

The Traditions of Gift Giving in the Philippines

Asian cultures such as the Philippines have a deep traditions regarding gift giving. This article discusses these different traditions and gives an overview of the kinds of gifts Filipinos appreciate.

Because of the generally warm nature of Filipinos, the tradition of gift giving in the Philippines is as varied and diverse as the number of islands it has. In summary, there is no "wrong occasion" to giving out gifts. From family events to formal functions - personal or business, a small token or a gift delivery is always appreciated.

For formal and corporate events, the more common gifts would include year planners, pens, bags and yes, even USB disk drives all engraved with the logo of the corporate function attended given during the event or through a delivery service afterwards. For less formal and casual events, other gifts such as food, figurines and flowers are always appreciated. It is important to note that the deeper the relationship one has with someone implies a pricier token, if not a sentimental one.

For instance, after signing on a huge account for a new business, it would be a prudent idea to send over a well-arranged bouquet of flowers or a food basket to your new partner. Above the gift, a personal note of affirmation saying "Congratulations to our new partnership!" or "looking forward to working together!" as well as other well wishes is tantamount to keeping a good working relationship.

It is also common tradition in the Philippines for one to bring food during gatherings. Although it isn't implied, a "pot luck" is very common where even with an overflowing amount food at the table, guests still bring in cakes and other finger food, if not a bottle of the host's favorite drink. This is because the host will always ask guests to take home food afterwards as a party souvenir, usually placed in plastic bags or containers. If food cannot be brought, other tokens such a variety of perfumed flowers will always find its place in the host's flower jar that usually sits by the living room. The host may also want to show off the bouquet and turn your gift into a table centerpiece for the feast.

At the end of the day, the phrase "it's the thought that counts" still holds true. No matter what kind of gift you give, the most important protocol to follow is that your token has sincerity written all over it. If you can't make a personal appearance when you give your gift, at least accompany it with a short note during delivery to add a personal touch. Gifts given with such intentions are more meaningful and are greatly appreciated by the host.

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