

# Etsy: Your one-stop-shop for one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts

At Christmas time, we give each other gifts just as the Magi bestowed frankincense, gold, and myrrh on baby Jesus, who is the greatest gift anyone could ever know. The tradition of Christmas gifts shared among loved ones is beautiful ... but sometimes it can be so frustrating!!! What do you buy for the person who tends to shy away from anything new or different? Or the person whose interests change so quickly you're always two steps behind? And who could forget - "the person who has everything?!!!"

After throwing my hands up in the air, I stopped my annual sojourn to the mall and took a tour on the Amazon, instead. With my Prime membership, I am guaranteed free two-day delivery on hundreds of thousands of items. Here is where I find great prices and availability on those things that normally would cost me a parking nightmare, long lines, and murky encounters with other stressed-out shoppers - the kind which make me question the spirit of Christmas.

But, even the Amazon jungle has its limits. Sometimes I'm looking for something unique; something that doesn't come from a factory; something that isn't buried under plastic in a box. This used to require hit-or-miss trips to craft fairs and expensive commissioned pieces. This year, I've been finding treasures on Etsy, an online marketplace for artists, artisans, crafters, antique dealers, and other creative minds to peddle their wares.

I started using Etsy as a venue for finding graphic designs for invitations and games for Frank's Dr. Seuss-themed first birthday party, but soon I branched out into fine jewelry for my mom, reusable The Very Hungry Caterpillar sandwich and snack bags (perfect for St. Joan of Arc's waste-free Wednesday lunches), and everything a little boy could ever want that has a lion on it (sorry, Leo! You'll just have to get used to it).



*Lion Cupcake Topper available at PrettyPalace1*



*Crochet lion newborn bonnet by kreativkris. Screen printed personalized lion pillow by zoeysattic. Custom first birthday lion bib by*

*grandmasbabyboutique.*

I have been able to find things I never imagined just by typing a word into the search tab. (I just tried "Nativity" and found all of these diversely beautiful things!) Every seller I have dealt with has been professional, flexible, and eager to please.

My business-savvy best friend, Rachel, and her talented husband, Dave, sell his iconic Baltimore-themed photographs at their 13th Hour Photography Etsy store. Dave uses a special metallic paper to make his art appear 3-D. Dave says, "It's so rewarding knowing that someone spent their hard-earned money on purchasing a piece of my artwork. Whether they bought it to display in their home or give as a gift, it means so much to me personally."



*Baltimore Ravens Win Superbowl XXXV Crab Art Print by 13thhourphoto.*

So if you have a talent, consider sharing it - and making a little extra dough - on Etsy. And, of course, if you're looking for a special gift for an O's fan, Ravens fan, or photography connoisseur, check out 13th Hour Photography.

I wish I could share with you some of the awesome custom Christmas gifts I've found so far, but I'd be ruining the surprise for some very special people in my life who just might be reading this!

My suggestion: start shopping on Etsy soon. Like the second you finish reading this. Craftsmanship takes time - and so does shipping. (We have a few things coming from Europe that we ordered two weeks ago). So, what are you waiting for?!?! That perfect present is a click away!