticipated Frozen 2 or A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood. Although they are not specifically Christmas movies, they are for sure heartwarming and great to watch with the whole family. Perhaps you'd like something more unconventional. If you haven't seen it already, the record-breaking Joker is a must. Just make sure not to bring your younger brothers and sisters as the movie can get very gory. Regardless of who you watch a movie with (or even if you go alone), there are plenty of movies out during the holiday season to binge-watch.

One of the main occurrences that winter bestows upon this city is snow, and though this snow may add a level of difficulty to your travels there are plenty of ways to enjoy this yearly gift. For starters, Mel Lastman Square has opened its annual skating rink for all to enjoy, whether or not you can skate. However, if you do wish to learn how to skate there are plenty of courses that you are able to attend around Toronto in an actual indoor skating rink. Skating is not the only winter activity that uses solidified water to move from point A to point B. Tobogganing, as well as skiing, poses a great source for entertainment for all of those who love the thrill of speeding down a slope. Toronto is home to multiple hills and slopes that are covered in snow at this moment, ready to be used for the enjoyment of all those who wish to use them. There are also ski resorts that you may attend if you wish all around Ontario, but they may be a bit more pricey as well as hold a larger distance between them and you compared to the smaller slopes in Toronto. You may also want to reach back into your childlike wonder and perform activities that help you remember the times before high school. These activities can range from building snowmen, having a snowball fight, or any other idea you may have that you are interested in relating to winter. These are definitely not the only uses of the snow on the ground and are merely suggestions on how to make the most of your days off.





What else?

Another option is to go sightseeing at the many holiday-themed structures in and around Toronto. The country's tallest Christmas tree is coming to the CF Toronto Eaton Center and stands at approximately 108 feet tall so make sure to bring your family to witness this marvellous sight. You can also visit The Winterfest at Canada's Wonderland or The Christmas Market down at the Distillery District. One final option is to attempt to cook Christmas dinner with your family as well as eventually sit down and devour it. Though you may not know how to cook, what better time is there for you to be gifted with the knowledge on how this process works while you prepare a turkey dinner with the ones you love. As well, if you are feeling more crafty you may be inclined to try and build a gingerbread house seeing as the season calls for it. Truly, the only real thing that you need to make the most of your break is the presence of those you care about and of those who care for you.



You may also have your own opinion on what can make the perfect winter break and if you get enjoyment out of it you should, by all means, spend your time the way you wish. However, that does not diminish the enjoyment of the options provided and if you desire to, you are invited to perform any activity previously mentioned, just remember to stay safe.





MENTAL HEALTH



HOW TO COPE AROUND THE HOLIDAYS

written by: Crina M.

The holidays can be a very joyous time for people. However, it can be the opposite for others. Holiday depression is a very real problem that some go through when the holidays roll around. There are many factors that can contribute to this such as having too much to do, reminders of a lost loved one, or one's own personal loneliness. Here are some ways to help reduce the burden that the holidays bring:

BUDGET

- Plan your budget before the holiday season
- Only spend cash or debit so that you don't have to worry about paying back credit
- Host a Secret Santa! It will take away from the cost of presents

SPENDING TIME WITH OTHERS

- Spend time with people who care about you, whether it be friends or family
- Surround yourself with positive people

PACE YOURSELF

- Don't take more responsibilities than you can handle, ask for help!
- Make a list of top priorities and get those done first

STAYING ACTIVE

- The holidays are a time of treats and eating, so find time to work off the holiday calories
- Take everything in moderation, you will feel good and enjoy it more!

HOBBIES

- Volunteer with a nonprofit organization like a food bank or a soup kitchen
- Join free holiday activities within your area

Overall, the holidays can be a rough time for some, but it can be a joyous time full of celebration with the right help. Be grateful for what you have this holiday season!

BEST OF 2019

With 2019 coming to an end, it's safe to say that this year has been an interesting one. Here, we will be discussing what has been the best of pop culture in 2019.

