

Jewellery Gifting Guide

Jewellery is a popular gift at any time of year, but this is particularly true at Christmas. Why? Because it's beautiful, comes in a range of styles and prices and can be as personal or intimate as you make it. Are you thinking of buying jewellery as a gift? This guide will tell you what you need to know before you buy, so that your gift is truly appreciated, and suited to the person you're giving it to.

This year, I know many of us are thinking that nobody's going anywhere, what do they need jewellery for? But it's when we're not going anywhere, the days are short, and you're not doing anything much that you need something to connect with others and to cheer you up. And jewellery is definitely something that that can do both those things and much more.

When buying jewellery as a gift, there are mainly two things you need to consider. The first is the person you're buying it for. What sort of person are they? What will they like? What will suit them? The second is the jewellery that you're buying. Will it fit? Will it be comfortable? Where can it be worn? What will go with? Read on to get the answers to all this and more in this guide.

Who Is the Jewellery For?

The last thing you want is for your gift to be cast aside and forgotten, because the person you gave it to didn't like it. So it's important to consider who you're buying the jewellery for. Here are some questions to ask yourself to make sure that your gift is truly appreciated.

What's their usual style?

This is probably the first and most important thing to consider. It's actually really difficult for a person to depart from their true style for any significant length of time. So unless you really want to try and change their style, it's best to know what their usual style is, and go with it. Here are a few things to look out for.

1. Do they like big statement pieces, or do they prefer more delicate items? If all you've ever seen a person wearing is minimalist jewellery, there's not much point in buying them a big statement piece. They may wear it for a little while, but it will soon be relegated to a lower spot in their list of favourites. Why not consider something from the Halo Jewellery Elements range? These are contemporary, colourful and not too large.
2. Do they prefer vintage or modern? If they prefer more contemporary items, look for pieces with geometrical designs and clean, simple lines. Pretty much anything from the Halo Jewellery range will work. Stay away from oxidised pieces. Oxidation is nothing but an intentional form of tarnish, and by the very definition, such pieces will have an older, more traditional feel to them.
3. How do they usually dress? Do they like dressing up? Some pieces are versatile enough to be dressed up or down. And usually these are the contemporary style smaller pieces. But that isn't to say that you can't find some great casual style larger pieces. These will usually be in beaded jewellery, with leather, resin and other modern materials bringing the piece together. It will, however, be more difficult to find pieces that are more dressy in these types of materials.

What do they like?

1. Think about what they're interested in. What do they believe in? What are they passionate about? There are a whole host of items you can give someone to make them feel special, and let them know that you thought of **them** and them alone, while buying your gift.

Buying something that you know they are interested in also shows that you know them well. You're not just buying three gifts and giving one each to three acquaintances; you've thought about them specifically.

So consider if they are interested in movies, books, music or sports. Think about whether they believe in zodiac signs, support women's empowerment or are passionate about the environment or animal welfare. And then pick a piece of jewellery that symbolises this. They will love it. Halo has zodiac signs in the Signs and Symbols range, as well as others that might suit.

2. Do they prefer silver or gold? I have a friend who never wears silver. So even if all her pieces aren't made of solid gold, they will be gold plated. So unless you want to introduce them to a whole different type of jewellery, stick with whatever colour you've seen them wear before. Halo sells only sterling silver off the shelf, but if I'm given enough notice, I can get pieces plated for you. Just email me at halojewelleryuk@gmail.com.

Incidentally, there are many different types of plating that are available – on different metals, at different thicknesses. The price will give you an idea, but always ask what you are getting.

3. Other than the metal itself, what do they like? Pearls? Gemstones? Enamel? There are lots of choices of budgets and colours in all three of these materials. So consider the colours they like. Brights or pastels? Warm or cool? Opaque or transparent? I'm not an expert on colour, so I've given a couple of useful links at the bottom which might help with this particular topic.

What suits them?

1. Do they have any allergies? Is their skin sensitive? Even if they don't have any allergies, avoid jewellery containing nickel and ear wires made from copper. Precious metals like gold or silver are always the safest bet.
2. Consider their age. I don't want to sound ageist, but there are just some things that will suit a sixteen year old, that a more mature person can't carry off. That's just how things are. Of course there will be exceptions, I'm just talking about the majority. So visualise the person you're buying the jewellery for, wearing the piece you're considering buying. If they look good, if they look comfortable in your mind's eye, you're on the right track.

If you consider these things about the person you're buying for, you're well on your way to getting them a piece of jewellery that they will treasure and use. Now here's something else you need to consider.

What Item of Jewellery Is It?

Whether it's a ring, a necklace, a bracelet or earrings, there are things about each one that you need to consider. Here are some tips.

Rings	
Size	<p>This is the most important thing. If you get the size wrong, the ring will be uncomfortable, or even worse, unwearable. If you are absolutely determined to buy a ring, but don't know what size to buy, consider buying an adjustable ring. They aren't as classy as those made to measure, but a safer bet.</p> <p>Another option is to consider an open ring. Here, the gap between the two sides is a feature. This looks stylish, and you don't need to worry too much about the size. They will usually come in small, medium and large sizes, and that's as much as you need to know.</p>
Width	<p>This is important if you know that the person already wears rings that they won't want to take off. Then your ring needs to complement the existing rings. It shouldn't be too wide. All the rings together must fit much before the knuckle nearest the wrist, otherwise they will be uncomfortable.</p> <p>Stacking rings are a great present, because you can wear as many or as few as you want, and they look delicate on their own, or with other rings.</p>

