

Find the gift in four steps

Work top to bottom. Answer the grinder question first, because it overrides everything else.

STEP 1 · THE OVERRIDE

Do they already own a burr grinder?

No, and your budget is over \$25: stop here. A burr grinder (the entry benchmark is the Baratza Encore) is the single biggest coffee upgrade that exists, and nothing else on this page competes. **Yes, or budget under \$25:** continue to step 2.

STEP 2 · THE PERSON

Which one are they?

Barista: works behind a bar; already owns opinions. **Enthusiast:** home espresso or pour over nerd; owns a scale. **Casual:** loves coffee, does not study it. **New:** just getting into real coffee.

STEP 3 · THE BUDGET

Cross person with budget

Find your square in the grid below. Each cell is the pick that lands, based on the same logic as our online gift finder.

	Under \$25	\$25 to \$75	\$75 to \$200	Go big
Barista	Barista tools they will actually use: tamping mat, wand cloths, shot timer	A beautiful hand grinder, the heirloom tier	A precision kettle or a proper espresso scale	Dual boiler fund: cafe-grade gear at home
Enthusiast	A bag of genuinely great beans from a local roaster	An AeroPress plus beans to break it in	A precision kettle or espresso scale, the tool they talk themselves out of buying	A serious machine upgrade or a grinder above their current one
Casual	A properly funny coffee mug: under \$25 and used daily	An AeroPress plus a bag of great beans	Breville Bambino Plus: real espresso, tiny footprint	Breville Barista Express Impress: the no-research grand gesture
New	A pour over starter: V60 plus filters, the classic gateway	An AeroPress plus great beans, or a starter burr grinder	Breville Bambino Plus as the best first machine	Barista Express Impress: grinder, assisted tamp, and espresso in one box

STEP 4 · THE TIEBREAKER

Still torn? Use their vibe

Practical: pick the tool from their column. **Sentimental:** pick the hand grinder or anything engravable; heirloom beats spec sheet. **Funny:** the mug, plus something small and real so the joke is not the whole gift.

Prefer to answer questions instead? The interactive version lives at baristalife.co/pages/coffee-gift-finder. Buying for a whole team: baristalife.co/pages/corporate-gifts.

The occasion calendar

Coffee gifts fail when they are bought the night before. Fill in the names now, and note that anything shipped from a roaster or engraved needs lead time.

Occasion	When	Gift lane	Who I am buying for
Valentine's Day	February 14	Sentimental lane: hand grinder, engraved scoop, or the mug that says the thing	
Mother's Day / Father's Day	May / June	Upgrade lane: the tool they keep almost buying	
National Coffee Day	September 29	Small lane: great beans, a funny mug, an excuse	
Thanksgiving / host thanks	November	Consumable lane: beans and treats, nothing that needs counter space	
Holidays	December	The grid on page 1, planned in November, shipped by mid-December	
Birthdays	Write them here	Their exact square from page 1	
Thank-you / just because	Anytime	A bag from a local roaster beats a gift card of the same price	

The do-not-buy list

Every item below gets bought constantly and loved never. When in doubt, return to the grid.

- **A blade grinder.** It chops instead of grinding and makes coffee worse with confidence. If the budget only covers a blade grinder, buy great beans instead.
- **Flavored novelty beans.** The hazelnut-cinnamon-bomb tin from the gift aisle is stale by design. Real beans from a local roaster cost the same.
- **The giant novelty mug.** One joke, then it holds pens. If humor is the goal, buy a normal-sized funny mug that survives daily rotation.
- **A steam-toy "espresso" machine.** The cheapest machines labeled espresso cannot brew it and mostly teach disappointment. Under \$100, an AeroPress makes better coffee, full stop.
- **A pod machine for a pour over person.** You are not upgrading their coffee, you are arguing with it. Match the gift to how they already brew.
- **Another mug for a mug person.** Their cabinet is a museum with no vacancies. Beans, filters, or the grid instead.
- **A subscription to your taste.** Coffee subscriptions are great gifts only when they match the recipient's roast preference. Ask one spy question first: "dark or fruity?"
- **Anything that duplicates the grinder question.** Check step 1 before buying any gadget. A \$30 gadget next to a \$150 grinder gap is a missed gift.

This planner is free. If it saved you a gifting panic, the interactive tools, the caffeine database, and one useful coffee email a week live at baristalife.co.