

PRODUCED BY



CONDE NAST TRAVELLER PARTNERSHIP

# The best Spanish foods to give at Christmas

*Delight any foodie with these delicious present ideas*



Shopping for a discerning food fan can be tricky, but you can never go wrong with a good quality ingredient, decadent treat, or bottle of wine from somewhere special. Whether you're shopping for upcoming Christmas gifts or planning ahead for a birthday, these Spanish foods are bound to be a hit with any recipient.



## For the foodie who enjoys traditional flavours

When it comes to buying gifts for food aficionados, a safe bet is to go traditional with a high-quality, well-known product that they'll recognise and definitely enjoy. A great option (barring any dietary restrictions) is the revered Spanish Jamón Ibérico. Made from free-range pigs that have spent their entire lives snuffling through the Iberian undergrowth and growing fat on a diet of acorns during the autumn and winter months (a period known as *la montanera*), this ham has an incomparable flavour.

Spanish cheese is also a sure success, with 200 different types to choose from. The varying characteristics of each cheese showcase the country's diverse landscapes, weather, and production methods, but one that remains a favourite is the PDO (protected designation of origin) Manchego, made from Manchego sheep's milk.

And with cheese, there must be wine; opt for something different with a sherry. Produced exclusively in southern **Andalusia**, Marco de Jerez sheries are some of the finest in the world – aged naturally in caskets and available in varieties such as Fino, Amontillado, Palo Cortado and Moscatel, any one of them would be a welcome addition to any table.



## For the friend who loves a cheeseboard

Give a loved one everything they need to make any cheeseboard sing with a range of authentic Spanish cheeses. Start off with Galicia's most acclaimed export, San Simón da Costa PDO, from the province of Lugo. This decades-old recipe uses cow's milk from Rubia Gallega, Pardo-Alpina or Frisona breeds, the smoky flavour pairs beautifully with a glass of Spanish white wine. Look for those made from Albariño, a grape variety grown in Pontevedra and A Coruña – it's the star ingredient of a number of wines covered by the Rias Baixas PDO, characterised by its fruity notes and high acidity.

For a side salad that's as good as the cheeses, take deeply flavourful tomatoes from La Cañada PGI (Protected Geographical Indications) in the Almeria region and toss in good Spanish extra virgin olive oil – a bottle of any of its 31 PDO blends is the ideal way to round out a gift.



## For the ultimate supper party host

Everything required to create a fantastic supper is the ideal gift for a friend who loves to entertain; thank them for all the dishes they've served you over the years by giving them the makings of a full menu. The main event is Ternasco de Aragón PGI lamb, fed on milk and white straw for an incredibly tender meat. Serve it alongside the Patatas Gallegas, a potato with a PGI that covers the Agría, Fina de Sarbello and Kennebec varieties; they're delicious simply cooked with a sprinkle of salt. Add in a bottle from Spain's notable Rioja PDO, with more than 100km of vines stretching along both banks of the Ebro River and 14 different grape varieties, these world-renowned wines include reds, rosés and whites, both still and sparkling. No matter what your recipient's tastes, there'll be a bottle for them.



## For the foodie who sees snacking as a way of life

For a snack in pure Spanish style, go for a Barbote Mojama PGI or Isla Cristina PGI Mojama. This salted fish is made with the best part of the yellowfin or bluefin tuna caught off the coast of Cádiz and cured using the Almadraba technique inherited from the Phoenicians. It's so iconic in Spain that it's considered the Jamón Ibérico of the sea, and makes for a unique gift. Pair it with some distinctive canned asparagus, grown in the Navarre, Aragon and La Rioja regions, for a heartier snack.

A jar of the acclaimed Pimentón de la Vera PDO is also a great gift choice. It's typically made from one of four varieties of peppers – Jaranda, Jariza, Bola and Jeromin – grown in Extremadura before being dried, smoked and ground. And any snack can be made more exciting with the liberal glug from a bottle of extra virgin olive oil, a cornerstone of the Mediterranean diet and classified as Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.



## For the foodie with a sweet tooth

With Christmas just around the corner, Spanish pantries are filled with traditional products made from honey, cinnamon, sugar, pistachio or almond: recipes that have been passed down for centuries and are indicative of the Arabic influence on Spanish food culture and which make a great alternative to chocolates or sweets. Some of the most traditional (and delicious) to package up for loved ones include *buesos de santo* (stuffed marzipan tubes), *Mantecados de Estepa PGI* (shortbread cookies), *Turrónes de Alicante PGI* (nougat) and *Mazapán de Toledo PGI* (marzipan).



## For the foodie who's always on the go

**Spanish canned products** are the ultimate present for anyone with a busy lifestyle, easy to store in the cupboard until they're needed for a quick supper, a snack shared with friends to spice up an evening of conversation, or a late-night meal after a busy day. Choose products that share the same high quality as fresh ingredients; such as bluefin tuna, or the intensely-flavoured orange-hued mussels caught in Galician estuaries such as Vigo, Pontevedra, Arousa, Muros-Noia or Ares-Betanzos, which are covered under the PDO Mejillón de Galicia. For a sweet and spicy kick, add in a can of piquillo peppers from Lodosa PDO, a delicacy enjoyed throughout the region for its silky texture.

To find out more about Spain's quality food and wines, visit [Spain Food Nation](#).