NEW FOR 2017
THIS YEAR'S SEASONAL TRENDS MADE EASY

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS

TWO GREAT RECIPE SUPPLEMENTS INCLUDED!



Everything you need for the perfect Christmas!



NADIYA HUSSAIN
PHIL VICKERY &
KIRSTIE ALLSOPP

COOK THE **BEST** CHRISTMAS **MENU EVER!**

+ NADIYA & PHIL EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

328 FESTIVE IDEAS

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO GIFTS, CRAFTS, RECIPES, DÉCOR AND MORE

★ WIN! ★
A FAMILY TRIP TO Lapland UK
(and a stay in a five-star hotel!)



It's a wrap!
STYLE YOUR GIFTS LIKE A PRO! TOP TIPS INSIDE…

THE HOLLY & THE IVY
CREATE STUNNING NATURAL DECORATIONS

Christmas in four simple steps!

1

Trends to try

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Magical days out

3

Tempting recipes

4

Creative projects



"The best pre-Christmas day out ever!"

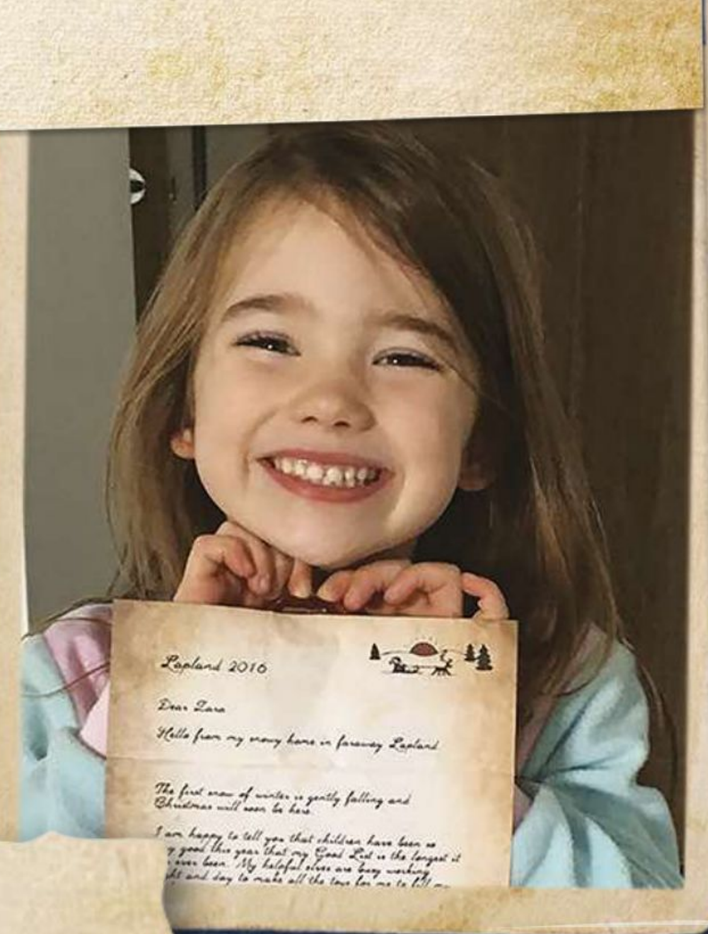
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Carrie Longton,
Founder of Mumsnet





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laplanduk.co.uk

To book your invitation
Open mid Nov - Christmas Eve

INSIDE!
ALL YOU NEED FOR A **PERFECT** CHRISTMAS!

WELCOME!

How do you celebrate Christmas? Are you already dusting off the fairy lights, preparing parties with friends and planning a feast for the family? Or do you prefer something cosier – perhaps some simple decorations and a restful week at home for two? However you like to spend the festive season, *Simply Christmas* will help you celebrate the way *you* want. We've got recipes, décor ideas and craft projects, plus gift guides to help you choose the perfect present. And our ideas for days out will inspire you to create happy family memories – don't miss our competition to win a trip to the magical LaplandUK! Whether you're a party animal or prefer a silent night, have a very merry Christmas!

Charlotte

Charlotte Martyn
Editor

Join us on Facebook for more fantastic festive ideas…
www.facebook.com/simplychristmasmag



Your fabulous recipe supplements!



Cover photography: Kirsty Allsopp by Rita Platts, Phil Vickery by Tim Sutcliffe, Room decor by Talking Tables, SKATE at Somerset House by James Bryant, Salmon tartlets by Waitrose
Ornament on this page supplied by www.tch.net

EDITORIAL
Editor Charlotte Martyn
Senior Art Editor Julian Dace
Deputy Art Editor Benedict Blyth, Louise Stevens
Production Editor Cecilia Forfitt
Photography Simon Lees
Contributors Vicki Atkinson, Jess Byrne, Helen Dorritt, Jenny Oldaker, Marie Parry, Zoë Patching, Amanda Robinson, Jessica Sharp, Vicky Sheridan, Claire Watkins, Zoë Williams

ADVERTISING
Call 0117 300 8206
Group Advertising Manager Penny Stokes
Advertising Manager Anna Summerson
Deputy Advertising Manager Victoria Allan

MARKETING & CIRCULATION
Direct Marketing Manager Kevin Slaughter
Direct Marketing Assistant Charlie Herne
Head of Newstrade Marketing Martin Hoskins
Newstrade Marketing Manager Janine Smith
Subscriptions Director Jacky Perales-Morris

PRODUCTION
Production Director Sarah Powell
Production Managers Louisa Molter, Rose Griffiths

LICENSING
Director of International Licensing and Syndication Tim Hudson
tim.hudson@immediate.co.uk
International Partners Manager Anna Brown

BUYING TEAM
Paul Torre, Karen Flannigan, Corinne Mellerup

PUBLISHING
Publishing Directors Kerry Lawrence, Catherine Potter

DISTRIBUTION
Frontline
Printed in England by Wyndeham Group

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Editorial team
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Subscriptions team
immediatemedia@buysubscriptions.com
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Chief Executive Officer Tom Bureau
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TRENDS

Global chic or glittering gold? Traditional red and green or rainbow brights? Find plenty of inspiration for your Christmas decorating in our pick of the season's trends.



RECIPES

Cook up a Christmas feast your guests won't forget, from the traditional turkey with all the trimmings to a selection of puddings to round things off in scrumptious style.



CRAFT

Let your creative side take over and spend an afternoon (or crafternoon!) with our easy handmade festive projects. We've also picked ten of the best festive family days out.



HOME

Find decorating ideas, lighting tips and advice on wrapping like a pro, plus a festive fragrance guide. We also meet the teams behind London's Christmas windows!



GIFTS

Presents for kids, gifts for her and treats for him, plus ideas for crafters cooks and gardeners. We've scoured the shops to find the perfect gifts for your friends and family.

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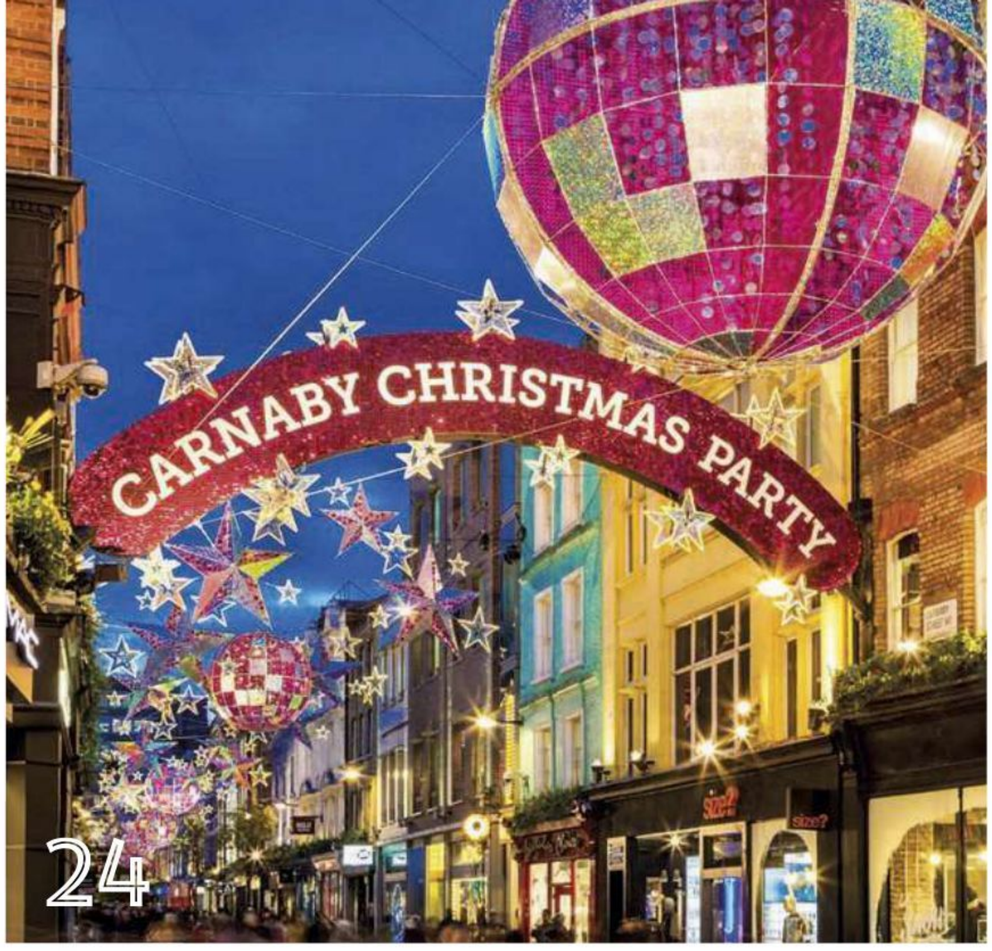
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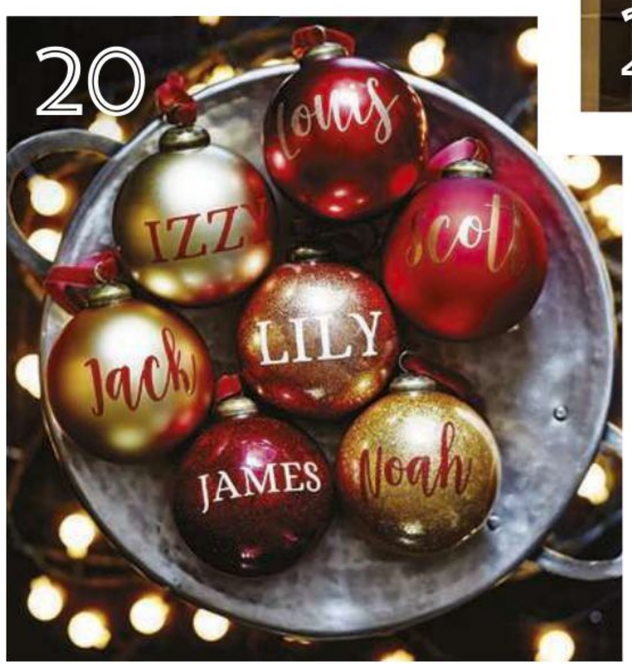
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Start planning next year's celebrations now!

