

# The New York Times

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## Thrifty Indulgences, Delivered to Their Door

By MARIAN BURROS

**L**IKE almost everyone, I'm pinching pennies this year. So my annual roundup of mail-order gifts still has indulgences, though for less than \$50 (without shipping).

Such parameters made it harder to come up with a mouthwatering list, but there are some amazing finds. (Not to mention two splurges.)

One of my favorite discoveries is Brian Noyes, the owner of the Red Truck Bakery in Orlean, Va., who has a deft hand with pastries and an unerring sense of flavor balance.

And at last, Di Palo's, a landmark Italian market in Little Italy, is selling its superb Parmigiano-Reggiano online. Another shift: this year the list is not divided into sweets and savories because so many places offer both.

Anything I liked was reordered under another name, to ensure that others are treated as well as The New York Times. Prices don't include shipping unless stated. The latest date to order for Dec. 24 delivery is noted in parentheses.

**1. BETZ BAKING** Post Office Box 15, West Chesterfield, N.H., 03486; (603) 256-8625, betzbaking@yahoo.com. Beth Ann Betz offers a delicious plum torte, the recipe for which has been in this pa-

per many times, \$42.95 with shipping, upon receipt of a check or money order made out to Betz Baking (Dec. 15).

**2. CALLIE'S CHARLESTON BISCUIT** Charleston, S.C.; (843) 577-1198, calliesbiscuits.com. A dozen of these savory handmade cheese biscuits are perfect hors d'oeuvres, whole or cut in half; \$17.95 a dozen (Dec. 22).

**3. CHEFSHOP.COM** Seattle; (800) 594-0885. The ultimate accompaniments to enliven a cheese platter: L'Epicurien quince paste, 4½ ounces, \$8.23; Castagna a Castagna fig and walnut jam for cheese, 9 ounces, \$12.99; Marziana almonds, 7 ounces, \$9.99 (Dec. 16).

**4. DEAN & DELUCA** New York; (800) 221-7714, deandeluca.com. Cabernet-poached pear tart, with pears and frangipane in cookie crust, serves 6 to 8, \$48 (Dec. 22). Two loaves of indulgent chocolate babka, \$25 (Dec. 10).

**5. DIPALO'S** 200 Grand Street (Mott Street), New York; (866) 259-3502, dipaloselects.com. Choose between the more intense Reggiano fr slightly milk 2006, or try Caprino Sta aged goat c

walnut leaves in which it is wrapped, is \$24.99 a pound. Sweet and peppery sopressata, \$14.99 a pound (Dec. 22).

**6. DONSUEMOR** Alameda, Calif.; (888) 420-4441, donsuemor.com. Lemon zest adds an irresistible spark to these simple but elegant madeleines. A box of 54 is \$42 with shipping (Dec. 18).

**7. EFFIE'S HOMEMADE OATCAKES** Hyde Park, Mass.; (617) 364-9300, effieshomemade.com. Like a crunchy shortbread — buttery with just enough sugar. Six dozen, \$30 (Dec. 15).

**8. THE GRATEFUL PALATE** Oxnard, Calif.; (805) 278-9095, gratefulpalate.com. For fanatics who can never have too much bacon, a one-gallon red metal bucket filled with Loveless Cafe bacon popcorn. It comes with a packet of real bacon bits for topping, \$33 (Dec. 15).

**9. JUNE TAYLOR** Berkeley, Calif.; (510) 548-2236, junetaylorjams.com. Luscious pear vanilla butter, 8 ounces, \$14; candied Seville orange rind bottled in sugar syrup, 14 ounces, \$26; Sierra Reserve anise-sauce, deep and rich 18

katinasgreekcafe.com. Tiroplitas with feta, cream and herbs, and spanakopitas with spinach and feta, made the old-fashioned way: plump, buttery and rich. 24 of either or a combination packages, \$48 (Dec. 20).

**11. MARKET HALL FOODS** Oakland, Calif.; (888) 952-4005, markethallfoods.com. Ricciarelli almond cookies, an almond fest in a marzipan cookie, perfumed with orange, a dozen for \$15; Dolce San Lorenzo — unlike so many dried-up versions of Christmas cakes, this traditional Ligurian pan dulce is moist with figs, raisins, walnuts and almonds. One pound plus, \$30 (Dec. 16).

**12. PEARSON FARM** Fort Valley, Ga.; (888) 423-7374, pearsonfarm.com. Who knew pecans come in different varieties? The most deeply flavored are Natural Desirable pecan halves; two-pound tin, \$24. Toasted and sea-salted pecans are just right for snacking, and cinnamon roasted would be great on French toast; two-pound tins, \$30 (Dec. 16).

**13. RED TRUCK BAKERY** Orlean, Va.; (888) 423-7374, redtruckbakery.com. A juicy is nd paste t, is \$14. mel pumpin pie are

\$24 each, in an aluminum pan (Dec. 17).

**14. STONEWALL KITCHEN** York, Me.; (800) 207-5267, stonewallkitchen.com. Layered cream cheese biscuits are probably more tender than homemade, \$24.95 a dozen (Dec. 17).

**15. VIRGINIA CHUTNEY COMPANY** Washington, Va.; (540) 675-1984, virginiachutney.com. Clare Turner, an Englishwoman who grew up in East Africa, has merged her country's chutney wisdom with Southern recipes. The results are full of fruits, instead of gooey syrups. For the Christmas bird, there's cranberry chutney; for everything else, sweet peach chutney or hot peach chutney, 10-ounce jar \$6.95 (Dec. 17).

### To Splurge

**16. ALLEN BROTHERS** Chicago; (800) 957-0111, allenbrothers.com. Humanely raised veal, pastured and milk-fed, is succulent. A 4-to-5-pound rack roast, serving six, is \$199.95 (Dec. 19).

**17. HARDWICK BEEF** Hardwick, Mass.; (860) 434-9402 or (413) 477-6500, hardwickbeef.com. This dry-aged, grass-fed and -finished beef is tender and full of meaty flavor; 7½ pounds of rib-eyes, strips, sirloins, chucks and flatiron steaks, \$81 (Dec. 16).

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