



## Unique and useful holiday gift ideas for the seniors on your list

Finding unique gift ideas for seniors, whether it's your parents, grandparents, friends, or your beloved next door neighbor, can be a challenge. Seniors are spending more time at home than ever before. Add to it that most will insist that they already have everything they need, and coming up with a unique gift can be even more daunting. However, there is always a great gift to be found! While any gift will be appreciated, the key to finding that great gift is to find something that is actually *useful* to them and will make their daily lives easier and more enjoyable.

Here's a list to get you started. Some gift ideas are more heartfelt, whereas others are quite practical, but they are

all useful. For the senior who claims to have everything they need, here are a few suggestions that might just surprise them.

### Family photos

While this may not be unique, it is always be appreciated. Gather and print family photos and place them in a nice album so your loved one can flip through them from time to time. This is an especially thoughtful gift for a senior with dementia as it will provide them a sense of comfort as they look through the photos. Even better - get home movies and old photos digitized. This will preserve the

memories and create a family archive full of memories they can enjoy on their electronic devices. Going for more unique? Make a personalized photo wall calendar online and have it printed. You simply upload your digital photos, choose a layout, and the print vendor does the rest. It's not only useful, but seeing photos of their loved ones will bring joy every day.

### **Ancestry DNA**

Speaking of family archives, go a little deeper into family history by giving your loved one a DNA ancestry test kit. Services such as 23 and Me provide a kit to help people discover more about their families and create family trees. This is perfect for those interested in gathering information for generations to come.

### **Coloring books**

Coloring books are not just for kids. Many older adults have been using these for stress-relief, and fun. Most people find coloring to be a relaxing and therapeutic activity. Adult coloring books come in many beautiful themes. Don't forget the colored pencils or markers! For the senior in your life with arthritis or dementia, choose a coloring book with larger, simple designs and easier to hold crayons or pencils.

### **Jigsaw Puzzles**

Puzzles are available in all sorts of sizes, themes, and difficulty levels. They make great gifts because they're not only fun, but they also keep seniors engaged and mentally stimulated, while being relaxing at the same time. As with the calendars, many online services are available to upload a photograph that can be made into a custom puzzle. If you can safely visit, do so and enjoy a cup of tea as you spend quality time talking and working at a jigsaw puzzle together. This will mean more to your loved one than the gift itself.

### **Grocery delivery services**

Everyone needs groceries, and it can be difficult for older adults to get out to the grocery store safely, especially in colder weather. Sign them up with their local market for weekly or bi-weekly delivery of essential items. A creative alternative – choose some times when you, or the grandchildren can shop for them and personally deliver their groceries. Imagine how happy they will be seeing a familiar face at their door.

### **Plan an adventure**

This can be simple, or more elaborate, depending on their mobility level. Get tickets for an art display that they



would enjoy, or special movie they've talked about, or plan an evening of stargazing, or a scavenger hunt (even from the car, with a thermos of hot chocolate) of local landmarks - the possibilities are endless. Pack a picnic basket of their favorite foods and snacks. As the weather permits, enjoy it together at the local park, or even in their home. The shared time and experience will be remembered and stand out as a top gift to them!

### **Smart phone or tablet**

Staying connected is more important than ever before. Many seniors are relying on technology such as cell phones and tablets to keep in touch with loved ones and combat feelings of isolation. If you know a senior who has yet to get a mobile device or is past due for an upgrade, this is a great gift idea. There are devices and plans for almost any price point and there are devices that are specially designed for use by seniors so they can easily keep in touch with loved ones through FaceTime, access online services, and get emergency help if needed.

### **Solar charger**

Solar chargers can be useful should there be an emergency. You can have peace of mind if the power would go out, that your loved one will be able to charge their devices

and contact their family and friends. They can be charged with sunlight, a bright lamp, or with the adapter so they'll be ready. They store enough energy to charge a smart phone or tablet several times before recharging.

### Media subscriptions

Watching favorite movies and TV shows, or listening to our favorite music is a great way to help pass time at home. This is especially true for seniors. Buying a movie service or music service for your loved one will pay off throughout the entire year.