Win Green

For wherever your imagination takes you...

If you were looking for the perfect children's Gift this Christmas then look no further!
The enchanting collection from Win Green will provide hours of fun for your little one.

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Christmas COUNTDOWN!

A little preparation goes a long way when Christmas is coming. Keep calm and get organised with our complete 'to do' list…



CHOOSE YOUR CHRISTMAS

Set out your ideas for the sort of Christmas you want – from cosy and intimate to a full family gathering – and you'll have a starting point for all your other festive decisions.

SET YOUR BUDGET

Even if your festivities are on the modest side, the costs can spiral. Make a list with everything on it (presents, food, cards, decorations, travel) then set a budget for each. You'll keep track of spending much more easily and it'll act like a planner too.

START CRAFTING

If you're intending to make gifts for the whole family, or rustle up your own decorations, start now. Judge how long each gift will take to make and decide if you can fit them all in. Getting the family involved in making the decorations will leave you time to knit, weave or sew your beautiful gifts.



SHOP EARLY

Battling the crowds in December and panic-buying on Christmas Eve doesn't have to be an essential part of the run-up to the big day. Start your Christmas shopping nice and early and you'll have lots crossed off your list before the rush starts.

BOOK NOW

If you're a fan of panto, book your tickets in good time to get the seats you want. Check out Christmas markets and Santa's grotto options while you're at it. Take a look at page 57 for ten ideas for great family days out, and see page 61 for your chance to win a trip to LaplandUK.

5 APPS FOR A FUSS-FREE CHRISTMAS



THE XMAS LIST

(£1.99 on App Store)

Keep your Christmas gift list and spending under control with this handy app to track purchases.



SWIFT GIFT

(free on App Store & Google Play)

Select a friend in your contacts, pick a gift and this app will deliver it direct to their door!



INKLY

(free on Google Play & App Store)

No time for cards? Snap a written message and transfer it to one of 1,300 card designs!



GIFT FINDER BY NOTHS

(free on App Store)

Avoid the high street and let this app handle your Christmas shopping.



SECRET SANTA TOMBOLA

(free on app store)

Give the tombola a quick spin to see what Santa recommends!

Words: Amanda Robinson; Props supplied by www.tch.net

10 things to do in NOVEMBER



LET THE FOOD COME TO YOU

Avoid a scrum in the aisles by booking a slot for a supermarket delivery in the week before Christmas. These delivery times get snapped up quickly, so think fast! If you can't get a slot close enough for Christmas for fresh produce, book one the week before for heavy or freezable items.

DEAR DIARY…

There's always lots going on before Christmas so invest in a family wallplanner. Put everything on it, like carol services, parties and nativity plays, then everyone will know what they're doing!

DÉCOR THEME

Whether you like to co-ordinate your decorations down to the last bauble, or it's more of a mash-up, now's the time to think about it. Get into the loft to see how the decorations are doing – check for breakages, test the lights and work out if you need to buy anything.

GET PERSONAL

Make a gift unique with a bit of personalisation. You can find all sorts of Christmas storybooks printed with the name of your choice, but order early. Letterfest do some really cute ones (*www.notonthehighstreet.com/letterfest*). Or why not make a special photobook with all your favourite shots for proud grandparents? Snapfish have some great options (*www.snapfish.co.uk*).

COUNT THE DAYS

Don't forget to sort your Advent calendar before December starts. If you want to treat yourself or a loved one, lavish calendars with a gift behind each door are available across a range of interests, from beauty products (*www.latestinbeauty.com*) to a daily nip of whiskey (*www.drinksbythedram.com*)!



SOME LIKE IT HOT

This might sound a bit dull, but get your boiler and central heating serviced this month if they haven't been checked for a while. No one wants to wake up to stone-cold radiators on Christmas Day, especially if you have a house full of guests.

STIR UP SUNDAY

Stir Up Sunday is the last Sunday before Advent (so this year it's 26 November) and it's traditionally the day the Christmas cake and pudding are prepared. Check out Kirstie Allsopp's Christmas cake recipe in our baking supplement, and see page 39 for a delicious traditional pudding.

PARTY TIME

Planning a festive bash? Send your invitations out early as people get booked up quickly – you could always plan your invites for New Year's Eve now as well. Even if you're just having 'open house' drinks, it's good to know how many to cater for.

CHILD'S PLAY

Before things gets too hectic, now's the time to sort any personalised gifts from the kids – plaster footprints from the pottery store, or handprint paintings of Christmas trees. They're more than just presents – they're keepsakes!

SUBMIT YOUR LIST

Remind the children to write their letters to Father Christmas in good time. The NSPCC will be running their 'Letter From Santa' scheme again this year – in exchange for a donation, you'll receive a personalised letter from Father Christmas. Find out more at *www.bit.ly/SCletter*.

20 things to do in DECEMBER



MAKE IT EASY

Why not type all your Christmas card addresses onto a label template so you can print them out? You can reuse the list every year, just updating where necessary. You'll find lots of templates online at sites such as www.labelplanet.co.uk.

STRETCH YOUR LEGS

Avoid Christmas cabin fever by planning a few outdoor activities during December. If you're near Westonbirt Arboretum, their woodland trail is open at weekends from 1-18 December, and is a magical, light-filled event. Book your tickets at www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt-christmas.

MAKE A WREATH

No self-respecting front door should be without a festive wreath, and it's not too hard to make your own, whether you fancy using foliage or something else – see page 45 for our ingenious fabric wreath.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christmas is what your freezer was made for! Do a quick stock-take before buying in bulk – a clear-out might uncover useful standbys. Bags of forgotten veg? Perfect for a quick and warming soup!

THE BIG FREEZE

Once you've tidied up the freezer, start preparing for Christmas day. Batch bake mince pies and sausage rolls and they'll keep for weeks in the freezer. You can freeze herbs and fiddly things like pigs in blankets – just remember to take them out in time to thaw properly. Staples like bread and milk can be frozen too.



CHARITY CHRISTMAS

Charity gifting is a great way to share with those in need, whether you're buying vouchers for items such as vaccines or crops, or picking up a gift for a friend. If you want to make a direct donation don't forget to use Gift Aid if you're eligible.

IT'S A WRAP

Hands up who spent Christmas Eve evening wrapping presents last year? Getting the bulk of the gift-buying out of the way early also means you can wrap them at your leisure. Take a look at page 76 for some professional giftwrapping tips. And remember to attach the labels securely!

LAST UK POSTING DATES FOR CARDS

SECOND CLASS Tuesday 19 December
FIRST CLASS Wednesday 20 December

For parcels, or addresses outside the UK, visit *www.royalmail.com* or ask at your local Post Office.

RADIO TIMES

A quiet afternoon in front of a film can be just what's needed amid the bustle of Christmas. Keep on top of the schedules with the annual bumper edition of *Radio Times* – this year's is available from Saturday 9 December.

JUMP TO IT

Why not dress up for charity on 15 December? Wear your favourite Christmas jumper, donate to Save The Children and you can 'make the world better with a sweater'. Find out more at https://christmasjumperday.org.

TRACK SANTA

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) have been tracking Santa's progress across the skies for 60 years. During December you can see where Father Christmas is around the world at *www.noradsanta.org*.



CHRISTMAS WEEK



FRESH OR FAKE?

An artificial tree will be looking good on Christmas Day even if you put it up in the middle of November. But if you prefer the real thing try not to buy it too soon or you'll be hoovering up needles every day for a month. A Nordmann fir should stay fresh for up to two weeks – remember to keep it well watered! See page 66 for more advice on winter greenery in your home.