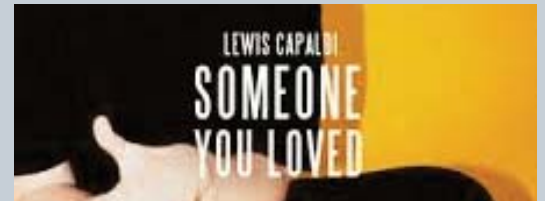
Best Movie: *Avengers: Endgame*



The Avengers: Endgame movie has made it on the top of the list, as it was arguably the most anticipated movie of the year. Ranked by Rotten Tomatoes as the number one movie of 2019, it did not disappoint. With an all-star cast including actors like Robert Downey Jr., Chris Pratt and Chris Hemsworth, the movie brought together all the characters of the Marvel Universe. The plot was nicely done, as it has been lead up to for ten years and wasn't over the top. Avengers: Endgame was a cinematic masterpiece and a brilliant end of an era for Marvel films.

Best Song: *Someone You Loved* by Lewis Capaldi

Although the song was initially released in 2018, it didn't make waves until this year. The beautiful piano ballad with emotional lyrics is sung by a soulful voice that will hit you square in the heart. I have yet to see someone who dislikes this song and I encourage you to give it a listen if you haven't already.



Best Book: *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood



This highly anticipated book has received the most attention this year following its release. The Testaments is a sequel to the world-renowned novel, The Handmaid's Tale. Released 34 years after the first book, it is a continuation of the dystopian society that unfortunately, oppresses women and reduces them to their uteruses. Even though it was released not too long ago, it has already won the Booker Prize award. This piece of literature is an amazing read, but of course, you should read The Handmaid's Tale first.

Best Fashion Trend: *Tartan Pants*

This fashion look is perfect for all. It is classic yet stylish. You can pair them with almost everything - from sweaters to t-shirts to puffer jackets. It is a versatile piece that can be dressed up or dressed down. It is a must-have for your closet.



WHAT WILL BE HAPPENING IN 2020?

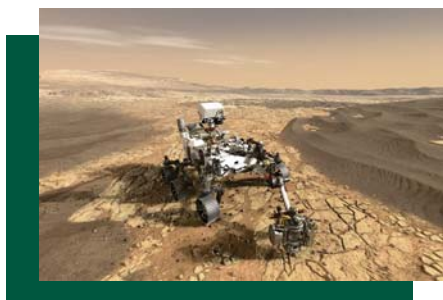


DORIAN W. & WREN S.

As the winter holidays go on, many thoughts drift into the future. What will 2020 bring? Up until now, the year 2020 has been seen as this phenomenon that will never arrive. We hate to break it to you, but it's coming sooner than you think. But what greatness will 2020 bring?

01 NASA ROVER

First of all, NASA has announced that it will be launching a new rover to Mars in July 2020. This rover - Mars 2020 - will search for microscopic signs of life, past or present. It will also take detailed readings of the climate and habitability of Mars. Last but not least, it will improve our understanding of Martian geology.



02 MOVIES

Maybe you aren't convinced yet. Well, let me introduce you to the grand selection of movies coming out next year. These include many sequels and prequels to popular movies you know and love. These include a Black Widow movie, another Wonder Woman movie, a Harley Quinn movie, Captain Marvel, a new Ghostbusters movie and of course, Fast and Furious 9.

03 TEAM TREES!



It is possible that movies and science isn't your cup of tea, but pop culture probably is. There is something that is planned to happen before 2020 that I wanted to remind you of - Team Trees. It has been running since October and aims to raise 20 million dollars to plant 20 million trees by January 1st, 2020. So far (as of the writing of this article) more than 16 million dollars have been raised.

05 MET GALA

What's also coming up is the annual Met Gala. The 2020 Met Gala's theme will be "About Time: Fashion and Duration." This theme will represent how clothing has changed over the decades. To add, the official Met Gala Instagram has announced that the co-chairs for the event are Emma Stone, Meryl Streep, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Nicolas Ghesquière. This is an exciting event to look out for if you are one to admire and critique fashion statements.



04 GRAMMY AWARDS



On the pop culture side of news, we have the 2020 GRAMMY Awards coming up on January 26, 2020. With nominations for your favourite artists such as Beyoncé, Khalid, Taylor Swift and categories ranging from hip-hop to jazz, be sure to tune in to see which artists grabbed an award.

All in all, 2020 will be an awesome year.

But you shouldn't just wait around. There are things to do, money to donate and preparations to be made. The future is bright, but the present is something you should cherish before it disappears.



Name's Sake



PHOENIX COMICS

