



5 Popular Holiday Expenses That Are a Complete Waste of Money

Description

Ah, the holidays. A time to be with family and friends, to share meals and exchange gifts, to watch kids open presents and play with new toys. It's a great time to be alive — and a great opportunity to blow a bunch of money.

Yes, this holiday season, Canadians are expected to rack up around \$1,841 apiece on holiday expenses. That's a lot of money on Christmas gifts, wrapping paper, and holiday cards.

But with inflation making everyday items more expensive, you might want to be more strategic about where you spend your money. To avoid completely blowing through your budget this Christmas, here are five expenses you can probably do without.

1. Fancy wrapping paper

Colourful or character-imprinted wrapping papers are generally a major waste of money. In fact, anytime something discardable, like the paper that goes on your presents, is marketed as “luxurious,” stay away: it's not worth the extra cash.

To be honest, no one remembers the wrapping paper on gifts. They remember the gifts themselves. So save yourself some money this year and buy discounted wrapping paper. Or better yet — recycle paper bags and use those to wrap presents.

2. Outdoor decorations

A few Christmas lights are okay, especially if you reuse them every year. But you don't have to go all Clark Griswold with your house: if you don't have an inflatable Santa, nine inflatable reindeer, an inflatable sleigh, and the inflatable North Pole, the world won't suffer.

I personally have fond memories of decorating the house with my father. So I'm not going to go all Scrooge on you and say *don't* decorate. But do so with reason — and a *budget*. If you can allocate \$50

toward some lights, then wrap a few trees. But don't overspend for the sake of winning best-decorated-house-in-the-bloc.

3. Holiday cards

Admittedly, I'm a little ambiguous on this one. I've certainly saved holiday cards from my Nonna (my Italian grandma), and it actually feels good when someone saves a card that *you* sent, too.

But this season, with inflation making everything more expensive, I'd say ditch the holiday cards in favour of something else. Send a handmade card or just a letter. Or better yet — an email.

At the end of the day, most of us just recycle our holiday cards anyway. Imagine taking \$100 and throwing it in the recycling bin. That's what typically happens when you receive 20+ holiday cards every winter.

4. Stocking stuffers

They're cute, small enough to fit in a sock, and generally a complete waste of money. Yes, *stocking stuffers* are nothing more than the riffraff of retail gifts: gifted on Christmas, broken or discarded by New Year's Eve.

A little harsh, I know, but hear me out: stocking stuffers have *got* to go. The way I see it, if you have to stuff it in a sock to make it appear appealing, it's probably not worth your cash.

A few edibles may be appropriate, or maybe a gift card. But filling a massive stocking with cheap toys or clothes nobody wants is just more clutter for the receiver.

Fill a tiny stocking, and focus your money on gifts people really want.

5. Shipping

Finally, though online shopping is convenient, paying for shipping isn't. Always be aware of how much you're paying to ship items to your house. At a certain point, shipping could start to make up a significant portion of your holiday spending. When it becomes too costly, you're better off buying items in-store, rather than online.

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