SOS SUPPLIES

We're talking essentials here: stock up on batteries (or better still, invest in some rechargeable ones) – it's the one thing you don't want to run out of on Christmas Day when the toys are unwrapped. And while we're on the subject of essentials, don't forget matches, sticky tape, plasters, foil…

ON THE GO

Travelling over the festive period? Everything is at full stretch, the roads chock-a-block, so the last thing you want is be stranded on the roadside with a car full of presents and a load of grumpy passengers. So before you head off, check the tyres, battery and oil, and top up the antifreeze.

PERISH THE THOUGHT

Leave buying your fruit, vegetables and other perishable items as late as possible. Pick from the back of supermarket shelves to find packets with longer use-by dates, to save you opening your fridge to find mouldy ham on Boxing Day.

BE MY GUEST

If you're playing host this Christmas, get any guest bedrooms ready at the start of the week to save you tidying up around your visitors once they arrive. Check you have enough clean towels and bedding – though guests coming by car usually won't mind bringing their own if you're running a little short. And make sure you've got enough chairs for Christmas dinner too!

THE BEST LAID PLANS…

Even if you've planned your Christmas shopping with utmost precision, there could well be some essentials that slip through the net. Make sure you know the opening times of your local corner shop in the run-up to Christmas, in case you need to dash out for a loaf of bread. A note of pharmacy opening times is useful too.

CHRISTMAS EVE

CHOP CHOP!

Save an hour or two on Christmas morning by preparing some of your Christmas lunch the day before. Cranberry sauce, stuffing and pigs in blankets can all be prepared ahead of time. Vegetables can be peeled, chopped and left to soak on Christmas Eve but will lose precious nutrients. Parboiling then refrigerating them is a better option. Or just set aside the right quantities of everything in advance, as that will save time too.

DRESS IT UP

Set the table the night before if you can. If you're planning a big sit-down breakfast on Christmas Day then a carefully chosen centrepiece will last all Christmas and can stay in place all the time. Otherwise, save time by getting all your cutlery and glasses in place the night before. Go natural with bowls of nuts and citrus fruits threaded with fairy lights, or a sparklefest of glittery reindeer, stars and twinkly tealights. See page 37 for fresh ideas for dressing a festive table.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS…

It's fun to help the kids sort out a snack for Santa and Rudolph. Get out a pretty plate and set the tray properly. Let them write a little note too. Who knows, they might wake up to a reply from the man himself in the morning.

AND RELAX!

Take time to wind down before the big day. Whether it's an informal supper with the family or tucking yourself away with a book and a drink, make sure you celebrate all your hard work and look forward to Christmas!



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Why not support a local animal rescue charity this year?

We have a great selection of gifts online. You can also sponsor the animals as a gift for someone or purchase something for the animals through our Amazon wishlist.



Every purchase will make a real difference to the animals.

National Animal Welfare Trust

Charity No 1090499

Visit the website www.nawt.org.uk



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SIMPLY
CHRISTMAS

TRENDS & TRADITIONS

Get the lowdown on this year's style and meet the real stars of Christmas!

Whether you like to surround yourself with traditional decorations and classic red and green at Christmas, or you want to give your home a festive style injection, we've packed the next few pages with this year's trends for decor. From nomadic style that borrows details from far-flung countries, to a playful palette of rainbow shades, there's something for everyone. We'll also be introducing you to the people behind some of our favourite festive traditions, from the Nutcracker to good old Christmas crackers!

Photography: www.talkingtables.co.uk

STYLE IT UP

Think about your lighting when using lots of metallics. Gold and glitter look great by day, but a few carefully arranged candles and fairylights can create a stunning effect come the evening!

Photography: www.talkingtables.co.uk



MAKE LIKE A TREE

Set your dinner table with these glorious gold leaf napkin rings, and bring shimmering natural style to your home. £35.95 for six, www.miafleur.com



OH, CHRISTMAS TREE!

Whether you're lacking the space for a real tree or you simply love modern, minimalist style, this bauble ornament should fit the bill nicely. £15, www.debenhams.com



SEASONAL SCENE

With its gold-dusted church, trees and sparkling trim, this elegant bell jar decoration is a lovely finishing touch for your mantelpiece. £19.50, www.tch.net



GOING CRACKERS!

Give your guests a treat with a set of these ornate Tales of the Maharaja crackers to pull before dinner. £12 for a pack of six, www.johnlewis.com

SPARKLE AND SHINE

★

Nothing says Christmas like glitter and gold, and this selection is the ideal starting point to inspire your festive glow



STAR BRIGHT

For easy seasonal sparkle, these star-shaped decorations will bring dazzling Christmas cheer to any room. £6.99 for three, www.gingerray.co.uk



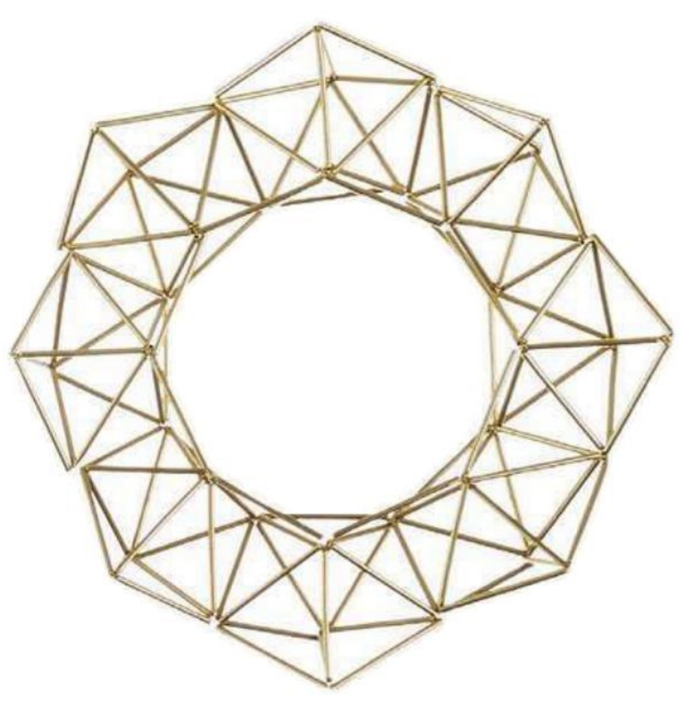
LIGHT OF MY LIFE

Create a magical glow with this gold-plated blossom tealight holder – just the thing to turn any room into a chic, cosy winter nest. £42, www.beandliv.com



POP GOES THE SPARKLE

This star confetti cannon is perfect if you're seeking something special for your dinner table, and it'll ensure Christmas goes with a bang! £1.99, www.pipii.co.uk



SCANDI-WREATH

We love this geometric wreath, which adds contemporary charm to any festive scheme with its Scandi-inspired style. £35.61, www.etsy.com/shop/authenticnordic



STELLAR STYLE

Hang this mains-operated LED branch star somewhere for all to see to lend an understated touch of seasonal magic to your home. £18, shop.nationaltrust.org.uk



BACK TO NATURE

Made from bark, this simple, Nordic-style tree decoration is just the thing for enhancing a rustic, nature-inspired décor scheme. £3.95, www.limelace.co.uk



WHEELY GREAT

Symmetrical, elegant beauty is at the heart of this fascinating copper wheel hanger, which will work perfectly with any colour palette. £3, www.johnlewis.com



SHINING EXAMPLES

Give a subtle nod to Eastern inspiration with a selection of these shimmering hand blown metallic glass baubles. £5 each, www.handmadechristmasco.com

NOMADIC NOËL

★

Take inspiration from around the world this Christmas with a selection of treasures that capture a global festive style



GET GLOWING

These quirky tealight holders, available in three muted shades, will make your home the envy of all your guests. £8.95 each, www.notonthehighstreet.com/nest



FOLLOW THE STARS

Combining bold design and vintage style, these antique zinc stars add a rustic touch of class to any Christmas tree. From £14.95 for set of two small stars, www.nkuku.com



FURRY FRIEND

Take inspiration from cold northern climes and add fake fur to your festive decorating this year. This cushion is a perfect starting point. £29.50, www.marksandspencer.com



LIFE'S A BIRCH

Take a break from from the traditional with this beautifully subtle handmade birchwood wreath. From £15.80, www.notonthehighstreet.com/redlilly

Photography: www.houseoffraser.co.uk

STYLE IT UP

Adorn your tree with trinkets from your travels, find decorations at Christmas markets or ask globetrotting friends to bring you back an unusual bauble instead of sending you a postcard.

STYLE IT UP

Play up a dark colour scheme with gold accents, feathers, luxurious fabrics and candles. Gifts wrapped in metallic paper and tied with black ribbons add to the unashamedly opulent look.

