

COSITAS WE LOVE

If you're still searching for those last-minute gifts or you're determined to find a unique gift for that person who seems to have everything, let us help you out. Conexión staffers spent the past several weeks compiling a list we've called "Cositas we love" designed to help those still doing some last-minute holiday shopping. All the items are Latino-inspired and can be found in San Antonio.



Mama Ojeda's Homemade Tamales Holiday Baskets

Starting at \$32.95, Black Tie Affairs Catering, 210-226-9881, btacatering.com

With a recipe handed down by his mother and grandmother, Richard Ojeda, owner of Black Tie Affairs Catering, offers holiday baskets in four sizes that include homemade tamales (in pork, chicken, beef, vegetarian or bean and cheese jalapeño), containers filled with chili con queso, salsa, pico de gallo, tostada chips and Mexican cookies in various sizes and amounts based on the size of basket selected.

Pan dulce purses and pillows

Starting at \$6.99, Krazy Vatos Emporium, 2342 S. Presa St., 210-532-7100, krazyvatosemporium.com

If you grew up around any ounce of Mexican American culture, you'll recognize and appreciate these coin purses and pillows shaped like traditional pan dulce. This is a unique gift that's perfect as a stocking stuffer or for that hard-to-shop-for person. (Krazy Vatos — co-owned by actors Jesse Borrego and Dany de la Paz — is shutting its doors at the end of the year. Items will still be available online. Plans are to reopen the store in another San Antonio location in 2012.)



Virgen de Guadalupe puzzle

\$98, Tres Rebecas, 711 S. St. Marys St., 210-224-5733, 3rebecas.com

The pieces to this puzzle fit together Jenga-style, and the result is a piece of art that's perfect for anyone on your Christmas gift list who appreciates Latino-inspired craftwork. Tres Rebecas also carries other Latino-themed puzzle art, including calaveras.



Mexican Papier-mâché Ornaments and Figurines

\$14-\$15, Casa Margarita, 732 S. Alamo St., 210-222-8444

Handmade by artisans, these brightly-colored papier-mâché ornaments and standing figurines come from Guanajuato, Mexico. These wide-eyed and round-faced designs, including an angel sirena, an angel and La Virgen de Guadalupe, are part of many collectibles, furniture, housewares and other handmade works from Mexico and other Latin American countries carried at Casa Margarita.



Latino-themed books

Starting at less than \$10, Tres Rebecas, 711 S. St. Marys St., 210-224-5733, 3rebecas.com

This Southtown shop and bookstore carries an eclectic collection of fabrics, jewelry, home décor and other cositas — all with a Latino theme. Among our favorite items at the store is its collection of bilingual and Spanish-language children's books, including some by local authors Carmen Tafolla and Diane Gonzales Bertrand.



Fiesta Mug Gift Set

\$6.99, Fiesta Store, 2611 Broadway, 210-227-5191, fiesta-sa.org

Wrapped in cellophane and tied with a festive ribbon, this Fiesta-branded mug stands about 6 inches tall and includes a choice of hot chocolate or coffee mixes or hot tea bags. The Fiesta Store also offers an array of Fiesta-themed items such as T-shirts and other wearable, ornaments, magnets, desk accessories and more.



Hallmark's Sinceramente line

Starting at \$2.99, Hallmark retailers, hallmark.com

Why send your holiday greetings in English when you can do it in Español? Hallmark created this Spanish-language and bilingual line of greeting cards designed with Latino customs and dichos in mind. We love this navidad collection, but Sinceramente includes cards for all occasions, including bodas, cumpleaños and quinceañeras.



"Rudolfo" Ornament from CasaQ

\$34, San Antonio Museum of Art gift shop, 200 W. Jones Ave., 210-978-8100

This 4-inch tall glass ornament created by Darlene Tenes and her Hispanic lifestyle company CasaQ is part of a line of 17 Latino-themed ornaments. Available designs include Our Lady of Guadalupe, star piñata, Aztec calendar, pan dulce and more. For a list of other local retailers carrying the ornaments as well as information on the full line, visit casaqornaments.com.

Mexican cinema paper dolls

\$8.99, Tres Rebecas, 711 S. St. Marys St., 210-224-5733, 3rebecas.com

A unique item that seems better suited for display than for kid's play, these paper dolls are made in the likenesses of cinematic María Félix and Pedro Infante. Others include Mexican artist Frida Kahlo.



more gift ideas

We asked some busy San Antonians for their tips on last-minute gift ideas. Inevitably, gift cards were a common answer. For those looking for some other ideas — or ways to dress up gift cards — here are a few suggestions:

Elizabeth Ruiz, radio personality, KTSA:

"Specialized calendars are good. . . . I usually buy a whole bunch of Spurs calendars. I don't have many relatives or friends who aren't Spurs fans. Besides, the proceeds benefit the Spurs Foundation."

Karen Martinez, anchor/reporter, KABB-FOX 29:

"I think holiday sweets make a great last-minute gift. Bake some brownies or cookies and package them in a cool Christmas tin and you've got a quick and inexpensive present. I love getting sweets for Christmas because I can share them with friends who come by my home during the holidays."

Karina C. Alderete, community relations manager, San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau:

"Pick a gift that reflects their personality or tastes . . . colorful scarves that can also be used as wraps, tickets for a show at the Majestic, a Bolners gift basket with spices, rubs and grilling essentials."

Carlos H. Alvarez, promotions and licensing director, Seg-Son Music Inc./A.R.C. Discos:

"Gift sets tied to perfumes/colognes where the stores offer the principal item plus aftershaves or lotions are always a hit. Lotions are great for women. And this item you can find everywhere. For guys, many friends of mine like to grill, so I find that even the smallest item geared toward grilling are good and priced well. And, of course, wine. A great, quick last-minute gift for anyone."

Vincent Bosquez, coordinator of Veterans Affairs, Palo Alto College:

"Traditionally, my gift of choice has been gift cards, but sometimes there are occasions when a 'real' gift is needed. When that happens, my fail-safe solution has been Starbucks. They always have something seasonal and exciting in coffee cups and gadgets, chocolates and coffee, along with stuffed animals and CDs."

Cleto Rodriguez, stand-up comic and television personality:

"I do all my shopping on Dec. 23 at Walmart. I can find everything I need there. I go to Walgreens for the really last-minute gifts, too . . . they've really stepped it up when it comes to their toys."