

Christmas Shopping – Filipino style

It's that time of the year that all Filipinos look forward to, the Christmas Season. Christmas Season in the Philippines is one of the longest in the world, what with Filipinos putting up their Christmas trees, lanterns, Nativity sets (known locally as "belen"), the day after Halloween!

Here are a few tips on how to navigate Filipino Christmas Shopping Madness:

- **ALL** are given Christmas gifts, whether they be token gifts or gifts specifically catered to the taste of the recipient.

Your driver, maids, gardener, poolman, hairdresser, manicurist, masseuse, favorite bank teller, security guard in your home, mailman, garbage man, AAVA security guard, your favorite supermarket bagman, your kids' school teachers, your kids' tutors, your personal trainer, the nurse or secretary of your doctor, your favorite doctor(s), etc etc etc...

What are token gifts?

Token gifts are generic gifts that you give to almost everyone in your list. It can be food, a Christmas décor, a mug, etc.

Some suggestions for food are: "ensaymadas" (Filipino version of "hot cross buns" or the "sweet bread"), brownies, chocolate crinkles, ham, etc. all these are wrapped in Xmas packaging. Or you can opt to give Xmas hampers/baskets and decide how big/expensive you would give to different people. Fruit cakes are also favorite Xmas presents.

Another gift item to consider is Xmas décor - you will never go wrong giving Xmas décor.

Cash – these you give to your postman, your cable guy, your gardener, your pool man, your maids, drivers and any other household help you are sustaining. I am sure you will all receive these small brown envelopes with a note that reads "Merry Xmas" from your mailman, etc. 😊