Photography: www.houseoffraser.co.uk



PRETTY PLUMES

Look no further for a festive talking point than this feather tree, an unusual twist on the traditional Christmas fir. £8, www.dunelm.com



PIECE OF ART

An iridescent sheen makes this vase an excellent vessel for holly, pine and other seasonal foliage, and it catches the light beautifully. £12, www.debenhams.com



SHAKE A TAIL FEATHER

Ensure you're bang on trend for Christmas 2017 by incorporating peacock feather decorations like this spectacular door wreath. £55, www.tch.net



ULTIMATE ELEGANCE

There's nothing quite so elegant as a finial bauble. This one will be treasured for years to come, thanks to its deep, striking shades and swirls. £6, www.johnlewis.com

THE LOOK OF LUXE

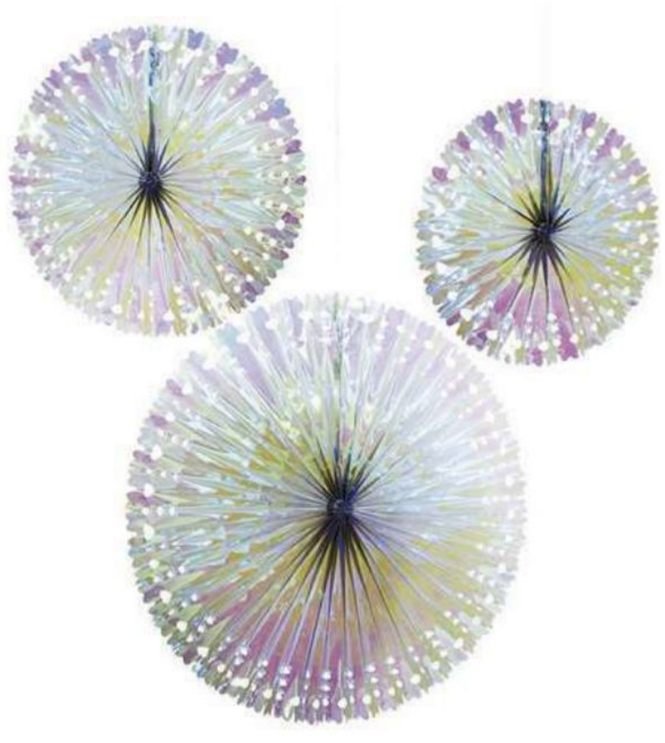
★

Treat yourself to a truly indulgent Christmas this year, with luxurious fabrics and striking decorations in rich colours



PERFECT PALETTE

Vibrant peacock blue and gold make a dazzling combination for this set of tealights, which create a flickering glow when lit. £15 for two, www.tch.net



SUBTLE SHIMMER

Give Christmas parties a stylish edge with eye-catching iridescent decs, like these pretty hanging fans. £9.99 for three, www.talkingtables.co.uk



DARK AND STORMY

Deep, rich tones like the colours in this large petrol bauble are a great way to add drama to an indulgent decorating scheme. £8, www.houseoffraser.co.uk



SUMPTUOUS SNAPS

Luxurious red velvet and gold crackers add some instant opulence18 to your Christmas dinner table. £19.99 for six, www.cotswoldtrading.com



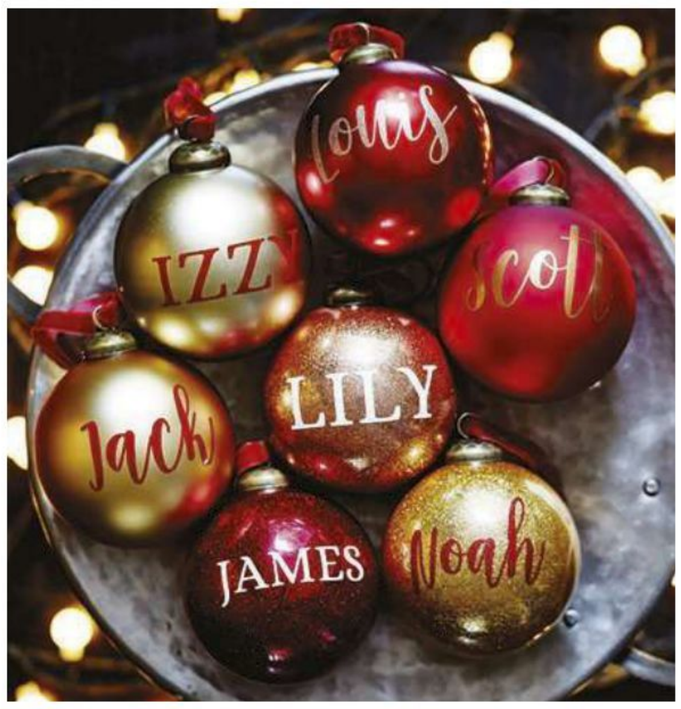
CHAIN REACTION

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a few DIY decorations, and this Santa paper chain is perfect for providing instant yuletide cheer. £3.99, www.talkingtables.co.uk



BERRY MERRY CHRISTMAS

Pinecones and pretty green foliage combine with red berries to create a wreath that will make a wonderful welcome to your home. £30, www.houseoffraser.co.uk



NAME IN LIGHTS

These beautiful personalised baubles will be the talk of your tree, and they'd also make super gifts for friends and family. £10, www.handmadechristmasco.com



PRETTY PLATTER

'Tis the season to nibble mince pies and all manner of other Christmas favourites, and this spruce-shaped plate is the perfect way to serve them! £15, www.debenhams.com

TIMELESS TRIMMINGS

★

Add classic seasonal style to your celebrations by embracing joyful decorations and a traditional festive palette of red, white and green



HELLO DEER!

These reindeer decs add instant seasonal style to your tree – their simple shapes will stand out beautifully among the branches. £3.50 for six, www.tch.net



HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS

Pop this merry sign on a child's door and let the excitement build as you count down the sleeps until Christmas Day! £3, www.wilko.com (from the end of October)



HAPPY HOLLY-DAYS

For a decoration that's chic but understated, classic yet contemporary, nothing could be nicer than this delicate holly bauble. £4.99, www.dobbies.com



GOOD ELF

From their cheeky smiles to their smart red and green bows, these elves will add plenty of fun to your festivities. £25 for six, www.nancyandbetty.com

STYLE IT UP

There are lots of ways to make a traditional colour scheme your own. Focus on red and white for a Scandinavian flavour, or red and green for more of a Highland feel. You choose!

Photography: www.tch.net



A TOUCH OF CLASS

This show-stopping fuchsia pink bauble is a special piece that's sure to add a dose of the exotic to your decorating. £6, www.johnlewis.com



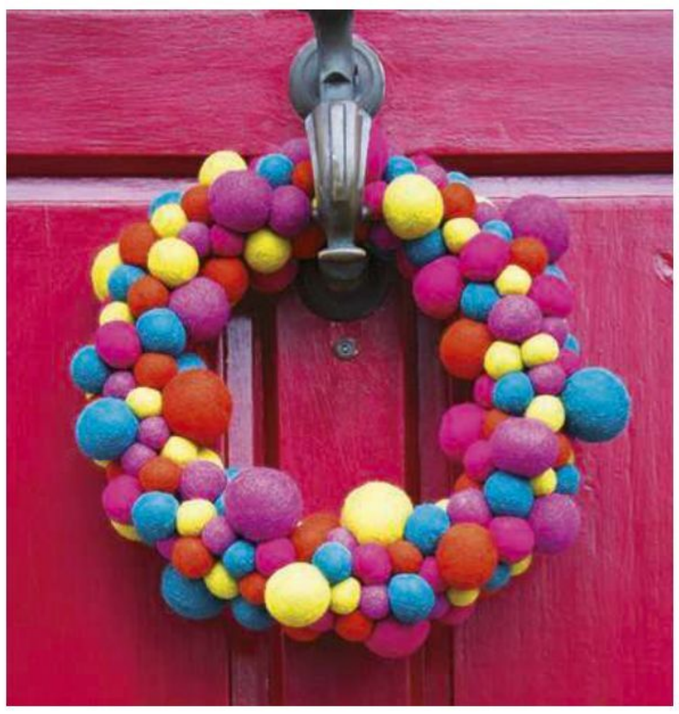
POM-POM PARTY

Pretty pom-poms and twinkling lights come together in this charming garland, which will look magical all year round. £29.95, www.theletteroom.com



CUTE CHARACTER

Give your tree a Peruvian flavour with the vibrant Lima Llama collection, which includes this sweet piñata decoration. £6, www.johnlewis.com



COLOUR BURST

A felt wreath makes an unusual alternative to the traditional foliage version and it can be enjoyed year after year. £51.45, www.notonthehighstreet.com/feltsogood

BRIGHT IDEAS

★

Inject a little fun into your festive celebrations with bold colour, a sprinkling of glitter and decorations that are merry and bright!



MEXICAN MAGIC

These decorations are hand-painted in Mexico city and will deliver a splash of cheer wherever you hang them. £4.50, www.notonthehighstreet.com/dejaooh



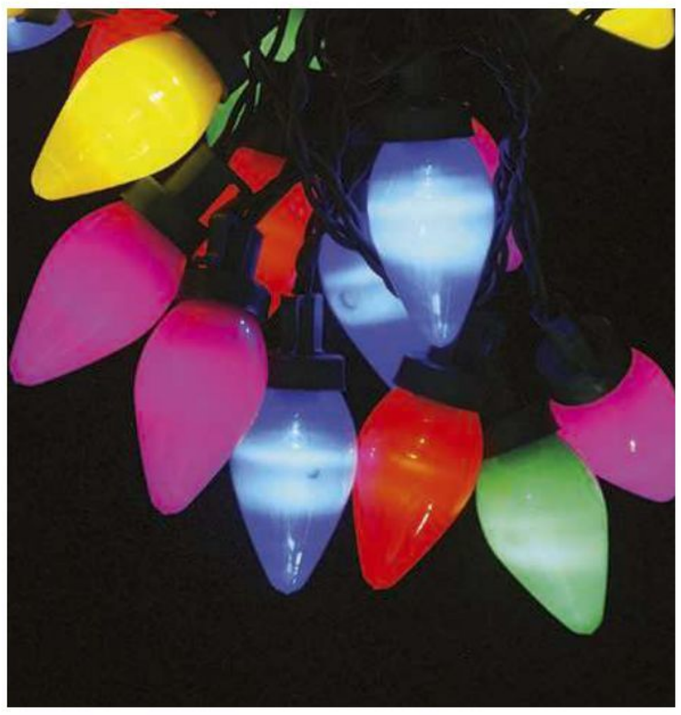
RAINBOW STYLING

Go back to basics with a brightly coloured set of bold and simple silk baubles that will look wonderfully striking on any Christmas tree. £14, www.tch.net



PRETTY IN PINK

Your guests are sure to be tickled pink when they spot this incredibly fancy peacock perched among the branches of your tree! £3, www.tch.net



LIGHT THE NIGHT

Shy away from traditional festive fairy light colours and get a gorgeous glow from the bold shades of these vintage festoon party lights. £15.95, www.glow.co.uk

STYLE IT UP

The key to this look is to let your playful side take over. There are no rules, so go as kitsch and colourful as you dare, with flamingos, feathered wreathes and faux trees in all shades and sizes!

