

WORTH READING

Gift inspiration: World fests, essays on life and guides

By Anne E. Stein

Special to the Tribune

Started holiday shopping yet? With Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa just around the corner, one or more of these titles should please any number of women on your gift list.

"Celebrating Women" by Paola Gianturco (PowerHouse Books, \$49.95)

From the joyous recognition of virgins in Swaziland to the celebration of Creole women cooks in Guadeloupe, this oversized title is packed with color photos and accompanying text describing 16 festivals from around the world that celebrate women. This is author/



photographer Paola Gianturco's second book examining women of the world; her first featured the unique skills of craftswomen from across the globe. While many of these festivals will seem completely foreign to us—a wife-carrying festival in Finland, a tribute in China to the goddess of the fishermen—each elaborate festival honors women in a particularly important cultural role, from lover to warrior to healer.

Writes Gianturco in her introduction: "It would make my heart sing if this book could help women everywhere understand one another more completely so we could find an understanding of our similarities—and differences—and a new cooperation that could tackle the problems beleaguering our world."