

Gift guide: Consoles to bring out the gamer in you

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In this product image provided by Nintendo, the Nintendo Wii is displayed. (AP Photo/Nintendo) NO SALES

(AP) -- With two new motion controllers out this fall, video game companies are giving even the most hand-eye-coordination challenged of us a chance to find our inner gamer. And for those who already have, lower-priced console bundles and an experimental game streaming platform can be reason enough to get a second - or third - gaming system this holiday season.

Here's a handy rundown of what's out there, how much it costs and who might want it:

- Kinect for the Xbox 360 from [Microsoft](#) Corp.

This is the futuristic [motion controller](#) from Microsoft Corp. It removes remotes entirely from the gaming experience. Kinect is basically a fancy camera that tracks your movements, hand gestures and voice. It can also recognize faces and scan in objects so you can use them in certain games. For now, two people can play simultaneously, though that will likely change as more games are developed. This holiday season, retailers are also bundling Kinect with a low-end version of the Xbox 360 at a discount.

Good for: Families with young kids, anyone averse to games with lots of buttons and complex controls. [Wii](#) graduates or anyone who's been meaning to get a Wii all this time and just never got around to it.

Not so good for: Dorm-bound college students and city dwellers in tiny apartments, as Kinect needs at least 6 feet - though more is better - between it and the players to work. Hardcore gamers could go either way, so best to check first.

Cost: \$150 for the standalone Kinect camera system, or \$300 for the Kinect with a 4 gigabyte [Xbox 360](#). Both come with a [game](#), "Kinect Adventures."

Must-have game: "Dance Central" (\$50)

- PlayStation Move from Sony Corp.

Sony says it had considered selling a controller-free controller a la Kinect but then thought better of it. Many games, it turns out, simply work better when you are holding a remote in your hand. Sony Corp.'s Move is that remote, at least if you are a [PlayStation 3](#) fan. It blends motion controls pioneered by Nintendo Co.'s Wii with the complex but entirely useful controls of a traditional game controller.

Good for: Wii owners ready to move on to high-definition games and first-person shooters, though for now the bulk of Move games are more limited to more "casual" titles. Families or roommates who want to play together or watch Blu-ray movies are also a good bet.

Not so good for: Xbox fanatics, hardcore gamers who want a pile of new titles to check out right away for Move might be disappointed with the selection.

Cost: \$100 for a bundle that includes the PlayStation Eye camera, one Move controller and a game, "Sports Champions." For \$400 total, you get all that plus a 320 gigabyte PlayStation 3.

- Nintendo Wii and accessories

To celebrate 25 years of Super Mario, Nintendo is selling a limited edition red version of the Wii this holiday season, which could make for a good gift for anyone on your list obsessed with this classic video game icon. The console comes with a red controller and two games - "Wii Sports" and "Super Mario Bros. Wii" - for the same price as a regular, white Wii system.

A great new accessory this year is the uDraw GameTablet from THQ Inc. It's essentially a mini art studio that lets players of all ages paint, doodle and color using a small tablet and an attached stylus.

Good for: Kids, families ready to graduate from the now very old PlayStation 2, little brothers and little sisters.

Not so good for: Hardcore gamers, tech-geeks.

Cost: \$200 for the red Mario bundle, \$40 for each additional remote plus \$20 for a Nunchuck. The uDraw tablet is \$70, with extra games such as

"Pictionary" available for \$30 each.

Must-have games: "Epic Mickey" (\$50), "Kirby's Epic Yarn" (\$50)

- OnLive MicroConsole

This new game console is so small it could easily fit in a Christmas stocking, and at \$99 it's almost cheap enough to stuff in there. Most likely you haven't heard of OnLive, a promising startup that has come up with a way to stream video games through an Internet connection, much like how Netflix shows movies online. The console plugs into players' TV sets and comes with a generic wireless controller for traditional shooter video games. Players can rent or buy video games to download, watch live game play by other gamers and upload perfectly played sessions called "brag clips" for others to admire.

Good for: Adventurous gamers with their eye on the next big thing. Budget-minded gamers who want to try before they buy. OnLive offers short-term game rentals for a fee.

Not so good for: Players into more casual games or the Wii; those averse with the traditional game controllers. Anyone with weak Internet service at home. Your broadband connection must be at least 3 megabits per second near your TV set, though 5 or more megabits are recommended. Cable modems will easily exceed this but some DSL subscribers could have problems.

Cost: \$99 for the console. There is a Netflix-style "all-you-can-play" service for \$10 per month, though the games available through it are older. Separately, games are available to rent for three or five days for about \$5 to \$9. Buying games for unlimited play costs the same as a traditional hard copy for a console or PC.

Must-have game: "Assassin's Creed II" (\$30)

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