Photography: www.theletteroom.com

MEET THE CHRISTMAS HEROES!

Ever wanted to know what it takes to light up Regent Street, or wondered who grows the sprouts for Christmas dinner? We chat to the people who make the magic happen!

THE BALLET DANCER

Rina Kanehara is dancing as Clara and the Sugar Plum Fairy throughout the festive season in the English National Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker*.

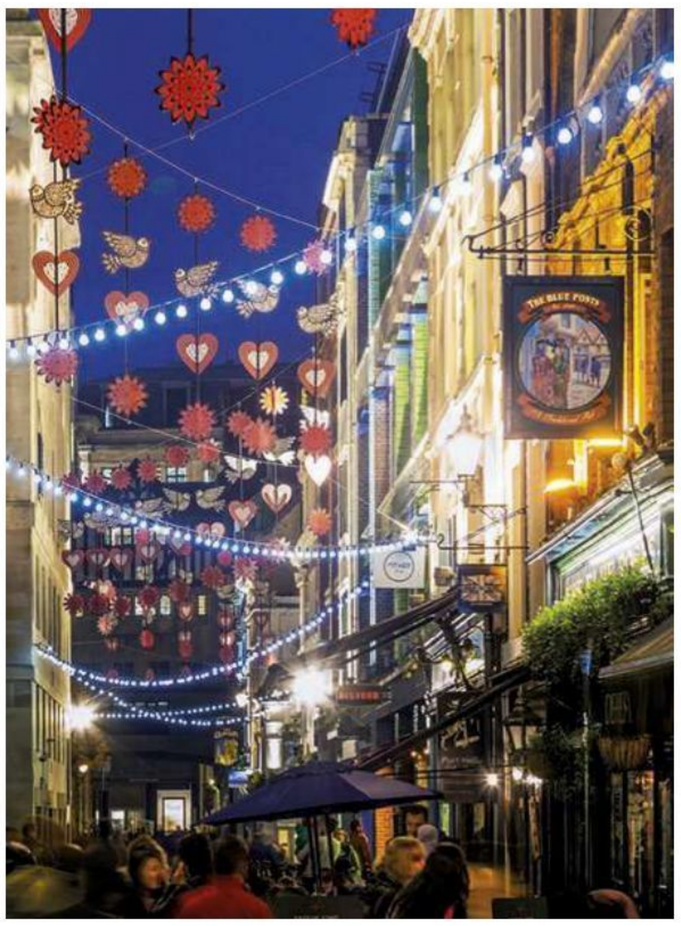
This year will be my third Christmas season dancing in The Nutcracker with English National Ballet. In my first year I danced the part of Lead Snowflake, and in my second year I had the amazing opportunity to dance as Clara/Sugar Plum Fairy which is one of the main roles in The Nutcracker – it was the first principal role I danced in a full-length ballet, so it really meant a lot to me.

I love the Sugar Plum Fairy costume. It's so sparkly, and the tutu is slightly shorter than usual. It's a really comfortable costume to dance in and that's a very important thing for me!

I can't describe how grateful I am to be part of this amazing production and to perform in London! Our Christmas season is usually about four weeks long, so we know that lots of people are going to see the production. I get very excited every time I go on stage. I do feel a little nervous sometimes, but for me, that's all part of the special feeling that I only feel when performing. I absolutely love dancing on stage, but it's also very special to see the reaction of the audience after the show – it's one of the best things about dancing in The Nutcracker!

www.ballet.org.uk/production/nutcracker

Words: Cecilia Forfitt; *Nutcracker* photography: Laurent Liotardo



THE LIGHTING EXPERTS

Hannah Stearn is visual project manager at James Glancy Design, the team that creates Christmas light installations in some of London's most famous streets

In January, when the last of everyone's fairy lights are being tidied back into the attic, Christmas is only just beginning for us! Pitching is the first task for the design team, and when all the ideas are signed off we create a full-scale prototype to unveil to our clients, inviting them in from the midst of summer to our very own Winter Wonderland. Meetings to discuss upcoming schemes often begin in January, so by the end of Christmas we're already planning the year ahead. We work all year round to ensure London is lit up in style come the festive season.

Ideas for the installations can come from a favourite book or a captivating exhibition – inspiration comes from the most unlikely of places. The initial ideas come from the mysterious mind of Mr Christmas himself, our creative director Paul Dart, who has been lighting up London for many years.

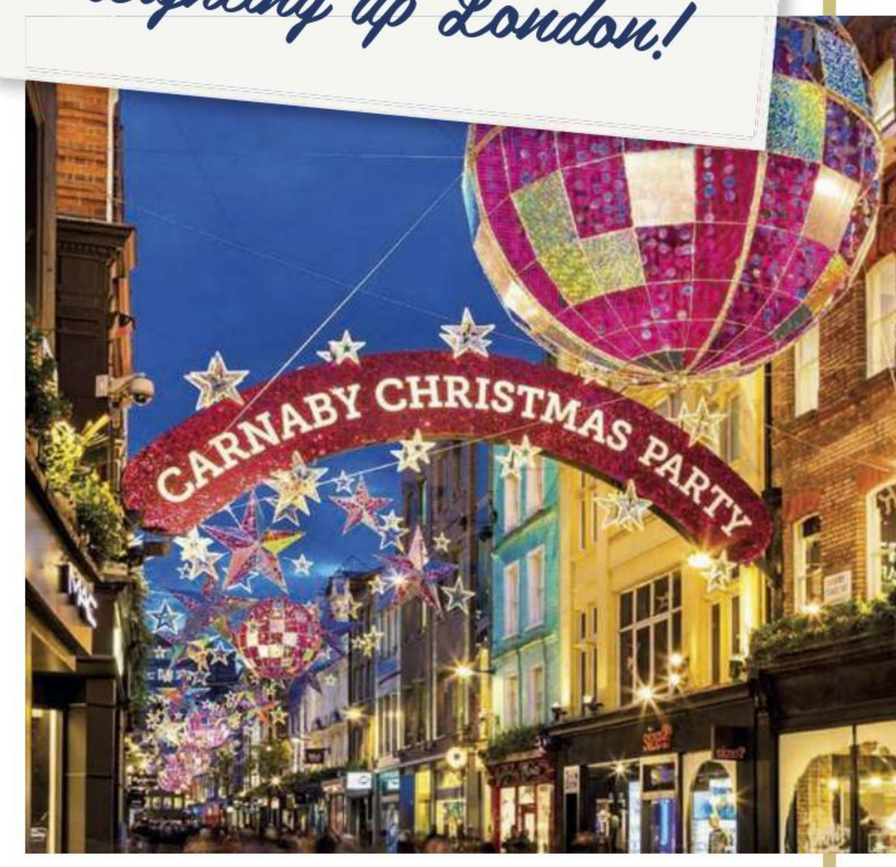
All our decorations are made on site in South London with designers, technical experts, electricians and project managers – plus a handful of elves who make the magic! There are so many elements to consider, from programming lights to printing illustrations.

This year we'll be installing London's lights starting in October and throughout November. There's such anticipation in the studio and workshop leading up to the big reveal, but nervous energy is soon replaced by excitement and joy when the lights burst through the streets and everyone's hard work comes together.

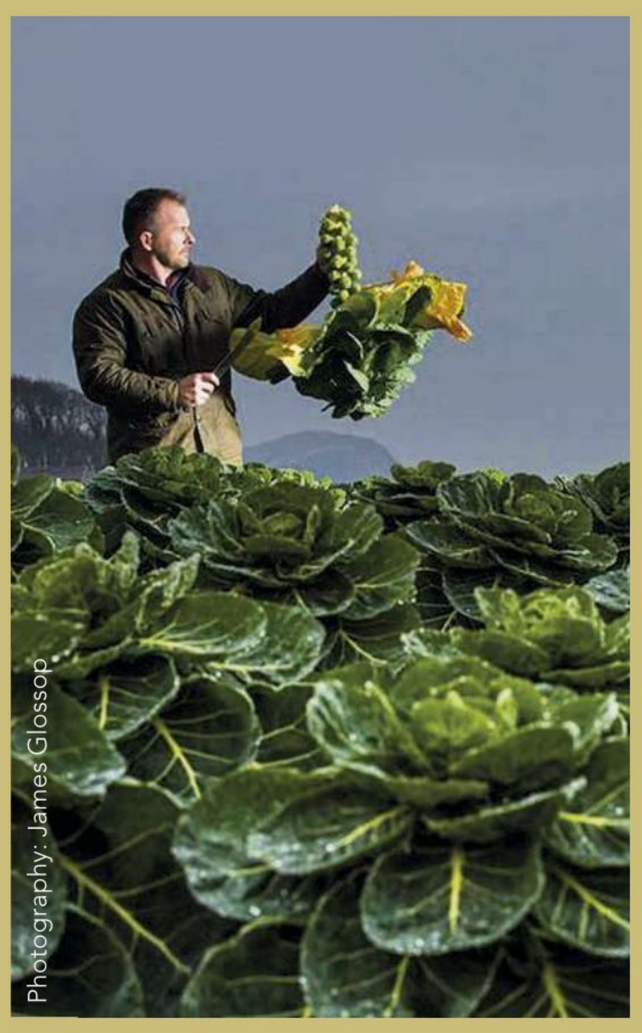
London's Christmas lights are a treasured tradition, and the glowing streets are a sign that the festive season is well and truly upon us. What could better capture the spirit of the season than gathering with your loved ones on a frosty evening to gaze at the magical lights?
www.jamesglancydesign.com



Lighting up London!