### Weighted blanket

A weighted blanket is a gift that's as useful as it is comfy. These specially designed blankets use deep pressure stimulation (similar to the effects of a hug) to relieve anxiety, reduce stress, and help people sleep more soundly each night. Sleep is essential to everyone's health and well-being, so while a blanket doesn't seem like a unique gift, this particular type is a gift to feel good about giving.

### Household safety items – walker, cane, grab bars

Being able to safely move about their home independently, or with the help of someone is important to seniors. Maybe it's time for a new cane or walker to help prevent falls and retain mobility. The bathroom is one of the most likely places for a senior to experience a fall in their home. Many falls occur when trying to sit down or get up from the toilet, or slipping in the wet shower. Arrange to have grab bars installed where they need them so they

can feel more confident and safely get around.

### In-home care services

Having an in-home caregiver from Assisting Hands Home Care to help out with personal care, as well as companion care, is a thoughtful gift that can improve the quality of life for your loved one, as well as provide peace of mind to you. This personalized service can be as frequent as needed, and there are services to fit many budgets.

Hopefully this list will provide you with useful ideas for the senior on your holiday list. If nothing else, make a call to them, or stop by to safely visit your loved one.

What better gift to give this season than the gift of joy?  
*Happy holidays!*



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		5					8	
			5			1		9
			9				7	3
	7		4	5	2		9	
9	1				3			
2		7			1			
	4					3		
	5		2	6				

### Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. This puzzle is TOUGH!

Visit [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com) for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

*Sudoku puzzle courtesy of [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com)*



# Simply Delicious

## HEALTHY CHICKEN POT PIE SOUP

This dairy-free paleo chicken pot pie soup is loaded with veggies like carrots, cauliflower & peas, and is gluten free.

**Prep Time:** 15 mins; **Cook Time:** 30 mins; **Serves:** 4

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 1/2 pounds uncooked boneless skinless chicken breast, diced
- Freshly ground salt and pepper
- 1/2 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 white onion, chopped
- 2 large carrots, sliced
- 3 cups diced Yukon gold potatoes
- 3 cups finely chopped cauliflower florets
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme (or 1 tablespoon fresh thyme)
- 2 cups of unsweetened almond milk, cashew milk, skim milk, 2% (if you want a richer soup, you can use whole milk)
- 3 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup frozen peas

### Directions

- Place a large Dutch oven or pot over medium high heat. Add in olive oil. Once oil is hot, add in diced chicken breast and generously season with salt and pepper. Cook chicken for 4-6 minutes or until thoroughly cooked and no longer pink. Remove chicken from pot and transfer to a large bowl; set aside for later.
- In the same pot, add in 1/2 tablespoon olive oil, chopped onion, sliced carrots, diced gold potatoes, diced cauliflower and thyme. Sauté for a few minutes until onion begins to soften, then add in milk, chicken broth and salt and pepper. Allow mixture to simmer uncovered for 10 minutes or until potatoes are fork tender.
- Next remove 3 cups of the mixture from the pot and add to a blender. Blend until completely smooth (be careful!), then transfer puree back to the pot. Stir in cooked chicken and frozen peas. Allow mixture to simmer for 5-10 more minutes to thicken up a bit. Taste and add



more salt and pepper, if necessary. Garnish with extra black pepper and fresh thyme, if desired.

## HEALTHY GINGERBREAD MUFFINS

**Prep Time:** 10 mins; **Cook Time:** 18 mins; **Yields:** 12

### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice or cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup blackstrap molasses
- 1 egg, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk (any milk)
- 1/4 cup coconut oil, melted and cooled to warm
- Optional: Coarse sugar or sparkling sugar, for tops

### Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a muffin tin with muffin liners; spray the inside of the liners with nonstick cooking spray to ensure the muffins do not stick.
- In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt. Set aside.
- In a separate bowl, add maple syrup, molasses, egg, vanilla, yogurt and almond milk. Whisk together until smooth and well combined. Add dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Fold in the melted coconut oil (we do this last so that it doesn't harden when mixed with other wet, cold ingredients.)
- Divide batter evenly between muffin liners, filling about 1/2 of the way full. Sprinkle with a little coarse sugar or regular sugar (this will create a beautiful muffin and a delicious crunch on the outside). Bake muffins for 18-22 minutes until a tester comes out clean or with just a few crumbs attached. – [ambitiouskitchen.com](http://ambitiouskitchen.com)