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6 local places to shop for Arizona-made host gifts

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Special for The Republic

The rush of the holidays and going full speed just to keep up with the shopping, cooking and festive parties leaves little time for the oft forgotten hostess gift. And the result is often an afterthought that takes the shape of a sad, pre-wrapped bundle of flowers or a random bottle of wine.

We've been there. But it doesn't mean we have to be again.

With just a little bit of planning, you can grab a more unique and thoughtful gift that your party hosts will appreciate, and support Arizona small businesses while you're at it.

Here are some of the best spots for locally made gourmet gifts that will ensure you never show up for a gathering empty handed.

Sphinx Date Co.

For more than 70 years, this all-about-dates company has sourced fruit from independent farms in Yuma and the groves at ASU and presented them stuffed with nuts, covered in chocolate or au naturel in pretty tins and baskets designed for gifting. And mother-daughter ownership team Sharyn and Rebecca Seitz stock their shelves with a bevy of other Arizona products including oil from Queen Creek Olive Mill, spices, dip mixes, prickly pear jam, nuts, wines and libations from Superstition Meadery. Head there early so you've got time to sip on a date milkshake while you shop.

Details: 3039 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale. 480-941-2261, sphinxdateranch.com.

ODV Wines

This cozy wine and bake shop is renowned pastry chef Tracy Dempsey's way of sharing two of her passions. In addition to an impressive Arizona wine section that your host will no doubt appreciate, Dempsey offers a haul of all things local — tea, hot sauce, honey, eclectic Embers Chocolate, Roastery of Cave Creek coffee and her own legendary bacon-pecan brittle. Browse the shelves for cute home and kitchen accouterments as well.

Details: 1325 W. University Drive, Tempe. 602-376-9021, tracydempseyoriginals.com.

D'Vine Gourmet

Looking for a creative gift in a hurry? Head here for the Made in Arizona box, which is ready to go in small or large sizes. The box contains a smorgasbord of all things Grand Canyon State, like prickly pear wine jelly, Hayden Flour Mills crackers, True Nopal Cactus Water and Kettle Heroes popcorn. About three-dozen local vendors are represented and goodies like D'Vine's signature caramels and prettily wrapped jars of its housemade jelly in fun flavors like black pepper merlot, apple chardonnay and tequila lime with habanero are sure to please.

Details: 72 S. San Marcos Place, Chandler. 480-275-5320, stores.dvinegourmet.com.

Arcadia Premium

Wine, beer and snacks, oh my! There's lots of Arizona adult beverages on offer, but also a cornucopia of homegrown treats. Iconic Cocktail Co. mixers, Kettle Heroes kettle corn, Kelton Lane Kitchen mustard and sauces by Cutino Sauce Co. are just a few.

Details: 5618 E. Thomas Road, Phoenix. 602-464-9000, arcadiapremium.com.

Sip & Shop

This woman-owned, Arizona-centric

boutique shows off wares from more than 60 local vendors spanning nearly every kind of gift. There is Arizona-themed home decor, drinkware, cute coasters and fun kitchen towels bearing kitschy verbiage like "The Real Housewives of Gilbert." And, as the shop's name indicates, you can enjoy a glass of wine or beer while browsing.

Details: 2486 S. Recker Road. Suite 101, Gilbert. Also, 2180 E. Williams Field Road, Suite 108, Gilbert. sipandshoparizona.com.

Desert Botanical Garden

No admission fee is necessary to access the garden's gift shop, which is a treasure trove of all things southwest desert themed. Why settle for a basic supermarket bouquet when you can come bearing a bag of Arizona wildflower seed mix, Arizona honey or a pretty potted succulent? Look for local candies, sweets and condiments, too.

Details: 1201 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix. 480-941-1225, dbg.org.