"The glowing streets of London are a sign that the festive season is well and truly upon us"



Photography: James Glossop

THE SPROUT FARMERS

Ian McLachlan and the rest of the team at Drysdales work tirelessly throughout the year to make sure we're tucking into the very best sprouts on Christmas Day

We grow over 1,000 acres of sprouts, 1,000 of swedes, and 150 of leeks, from the Scottish Borders up to Aberdeenshire. Each acre of sprout plants has about 14,000 plants and each plant should yield about 40 saleable sprout buttons – that's around 60 million servings! We plan to harvest around a third of our crop in December, ready for the festive period.

Our sprouts were planted in April and May. This process is quite labour intensive, as each plant is handled from the seeding tray and fed through a machine that plants them at exactly the correct depth and spacing that we require to grow the perfect sprout.

For the perfect sprout we need sun and rain in summer and cold, dry conditions through the winter. The bitter taste has been removed from new varieties, so you should expect the flavour without the bitterness. Our sprouts have to meet our customer specifications, so the run-up to Christmas is exciting, worrying and hectic – it's 15 months of planning coming to an end. So far this year's crop is looking good!

I do the cooking on Christmas Day and sprouts are of major importance. I steam half of what I'll serve, then roast the rest in the oven with the turkey.
www.rkdrysdale.co.uk



Season's greetings from Marie Curie!



THE CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGNERS

Lisa Kennedy, trading manager at Marie Curie, is in charge of choosing the designs and slogans that go into the charity's popular Christmas card range

Our cards brought in almost £430,000 in sales for Marie Curie last year, with all profits going to fund our work as the UK's leading terminal illness charity.

We always include traditional and religious cards as well as modern designs, and our greetings suit everybody. Our most used greeting is 'Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year'.

We take on board trends when choosing designs – woodland is a very popular theme. Our bestsellers tend to be more contemporary, but robins sell very well too. There are two types of Christmas card customer: one who doesn't like to see too many robins in the range, and one who doesn't think we have enough! Personally I'm not a fan of glitter on cards unless it's needed – a card with stars in the sky looks lovely wih a little sparkle.

When it comes to sending, I'm a last-minute poster! I find that December goes so quickly that the last postage dates sneak up on you. I'll always send cards, though, as it's important to keep in touch with friends and family during the season.
www.mariecurie.org.uk/shop

THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING BAKERS

Lesley Norris is product development manager at Bettys Craft Bakery in Harrogate, where Christmas pudding preparation starts in summer!

Bettys will produce around 13,000 Christmas puddings this year! Our classic pudding is based on an old Bettys family recipe, but these days we use vegetarian-friendly suet.

For the perfect Christmas pudding you want nice plump, flavoursome, juicy fruits and good quality nuts. Our fruits are all soaked in brandy and Yorkshire ale, and we mature our puddings for several months to help develop the flavour and texture.

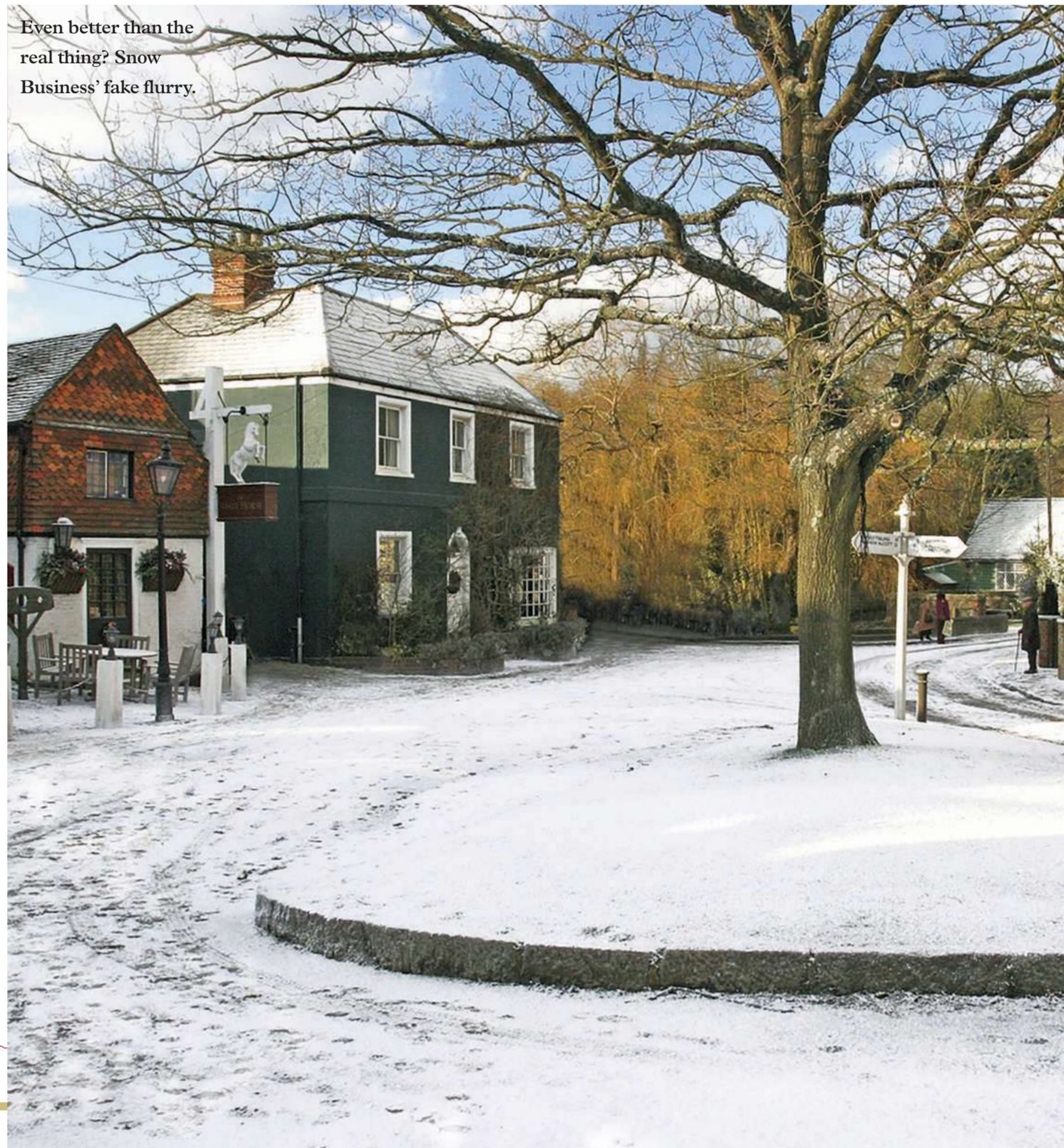
Texture is so important: you don't want anything too soggy and a pudding has to be firm enough so it doesn't just crumble into pieces when it's served.

For our Champagne pudding we use cranberries and apricots which we soak overnight in Champagne, flaked and whole almonds for texture, and nutmeg, cinnamon and clove to give it that really Christmassy flavour.

Starting the festive preparations so early in the year does make you feel like you've been working on Christmas for a long time, so you'd think you would be



Hot or cold, how do you eat yours? It's a very personal choice!



Even better than the real thing? Snow Business' fake flurry.





THE CRACKER MAKERS

Gemma Levell is sales and marketing manager at Celebration Crackers, the company that makes Christmas go with a bang for very important customers

We make crackers for five-star hotels such as Claridges, restaurants like Le Manoir and department stores like Harrods, as well as John Lewis and Paperchase.

We've produced crackers that have been sold to Elton John, and we like to think that the ones sold in Harrods end up on some very special Christmas tables! Our £1,000 box for Fortnum & Mason is filled with cashmere scarves, porcelain pill boxes and even gold bangles.

Once a year for about three weeks we collate jokes – even the postman has suggested some! It's usually our creative team that decide which ones go into the crackers, though – they're clearly the funniest team members! The best joke has got to be: "Why did the shrimp leave the party? Because he pulled a muscle!"

The run-up to Christmas is so much fun in the office. We listen to festive music, and we have such a wonderful time as a team. We all know how important it is to stick together through the busy months to make sure our customers enjoy their special days and events. After all, the Christmas meal would be just another roast dinner without crackers to make you feel festive and finish off the table!
www.celebrationcrackers.co.uk

put off, but being surrounded by all our lovely products really does get you into the festive spirit!

