

The Coffee Table Books to Give (and Keep) This Year

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Double down on these easy-to-love gifts.



Coffee table books hit that gift-giving sweet spot: they're easy to find, actually useful, and somehow they always feel super personal, even if you don't put that much thought into picking them. Who wouldn't love to receive a glossy 440-page tome that shows off the best mid-century modern homes around the world, or a pasta cookbook with a step-by-step guide to making ravioli by hand? Beyond being beautiful home decor, they also provide intel for future trips, inspire new hobbies, and nourish the armchair traveler in all of us.

Because two great books are always better than one, we made ready-to-give pairings for you, making it

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easy for you to beef up your present or gift couples, siblings, or roommates. Oh, and we won't tell if you land on buying one to give and one to keep. (Isn't that the best part of holiday shopping?) Here are the books we can't wait to give—and get—this holiday season.

Kwame Brathwaite: Black is Beautiful and Unseen: Unpublished Black History from the New York Times Photo Archive

In the past couple years, these two books have been among several new striking coffee table releases to chronicle modern black history in the United States. In the eponymous new book on his life and work, Kwame Brathwaite: Black is Beautiful, photographer Kwame Brathwaite's career is chronicled with a look at his campaign to challenge white beauty standards, and efforts to support a community of Harlem creatives in the 1950s and 1960s. (Expect to see intimate snaps of Miles Davis hanging out with other artists of the era.) In Unseen: Unpublished Black History from the New York Times Photo Archive, readers get an equally honest look at critical moments in black history that were somehow never published by the paper—including a photo of Rosa Parks arriving at the Montgomery courthouse. Paired together, these two books are powerful and important chroniclers of black history, and gorgeous ones at that.

Buy now: Kwame Brathwaite: Black is Beautiful, \$34

Buy now: Unseen: Unpublished Black History from the New York Times Photo Archive, \$23