

how do you get a elf on the shelf

How do you get an Elf on the Shelf? The Elf on the Shelf has become a beloved holiday tradition in many households, bringing joy and excitement to children as they anticipate the arrival of their special elf each Christmas season. This whimsical character is not only a festive decoration but also a fun way to engage children in the spirit of giving and the magic of Christmas. In this article, we will explore how to get your own Elf on the Shelf, the story behind this popular holiday figure, the different options available, and tips for making the most of your elf experience.

The Story Behind Elf on the Shelf

Before we dive into how to get your own Elf on the Shelf, it's essential to understand the story that accompanies this charming figure. The concept originated from a 2005 picture book titled "The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition," written by Carol Aebersold and her daughter Chanda Bell. The story describes how Santa sends his elves to homes around the world to observe children's behavior and report back to him. Each night, the elf flies back to the North Pole, and each morning, he returns to a different spot in the house, creating a fun hide-and-seek game for children.

The tradition encourages good behavior, as children are aware that the elf is watching and will inform Santa of their actions. This magical element, combined with the delightful illustrations in the book, has made the Elf on the Shelf a staple in holiday celebrations for families worldwide.

Choosing Your Elf on the Shelf

When it comes to getting your own Elf on the Shelf, there are several options to consider. Here's a breakdown of the different choices available:

1. Purchase the Official Elf on the Shelf

The most straightforward way to get an Elf on the Shelf is to purchase the official product. Here's how you can do it:

- Visit Retail Stores: Many major retailers, especially during the holiday season, stock the Elf on the Shelf. Stores like Target, Walmart, and specialty toy stores are great places to start your search.
- Online Shopping: You can easily find the Elf on the Shelf on various online platforms. Websites like Amazon, Walmart, and the official Elf on the Shelf website offer a range of options, including the traditional elf, themed versions, and accessories.
- Pricing: The price of the official Elf on the Shelf typically ranges from \$25 to \$40, depending on the package and any additional accessories included.

2. Explore Alternative Versions

If you're looking for something different, there are many alternative versions of the Elf on the Shelf available. Here are some ideas:

- **DIY Elf:** You can create your own elf using craft supplies or upcycle an old doll. This option allows you to personalize your elf with unique colors and outfits that reflect your family's style.
- **Similar Characters:** Some companies produce similar elf figures with their own stories and themes. These can include variations like "The Christmas Angel" or "The Holiday Gnome." While they may not have the same lore as the original, they can still add fun to your holiday traditions.
- **Homemade Alternatives:** Some families opt for homemade alternatives, such as stuffed toys or figurines they already own. The key is to have fun and engage your children's imagination.

Setting Up Your Elf

Once you've acquired your Elf on the Shelf, the next step is to set it up in your home. Here are some tips to help you get started:

1. Choose the Right Time

- **Timing is Key:** It's best to introduce your elf at the beginning of the holiday season, typically after Thanksgiving. This helps build anticipation and excitement for Christmas.
- **The Arrival:** You can create a fun arrival story. For instance, you might leave a note from Santa explaining the elf's purpose and how he will be watching over your family during the holiday season.

2. Select the Perfect Spot

- **Visibility:** Place your elf in a location where your children will easily spot him each morning. Popular spots include the kitchen counter, living room shelf, or a child's bedroom.
- **Creative Hiding:** Each night, move your elf to a new location to maintain the excitement. Use creative settings, such as perching the elf on a bookshelf or hiding him inside a cereal box.

3. Engage Your Children

- **Involve Them in the Fun:** Encourage your children to "find" the elf each morning and create stories about their elf's adventures. You can also let them help choose spots for your elf to hide as they grow older.

- Fun Activities: Introduce activities or themes for your elf, such as baking cookies, playing games, or reading Christmas stories. This can enhance the overall experience and create lasting memories.

Maintaining the Magic of the Elf

To keep the magic of the Elf on the Shelf alive throughout the holiday season, consider implementing some of the following ideas:

1. Create Traditions

- Elf Breakfast: Consider setting up a special breakfast for the family with elf-themed foods, such as pancakes shaped like elves or Christmas cookies.

- Elf Movie Night: Host a family movie night featuring holiday classics that include elves or Christmas themes. This can further enrich the experience and provide bonding time.

2. Encourage Good Behavior

- Positive Reinforcement: Use the elf as a way to reinforce positive behavior by praising your children when they demonstrate kindness, responsibility, or good manners.

- Note from the Elf: Occasionally, let your elf leave notes with motivational messages or compliments to your children. This personal touch can make the experience even more special.

3. Capture the Moments

- Take Photos: Document your elf's adventures by taking photos each day. These pictures can become cherished memories for years to come.

- Create a Scrapbook: Compile the photos and notes into a holiday scrapbook that your family can look back on in the future, celebrating the magical moments you shared together.

Conclusion

In conclusion, getting an Elf on the Shelf can be a delightful addition to your holiday traditions. Whether you choose to purchase the official elf or create a personalized version, the key is to embrace the magic and joy of the season. By setting up your elf thoughtfully, engaging your children in fun activities, and maintaining the excitement throughout the holiday season, you can create lasting memories that your family will treasure for years to come. So, go ahead, find your elf, and let the holiday fun begin!

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best way to get an Elf on the Shelf?

You can purchase an Elf on the Shelf doll from various retailers, both online and in-store, especially during the holiday season.

Are there any specific stores that sell Elf on the Shelf?

Yes, popular stores like Walmart, Target, and Amazon often carry Elf on the Shelf products, especially around Christmas.

Do I need to register my Elf on the Shelf after I get it?

Yes, you can register your Elf on the Shelf on the official website to receive updates and tips for the holiday season.

Can I get a personalized Elf on the Shelf?

Yes, some retailers offer personalized Elves where you can customize the name and appearance of your elf.

Is there a specific age for children to start using Elf on the Shelf?

While there's no specific age, many families start introducing Elf on the Shelf to children around 2 to 3 years old.

What should I do if my Elf on the Shelf gets lost?

If your Elf goes missing, you can create a fun story about how he or she got lost and hide a new elf or toy as a temporary replacement.

Are there different versions of Elf on the Shelf?

Yes, besides the traditional elf, there are also options like the Elf on the Shelf pet and different themed variations available.

Can I make my own Elf on the Shelf?

Yes, you can create a DIY Elf on the Shelf using materials like fabric, felt, and craft supplies for a personalized touch.

When should I set up my Elf on the Shelf?

Many families set up their Elf on the Shelf at the beginning of December, often coinciding with the start of Advent.

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