And when you see them in the shop windows and listen to all the lovely comments from customers it does make it all worthwhile.

I have heard that some people like to eat Christmas pudding cold, like Christmas cake, with Wensleydale cheese, but for me it has to be warm on Christmas Day, and served with a white sauce that has a good slug of rum poured into it!
www.bettys.co.uk

THE SNOWMEN AND WOMEN

Andrew Carruthers is distribution network manager at Snow Business, the team who make snow fall at Christmas if the real thing doesn't appear!

Christmas is our busiest season, and a very lively time for us. Enquiries are constant, which means our team need to work hard to ensure all of our customers get the snow they need, when they need it. From transforming a corner of your venue into Santa's grotto, to turning a 10-acre theme park into a spectacular winter wonderland for three months, we do it all. We also do falling snow, from a light flurry to a festival field-ful.

Our snow effects are made from a range of materials. Care for the environment is a priority, so for our settled snow we use paper and cellulose, which is biodegradable and eco-friendly, while falling snow is made from a special dry foam. Real snow is made with liquid nitrogen and water. It's real cold, wet snow that's safe enough to eat!

You can buy snowballs that don't melt, and huge 5kg bags of fake snow that will cover your whole living room floor – perfect for all your indoor snow antics, and for children to run around in (and it's not wet and cold!).

You can see our snow in many Hollywood blockbusters, as well as in department stores like Harrods and John Lewis. We all get very excited when we go shopping and see our products in the shop windows around the country.

And what you might find surprising is that we all jump up and stare out of the window when it really snows… We're all snow crazy!
www.snowbusiness.com

"We all jump up and stare out of the window when it really snows... we're all snow crazy!"



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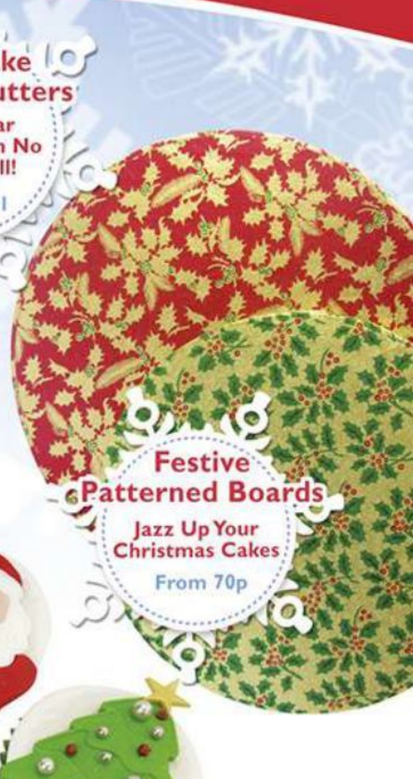
Creative ideas for Christmas...



















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SIMPLY CHRISTMAS

A CHRISTMAS FEAST

Discover delicious ideas for Christmas dinner and Boxing Day

Gathering around a beautifully decorated table, passing around plates piled with festive fare and pulling crackers... Christmas dinner is one of the most joyous parts of the day. We've chosen seasonal recipes that we think you and your guests will love, from Phil Vickery's succulent roast turkey to a light salmon gravadlax from Kirtie Allsopp, and a delicious mac 'n' cheese to share on Boxing Day. Phil also gives us tips for getting ahead with your Christmas cooking, and tells us what he thinks makes the perfect festive get-together!

Photography: Brook Lark

STARTER



Photography: Sarah Britton

PARSNIP OVEN SOUP

★

This no-stress soup is a super easy starter. Just pop your veg in the oven, blend and serve!

(serves 6)

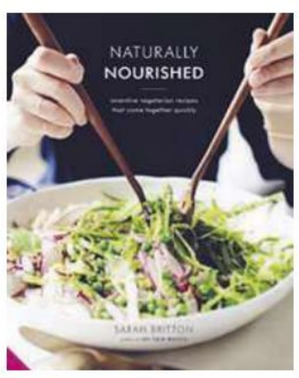
INGREDIENTS

1 small head of garlic · ½ tsp coconut oil or ghee · 1 kg parsnips · 3 medium onions · 1.5 litres/2 pints vegetable stock or water · 250g (or a 425g can) white beans (cannellini or haricot) drained and rinsed · 1-2 tsp fine sea salt · 1 tbsp cold-pressed olive oil, plus extra to serve · 1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

HOW TO MAKE THE SOUP

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Slice off the top of the garlic bulb, revealing the open cloves. Spread the coconut oil on top, wrap in foil and set on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes.
2. While the garlic is roasting, peel and roughly cut the parsnips into similarly sized chunks. Chop the onions. After the garlic has roasted for 15 minutes, add the parsnips and onions to the baking sheet. Roast for 30 minutes.
3. Place the parsnips and onions in a blender. Remove the foil from the garlic and squeeze the bulb from the bottom to extract the cloves into the blender. Add the stock, beans, salt, olive oil and lemon juice and blend on the highest setting until smooth and creamy. Transfer to a stockpot and heat until steaming. Serve with olive oil and black pepper.

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Naturally Nourished* by Sarah Britton (photography by Sarah Britton), published by Jacqui Small, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £20. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for just £16. To order, go to *www.quartoknows.com* and use code XMAS20. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.

STARTER



STAR RECIPE

Kisrtie Allsopp

Photography: Rita Platts

GRAVADLAX

★

This simple salmon dish is the perfect light and savoury starter on Christmas Day

(serves 12, with some leftovers)

INGREDIENTS

40g dill, chopped · 100g sea salt flakes · 75g granulated sugar · 2 sides of salmon, skin on, 500-600g each · Akvavit · 2 tbsp white peppercorns, crushed · Rye bread · Soured cream

HOW TO MAKE THE GRAVADLAX

1. Place a large sheet of clingfilm on your work surface and sprinkle all over with a third of the dill.
2. Mix the salt and sugar and rub all over the salmon.
3. Place one side of salmon, skin down, on the dill-sprinkled clingfilm. Cover with another third of the dill. Add a few splashes of akvavit and the peppercorns. Place the other side of salmon on top, skin up. Cover with the remaining dill.
4. Bring up the clingfilm and wrap tightly around the salmon to make a parcel. Put in a shallow tray and place weights on top. Chill for 48 hours, turning the parcel and re-weighting every 12 hours. A lot of liquid will be released, so make sure the dish is deep enough. Drain the liquid away when turning. The salmon will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days.
5. To serve, put one side of salmon on a board and scrape away as much dill as possible. Carve thin slices from the thickest end. Serve on rye bread spread with soured cream.

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Kirstie's Real Kitchen* by Kirstie Allsopp, published by Hodder & Stoughton, RRP £25 (photography by Rita Platts © Hodder & Stoughton 2017). *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for £15 by calling 01235 827702 and quoting code ALLSOPP40. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.

MAIN COURSE



Recipe and image courtesy of www.lakeland.co.uk

NUT ROAST WITH CRANBERRIES

★

This nut roast with a fruity twist is a tempting meat-free main course

(serves 8)

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp olive oil 3 medium leeks, finely sliced 4 rosemary sprigs, leaves only, roughly chopped 6 thyme sprigs, roughly chopped 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped 250g chestnut mushrooms, finely chopped 5 sage leaves, roughly chopped 600g mixed pecans, cashews and hazelnuts 150g Gruyère cheese, grated 3 eggs 150g dried cranberries Salt and pepper A little butter, to grease 125g frozen cranberries, thawed 3 or 4 bay leaves, to decorate (optional)

HOW TO MAKE THE NUT ROAST

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/400°F.
2. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Fry the leeks, rosemary and thyme for a few minutes until softened. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms and sage, cook for 2 minutes then remove from the heat. Transfer to a large bowl and leave to cool.
3. Place the nuts on a baking tray and toast them in the oven for about 8 minutes. Leave the nuts to cool before chopping finely and adding to the leek mixture.
4. Add the Gruyère, eggs and died cranberries, then season and mix well.
5. Grease a 2lb loaf tin and line with baking parchment. Transfer the mix to the tin and cook for 50-55 minutes. The nut roast should feel firm and a skewer inserted into the middle should come out clean. Cook for a further 10-15 minutes if required.
6. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes before turning out and removing the baking parchment. Decorate with the thawed cranberries and the bay leaves and serve immediately.

MAIN COURSE



Recipe and image courtesy of www.vickery.tv

STAR RECIPE

Phil Vickery

ROAST TURKEY

★

Phil's easy recipe will give you a juicy roast turkey in just a couple of hours!

