

Shopping in Long Island City

From [Laurel Angrist](#)

Fun Stores for Unique Gifts in Hunters Point

Shopping in Long Island City? What! Stores amongst the industry?

The [Hunters Point](#) section of [Long Island City](#) is in the midst of massive change. Residential high-rises have soared, restaurants and bars multiplied, and even a beach has opened up. Shopping has started to change, too.

Chain stores and shopping malls haven't arrived just yet, but you will find a small number of shops and boutiques -- both new and old -- giving residents local options for unusual gifts. Visit these offbeat local shops when you want a unique gift for that special person.

1. [Art-O-Mat - Long Island City Art and Artists](#)

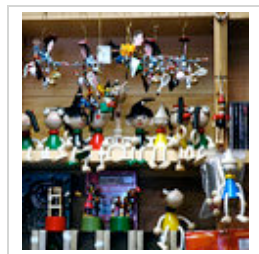
Art-O-Mat is a fun neighborhood store on Vernon Blvd where visitors can shop for local handicrafts and artisan-made items, or browse the back room gallery for work by neighborhood artists.

The store's hottest items include prints of Long Island City street scenes by artist **Sharon Florin** (\$75 framed; \$60 unframed), magnets made by local artists featuring neighborhood icons like the Pepsi Cola sign (\$2.50-\$4.50), and a wide range of handmade jewelry, pottery, and even CDs by area musicians.

This place is perfect for unique holiday gifts and souvenirs and affordable one-of-a-kind items.

- [Art-O-Mat](#), 46-46 Vernon Blvd, Long Island City
- Friday and Saturday 12-7, Sunday 12-5, and by appointment

2. [Slovak-Czech Varieties](#)



This import shop carries gift items originating in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. It runs the gamut from fine Prague glassware (\$5-\$25) to food and Czech and Slovak folk music.

What will bring you back every Christmas is the wall stocked high with puzzles, marionettes, and [wooden toys](#). These make great gifts for kids, and will put a gleam in the eye of many adults.

Up for a culinary adventure? Try a loosely translated cookbook. I recommend the Czech National Cookbook (\$25) with big color photographs and step-by-step instructions for traditional dishes like "Potato-Prune Dumplings" and "Old Bohemian Easter Cake."

[View Full-Size](#)

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- [Slovak-Czech Varieties](#), 10-59 Jackson Ave, Long Island City, 718-752-2093
- Monday - Saturday 11:30-7:30, Sunday 11-5

3. Celtic Arts

This small Irish gift shop sells lovely Celtic jewelry at affordable prices, including silver pendants and earrings (\$25-\$80) and gold and antique pieces for \$100 and up. It's a place to find Belleek china (\$25-\$300), widely collected pottery from Northern Ireland.

An entire wall showcases paintings by Irish-American artists, but the most original art is by shop owner and artist Sean Crean. He makes stunning mosaics out of hand-cut Italian glass (\$500-\$1000).

Cheaper gift items include prints of Scottish and Irish family histories (\$20), and printed Irish blessings (\$40 framed; \$20

unframed).

- **Celtic Arts**, 24-15 Jackson Ave, Long Island City, 718-482-7624
- Monday - Friday 10:30-6, Saturday 12-3; but closed Saturdays in summer

4. [The Purple Pumpkin](#)

The Purple Pumpkin is the place to go when you're stumped for a gift idea or need a party item, especially cards, balloons and overstuffed gift-baskets.

They have a good selection of kids' toys and some of the hottest items are the creative wooden animal puzzles (\$10), bath toys (\$5-10), and baseball stadium replicas.

The store employees will help you create an original gift basket for any occasion (\$25+), with bath products, gourmet food items, or baby shower gifts. The store also stocks good choices for last-minute gifts like frames and photo albums (\$15-25) and scented candles (\$1-\$10).

- [The Purple Pumpkin](#), 47-14 Vernon Blvd, Long Island City, 718-784-7300
- Monday - Friday 10-7, Saturday 10-5, Open Sundays 11-3 in December only

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