

# Thrifty Indulgences, Delivered to Their Door

By [MARIAN BURROS](#)  
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LIKE 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-Reggianos 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.

### Multimedia



Interactive Feature  
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**1. BETZ BAKING** Post Office Box 15, West Chesterfield, N.H., 03466; (603) 256-8625, [betzbaking@yahoo.com](mailto:betzbaking@yahoo.com). Beth-Ann Betz offers a delicious plum torte, the recipe for which has been in this paper 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 BISCUITS** Charleston, S.C.; (843) 577-1198, [calliesbiscuits.com](http://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).

Seattle; (800) 596-0885. The ultimate accompaniments to enliven a cheese platter: L'Epicurien quince paste, 4 1/2 ounces, \$8.23; Casa di a Castagna fig and walnut jam for cheese, 9 ounces, \$12.99; Marcona almonds, 7 ounces, \$9.99 (Dec. 16).

**4. DEAN & DELUCA** New York; (800) 221-7714, [deandeluca.com](http://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. DI PALO'S** 200 Grand Street (Mott Street), New York; (866) 259-3502,

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[dipaloselects.com](http://dipaloselects.com). Choose between the more intensely flavored Parmigiano-Reggiano from November 2005, and the slightly milder Parmigiano of April 2006, or try both. Each is \$16.99 a pound. Caprino Stagionato, a complex organic aged goat cheese with the taste of the walnut leaves in which it is wrapped, is \$24.99 a pound. Sweet and peppery soppressata, \$14.99 a pound (Dec. 22).

**6. DONSUEMOR** Alameda, Calif.; (888) 420-4441, [donsuemor.com](http://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](http://effieshomemade.com). Like a crunchy shortbread — buttery with just enough sugar. Six dozen, \$36 (Dec. 15).

**8. THE GRATEFUL PALATE** Oxnard, Calif.; (805) 278-9095, [gratefulpalate.com](http://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](http://junetaylorjams.com). Luscious pear vanilla butter, 8 ounces, \$14; candied Seville orange rind bottled in sugar syrup, 14 ounces, \$26; Sierra Beauty applesauce, deep and rich, 18 ounces, \$15. An elegant organic one-pound fruit cake, perfumed with port and brandy, \$42 (Dec. 18).

**10. KATINA'S GREEK CAFE** Overland Park, Kan.; (913) 523-4557, [katinasgreekcafe.com](http://katinasgreekcafe.com). Tiropitas 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 package, \$48 (Dec. 20).

**11. MARKET HALL FOODS** Oakland, Calif.; (888) 952-4005, [markethallfoods.com](http://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 dolce 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](http://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.; (540) 364-1883, [redtruckbakery.com](http://redtruckbakery.com). A creamy Gruyère and onion quiche is \$22. The stollen, full of almond paste and fruits, in a sugar coating, is \$14. Mince-meat pie, above, caramel [pumpkin](#) pie and sweet potato pecan pie are \$24 each, in an aluminum pan (Dec. 17).

**14. STONEWALL KITCHEN** York, Me.; (800) 207-5267, [stonewallkitchen.com](http://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](http://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](http://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).

#### A high-mileage masterpiece

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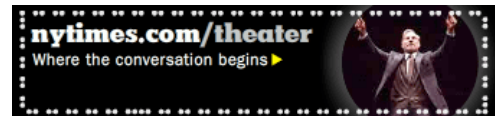
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17. **HARDWICK BEEF** Hardwick, Mass.; (860) 434-9402 or (413) 477-6500, [hardwickbeef.com](http://hardwickbeef.com). This dry-aged, grass-fed and -finished beef is tender and full of meaty flavor; 7 1/2 pounds of rib-eyes, strips, sirloins, chucks and flatiron steaks, \$81 (Dec. 16).

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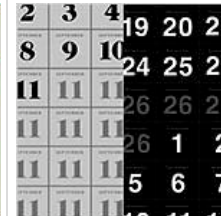
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