

# Christmas Shopping



One in 20 people considers Christmas shopping more stressful than divorce or burglary. How sad is that!

I'll admit I mostly hate shopping. I'm one of those rare women who doesn't want to browse. If I need something I go get it. My husband calls me a destination shopper. That means I know what I want. I go to the store, I walk in, and go directly to what I am looking for. I pick it up, take it to the cashier, pay for it, and go back to my car for the drive home. Done.

I might hate Christmas shopping but I am not afraid of it! I don't get sweaty thinking about having to do it. I have no fear. I just tackle the task and get it done. I treat it a little differently than shopping the rest of the year. I try to make it a little more fun but I am still task-focused.

What I thought I'd do today is lay out how I organize myself to keep my shopping stress down during the holidays. Maybe some of what I do will help you too.

Ideas for stress-less shopping.

1. The first thing I do is get out a file folder. I mark it "gifts" and I keep all my ideas and notes in there.

2. I keep two lists. One is gifts that are for family. The other list is business gifts.
3. I peruse catalogs looking for ideas. I do this while I watch the evening news so I am getting two things done at once. (As soon as you order something from a catalog you'll never be at a loss for catalogs to show up in your mailbox. Many of those catalog companies own more than one kind of catalog so you'll get an assortment).
4. I tear out pages that have things I am interested in. I mark the item and note who it might work for. All those pages make it into my folder.
5. I may buy that item from the catalog. I often do, but I might decide to get it locally or get something very similar locally. The catalog page then acts as my reminder.
6. I never go looking for deals but sometimes they "come to me". When I am taking my ideas to the local stores, sometimes I find out what I am after is on sale. That's a bonus. That's a reason I have about a half dozen favorite stores on my shopping route. Early in the process, I find out if things on my inspiration list are available locally. Then I can wait for a bit to see if they go on sale.
7. I have two main shopping days. One is when I do all my catalog ordering and the other is when I go out in my car. That doesn't mean I don't have other shopping to do. I try to be organized enough that I can get most of it done in a couple of days.
8. I always shop alone. No distractions from chatting with anyone else.
9. Okay, so when I do my catalog shopping I do it by computer. I get each thing ordered and check them off. Oh, how good it feels to have all those items checked off my list.

10. By ordering I also know I will always have a box to wrap it in. And so many places do free shipping now so I'm not spending extra money.
11. My husband's hint is Tuesday evening. He does all his shopping on Tuesday evenings. That's when the fewest people are in the stores.
12. For the Saturday shopping I'm going to do, I go to bed early Friday and I'm up and out the door when the stores open.
13. I map out my route. I do. I figure out what store order I am going to go in so I can make an efficient trip.
14. Then I make a small list of what I am going to get at each store so I don't forget anything. I keep my big folder in the car in case I need to reference it but I am basically working off of a short list in my pocket.
15. Holiday traffic on Saturday afternoons can be atrocious! Crowded streets, traffic backups, and few parking spaces. Even if you live in a smaller town this same thing happens, so I know you know what I mean. I try to be off the streets by 1 PM; even if that means I have to go out again the next day.
16. Up until I go out and do my big days of shopping, I might start picking things up during lunch hours. That's when I do my destination-style shopping. If I need to go to some kind of specialty store, this allows me to concentrate on that one item at that special store. It makes that gift feel more special too.

I try to make the whole Christmas process feel special by keeping my stress down. The catalog perusing makes me feel like I took time to select each gift with a special person in mind. Then the actual shopping is more like an errand; an errand just to go get it.

Enjoy!

Cheers,