Earrings	
Pierced or Clip-ons	<p>Make sure that you know whether the person you're giving the earrings to has pierced ears or not. Most people these days do have pierced ears, but be sure. A person with pierced ears will generally prefer earrings meant for pierced ears rather than clip-ons. If you don't know, I would suggest steering away from earrings altogether.</p>
Dangle or Studs	<p>This is the first thing you need to decide, but it should be quite straightforward. Both have their pluses and minuses, and it's simply a matter of what the wearer prefers.</p>
Length of Dangle	<p>If you are buying dangling earrings, make sure the length is in sync with the person's style and preference of length. Err on the side of caution – too short is better than too long. A great way of getting round the problem altogether is to go for ear threaders. These are very popular these days, and they allow the wearer to vary the length of the earrings. Perfect!</p>
Ear Hooks	<p>If you're buying dangles, you can also look for interestingly shaped ear hooks. They can be a feature as well as a functional part of the earrings. Exaggerated ones, flattened ones, pointed shaped ones are just some of the variations you can look out for.</p>

Necklaces	
When will the necklace be used?	<p>Is it likely to be worn to work? In that case, pick something that's light, and can be comfortable all day, not something so heavy that it weighs them down, or slaps them on the chest and hurts them as they're running for a bus!</p> <p>Is it going to be worn for casual outings? Dinner with friends? Then you can be braver. Go for a little more glitz; maybe something with gemstones. But above</p>

	all, make sure it suits their style.
Necklace Length	<p>This is of paramount importance. The basic question to ask is where it should sit on the person? On their skin or on their clothing? This along with the style of necklace will determine the length. I've included a link to specific chain lengths, and where they sit at the bottom. But as a rule of thumb, any necklace length up to 45 cm (18 in) sits on the skin. Anything longer will sit on their clothing.</p> <p>Some lengths suit some styles better. Lariats are usually quite long. Chokers should sit snugly around the neck, but unlike what the name suggests, should not choke!</p>
Chain Thickness	<p>If you are buying a pendant necklace, consider the thickness of the chain in the context of the pendant. Normally, you will be offered only chain types that will be able to handle the type of pendant that you are buying. But in case you are buying the chain and pendant separately, here's what to look out for.</p> <p>If the pendant is quite heavy, go for a thicker chain, so that it can bear the weight of the pendant. Even if the pendant is light, if it is large in size, a thicker chain will look nicer.</p> <p>If the pendant is tiny and minimalist, go for a fine chain. That combination is always beautiful.</p> <p>Some necklaces don't give you a choice, and this is great because you don't have to worry. The designer has done your thinking for you. No designer worth their salt will put an incompatible chain and pendant together.</p>
Putting on and Taking off the Necklace	<p>This might sound trivial, but having a fiddly clasp is a real turn-off in terms of usability. Who wants to spend time messing around with a tiny clasp, wondering if all is well and giving the necklace a tug only to find out that it hadn't been fastened properly. So make sure that the clasp is a good quality, easy to use clasp. There are as many types of clasps as there are necklaces, so if I were to talk about all of them, this would become a very long guide.</p> <p>I personally like T-bar clasps the best, because they are so easy to use. The only downside is that the chain length is not flexible, so bear that in mind. My next favourite is the lobster clasp, because it can come in some reasonable sizes, and although not as easy as the T-bar, it has the flexibility of allowing extender chains.</p>

Bracelets and Bangles	
Bracelet or Bangle?	<p>And yes, that really is the first choice. What's the difference and what should you go for?</p> <p>Bracelets are typically flexible, and may or may not have a focal point on the piece. Bangles on the other hand will be firm in shape, and typically have no specific focal point on the piece. And whichever one you're buying, here's what to look out for. And cuffs are firm like bangles, but are open on one side, so they can be slid onto the wrist and pressed a little to size.</p>

Size	<p>Regardless of whether you're buying a bracelet or a bangle, the size needs to be right. A medium size bracelet is typically 18 cm (7 inches) and will fit most people. For larger boned or people who like their bracelets a little loose, go for 19 cm. A loose bracelet is uncomfortable, particularly if you wear it on your writing hand.</p> <p>Measurement of bangles is a little trickier because it depends not only on the wrist size, but also on the flexibility of the hand to be able to squeeze the hand through the bangle. Err on the side of caution and go for slightly bigger rather than slightly smaller.</p> <p>Most convenient for sizing is the cuff. Since it has an open side, the wearer can just bend it slightly to fit their wrist perfectly.</p>
Clasps	<p>Not relevant for bangles, but for bracelets, it's probably even more important than necklaces that you have a simple clasp, because you have only one hand free. My favourite has always been a T-bar style, and you can get some amazingly attractive ones. I have a bracelet that I bought years ago, and it's not even my most attractive one. But it gets worn more than any other, simply because it's so easy to put on before I rush out of the house.</p> <p>An alternative to the T-Bar clasp is the silicone slider clasp. It's easy to use, and the bracelet size is adjustable. It's particularly good for bracelets with a focal point, because you can tighten the bracelet to keep the focal point on show. The only downside is that the silicone does become loose over time.</p>

And Finally

Okay, I haven't covered every conceivable piece of jewellery, nor every conceivable type. But hopefully this will give you an idea of what to look out for, and help you make an informed decision on the gift you're buying. And remember, as with everything else, it's the spirit in which the gift is given, and the thought that counts more than the gift itself – always.

Useful Links

If you want to find out more about what colours suit you, please consider getting a session with Kelly Caira (<https://www.houseofcolour.co.uk/find-a-stylist/profile/8437>) or check out House of Colour (<https://www.houseofcolour.co.uk/>).