

1. **Fruitcake.** This **Dean and DeLuca** fruit cake is not your usual, run of the mill cake, we all associate with being repulsive. But then again, what do Dean and Deluca NOT do right? Everything in their boutique satiates both my palate and aesthetic appeal. I had some of this cake and decided that not all fruit cakes are made equal and Dean and Deluca's is the fairest of them all. You can get it in white or dark cake. I prefer the dark, which is \$36.

2. **OXO tongs.** I can not function in my kitchen without these bad boys! I swear they have spared me plenty of oil splatter knick burns and torn up fish! They are great for flipping and handling most anything you make. I especially love using them for my brioche french toast recipe you can drool on [here](#).

3. **Torrón.** Dean and Deluca does it again with a classic I grew up eating, only this **turrón** is gourmet for you discriminating palate types. Torrón, or nougat, is originally from Spain and is a traditional Christmas and New Year's Eve/Day candy dessert, found in abundance and never depleted. The Italian also have a fantastic version, which is what D & D offers. This gift pack has 4 different flavors including orange, pistachio, 4 fruits, and almond. A gift set of 4 bars costs \$16. **new note: my fave turrón flavor was the all pistachio one. Finished it within the hour. The 4 pack didn't last a week. Perfect midnight snack if you're up that late. Yeah, that good!*

4. **I adore this nutmeg mill.** A friend of mine first showed it to me a few years ago and I immediately went on a hunt for it. It's perfect for grinding fresh nutmeg and once you use it, you'll never go back to ground nutmeg in a jar. Believe that. I found mine on Ebay for about \$14, brand new. This same one here sells at Williams & Sonoma for \$25. Great deal, either way.

5. LOOOOVE this book. Written by top chefs at the CIA, **The Professional Chef**, now it's 8th edition, is perfect for the home cook that wants and needs to learn basic and even advanced training and technique. Not only does it have a gorgeous bronzy-metallic cover, but it is filled with over 280 pictures of methods, technique demos and dishes you can make at home. Amazon. \$70. Thomas Keller approves this book. I think he loves it, too.

6. **Kaña Cuban Espresso.** I have officially moved on from Bustelo Cuban coffee. If you follow this blog, my Facebook and Twitter, you know I am vehemently obsessed with Cuban espresso. Well, earlier this year, I was introduced by to this gourmet Cuban coffee. This S*** is where it's AT! They found me on Twitter and offered me some and I've been a fan since. Now, I'm just trying to work out

an endorsement deal with them. The owner is a Cuban lawyer, so he knows the biz. While I work on that deal, you work on visiting their [site](#) and trying out their espresso. So silky smooth. **new note: the gift basket pictured is an ideal gift for the espresso lover or newbie. Comes with a stove top espresso maker, demitasse and saucer, creamer and sugar pots. \$60. Click on the picture to go to their site!*

7. I collect **mortars and pestles** for grinding some spices like coriander and for mashing *aguacates* for guac. I love this one because it looks completely different from all the rustic and international ones I've picked up along the way. And, it's just pretty as hell. I just wonder how practical it is. It's not cheap, so unless you're selling off some of your food shots, I'd stick with the good ol' wood or marble ones. This one is just sooo clean looking. \$ 105.

8. **Honey.** Love it. Use it almost every day in something. So this ceramic honey pot was a no brainer when I saw it at T.J. Maxx. Cute, practical and cheap enough to buy for all your honies. \$4 at T.J. Maxx or \$8 somewhere online. Oh, use the stirrer (which is shaped like a honeycomb) to stir your honey in your hot tea. Works like a charm.

9. **Snowball crystal votive holder.** I have 8 of these and one more would drive my wanna live-in part-time lover, crazy. These adorable and uber chic crystal votive holders are unique and classy. Made in Sweden by Kosta Boda, they are "snowballs" that will gracefully add ambiance to your holiday soirees. You can pick them up at Macy's, Neimans, Saks or even on Ebay for the low-low!

10. I couldn't end my gift guide without a **pressure cooker**, the tool of all tools for the serious cook, chef, newbie, etc... Pressure cookers cut down your cooking time by 75%, almost every time. No lie. I use them for just about everything. I have 7, working on getting up to 10, soon. The one pictured below is a 1946 Mirro Matic 4qt that I use to make smaller flans, and portions of dinner for just 4 people. I can't imagine not owning at least one. Consider a vintage one just because of the mystique, but if you fret blowing off the jigglers, definitely go for the new ones, which are full-proof and don't allow opening until all the pressure is released. You'll avoid a black bean covered ceiling! A good brand would be Fagor, sold at Macy's or guess where: yes, Ebay, for much cheaper. Click [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) or [here](#) for some pressure cooker recipes I've made!

* I was not paid for any of these "endorsements." I have tried everything and personally own most of these things. Dean & DeLuca did provide the turrón and fruit cake to taste and yes, I do love it! You will, too!

HAPPY SHOPPING, MERRY RECEIVING AND CONSIDER GIVING TO THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN YOU!

WHAT'S ON YOUR GIFT GUIDE!?

