

Before You Buy Bed and Breakfast Gift Certificates

From [Elizabeth Arneson](#),
Your Guide to [Bed & Breakfasts](#).
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A gift certificate to a bed and breakfast is a wonderful gift for any occasion, but there are a few things you should consider before purchasing one.

Location, Location, Location

Be sure the bed and breakfast is in a location the recipient will be able to get to easily or has expressed a strong interest in visiting. Buying a gift certificate for an inn that's even three or four hours away can easily turn into one of those "well, it's the thought that counts" kind of gifts.

Multiple-Inn Gift Certificates

Some online B&B directories, such as [BedandBreakfast.com](#) and [BnB Finder.com](#), offer gift certificates which can be used at numerous bed and breakfasts. State B&B associations often offer gift certificates good at any member inn. Using this option removes a lot of the anxiety you might feel at buying a gift certificate to one particular inn, because it lets the recipient find one on their own.

- [bbcanada.com](#)
- [BedandBreakfast.com](#)
- [BnB Finder.com](#)

Read the Fine Print

Be sure to ask about any "fine print" which may exist. Some B&Bs will only accept reservations with gift certificates (particularly if they offer a discount on them) at specific times, such as for mid-week stays or during specific months. This is the exception, not the rule (and some restrictions may even be illegal in some areas), but you don't want the recipient to have an unpleasant surprise when he or she tries to make a reservation.

The Right Gift?

Bed and breakfasts are wonderful, but they aren't for everyone. Some people are just more comfortable staying in traditional hotels. Make sure the recipient will actually be interested in staying at a bed and breakfast.

Special Packages

If you're buying the bed and breakfast gift certificate, perhaps you would also want to buy the inn's "Romantic Getaway" package -- or whatever other special offer(s) they might have available. Ask the innkeeper what packages they offer, and consider adding one or more to make your special gift even better!

Ask About Discounts

Some bed and breakfasts will give you a discount, perhaps 5 or 10 percent, on a gift certificate. This works for them because they're getting the cash without having (yet)

done any work to earn it. Even if the inn's Web site doesn't mention one, ask if a gift certificate discount is available. (Don't be disappointed if the answer is no -- it's still a great gift and a great value!)

Know Exactly What You're Getting

Some B&Bs sell gift certificates based on room nights (e.g. good for "two nights in a deluxe room"), while others sell them based on dollar value (e.g. good for "\$200 off the cost of a reservation"). The distinction may be important if room rates go up before the gift certificate is redeemed. There are advantages to both, so the important thing is just to make sure there are no misunderstandings.