(serves 8-10)

INGREDIENTS

1 x 5kg bronze turkey, with giblets and the wish bone removed 2 large carrots, peeled 2 large onions, peeled 6 sticks of celery 1 leek 2 bay leaves 2 chicken stock cubes ½ bottle dry white wine 2 pints cold water Salt and freshly ground black pepper 55g melted butter 2 tbsp cornflour 4-6 tbsp cold water

HOW TO COOK THE TURKEY

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/400°F/ Gas Mark 6.
2. Remove the giblets from the bird, and if you're using a frozen bird then make sure that it's fully defrosted first.
3. Season the bird well inside and out well with salt and pepper and pack your preferred stuffing into the body cavity.
4. Tie the legs and the parson's nose together with a piece of string and secure well, so the stuffing is held inside the bird.
5. Chop all the vegetables into large chunks and place in the bottom of a large baking tray. Place the turkey on top – the tray should be large enough so the bird has at least 5cm gap all around.
6. Pour in the white wine, cold water and chicken stock cube, and place the whole tray on to the stove.
7. Bring to the boil and cover tightly with two layers of foil and pop into a preheated oven. Simmer for 5 minutes, covered, to get the steam and heat going (this is the most important bit!).
8. Cook the bird for about 2 hours, approximately (this will depend on your turkey size). To check if the bird is cooked, remove from the oven (carefully as there will be a lot of stock, wine and turkey juices). Remove the foil and insert a knife where the thigh attaches itself to the body of the bird – the juices should run clear. If not, cover again with foil and cook for a further 20 minutes.
9. When the bird is cooked, remove it from the oven, then turn the oven up to 230°C/210°C Fan/Gas Mark 8/450°F.
10. Tip off the juices and save for the gravy, then brush the bird well with melted butter or oil and return to the oven to brown beautifully.
11. Once browned, remove from the oven and wrap in a double layer of foil then two clean tea towels – this should keep it warm for up to an hour.
12. To make turkey gravy, reboil the stock and juices in a saucepan (you may need to add a little more water) and skim well. Mix the cornflour and water together and use this to thicken the bubbling stock.
13. Carve the bird and serve with the gravy.

COOK SMART!

The cooking time for a stuffed turkey will vary depending on its size. Ask your butcher for some expert advice rather than risk guessing on the day!

SIDE DISH



ROAST POTATOES

★

Searching for the crispiest, crunchiest roasties? These super spuds should do the trick!

(serves 8-10)

INGREDIENTS

1.5 kg peeled potatoes, cut into quarters 200g good beef dripping, duck or goose fat (use rapeseed, vegetable or olive oil for a vegetarian alternative) Salt and freshly milled black pepper

HOW TO MAKE THE ROAST POTATOES

1. Pre heat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/400°F/Gas Mark 7.
2. Place a pan of cold water on the stove and bring to the boil, then add salt and re-boil. Add the potatoes.
3. Bring the water back to the boil and simmer for about 10 minutes, or until the outsides of the potatoes start to fall away, then carefully drain.
4. Meanwhile, place the dripping, fat or oil in a baking tray, pop it in the oven and heat for 10 minutes.
5. Drain the potatoes then tip them into the tray of hot fat. Season well with plenty of salt and pepper and pop into the oven. Cook for 35-40 minutes.
6. When the bottoms are crisp and golden, turn them over and return to the oven Cook for a further 35-40 minutes until the sides are crisp and golden. Serve piping hot.

THERE'S MORE!

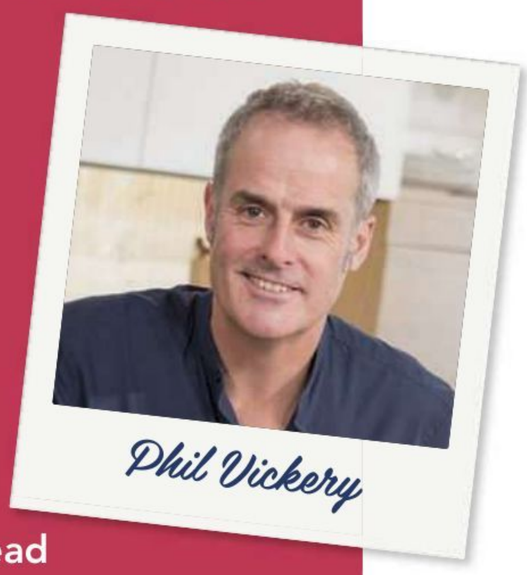


For more expert advice on Christmas catering and baking, plus a delicious recipe for white chocolate and cranberry shortbread, read our interview with Nadiya Hussain, only in our free baking supplement!

"FOR ME, CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT SPICES AND CITRUSSY FLAVOURS"

"I LOVE SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH MY FAMILY"

As resident chef on ITV's *This Morning* Phil Vickery has guided us through hundreds of recipes. But what's his advice for the perfect Christmas dinner?



What are your tips for getting ahead with the cooking on Christmas Day?
Prepare days in advance! You can do all the veg the day before so the only thing you need to worry about is the turkey.

Do you have any advice for someone who might be a bit nervous about hosting Christmas?
Don't be nervous, don't panic and take your time. Think about your menu carefully and make it simple: four or five veg dishes, the turkey and gravy. Cold starters make it easy for you, or soup – that can be prepared days in advance and all you need to do is pour! Also, if it's starting at one o'clock I tell guests to come for noon! People are always late…

When it comes to Christmas cooking do you like to keep it traditional or try new things?
Traditional, mainly, though occasionally I'll change the vegetables, For example, last year I made Brussels sprouts rolled in crème fraîche, mango chutney and Indian spices.

Who are your fantasy festive guests?
Keith Floyd and The Queen – I'd love to have a normal conversation with her. Most importantly, no one dull – that's why I love spending Christmas with my family…

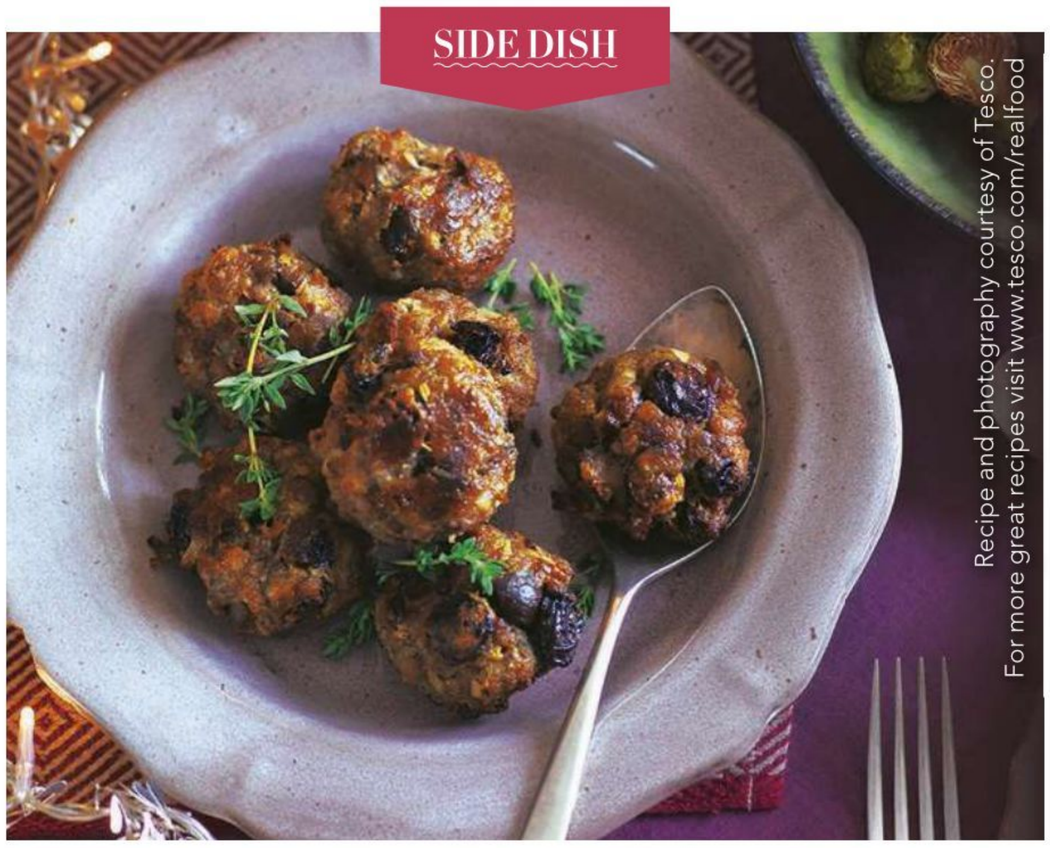
And what's your idea of a perfect Christmas get-together with friends?
Local, proper pub, a roaring fire, good beer and maybe a lock-in, with peanuts, perhaps a pickled egg and some Christmas music.

Tell us about your most memorable Christmas…
We went to Lapland with the kids – my daughter must have been about four months old. We met Santa Claus and he was the real deal – even I was convinced! It was a real adventure and a lot of fun.

Do you open your presents before or after lunch?
I like to go for half before and half after, but it depends who's visiting. It's always nice to open presents with the people who have given them.

What gifts are on your Christmas wish list?
A new tractor! A Kubota m5-111, 110 horsepower, with a loader on the front. I'm writing my letter to Father Christmas now…

SIDE DISH



CHESTNUT, THYME AND DRIED CHERRY STUFFING

★

This stuffing has it all - rich chestnuts, juicy sausage meat and tangy cherries

(serves 8)

INGREDIENTS

25g butter 1 onion, chopped 200g cooked, peeled chestnuts 100g dried cherries 475g traditional sausages 100g fresh breadcrumbs 3tsp fresh thyme leaves 1 egg, lightly beaten 1 lemon, finely grated zest only 5ml olive oil

HOW TO MAKE THE STUFFING

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Melt the butter over a low to medium heat and add the onion. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring, until soft.
2. Stir in the chestnuts and cherries. Cook for 5 minutes. Let the onions brown slightly. Remove from the heat and cool.
3. Remove the sausagement from the skins and add to the onion mixture with the remaining ingredients. Season. Using wet hands, form 16 rounds, slightly larger than a golf ball. Space out in an oiled roasting tin and bake for 25-30 minutes, turning over halfway, until golden brown.

SIDE DISH



ROASTED CARROTS AND PARSNIPS WITH A HONEY AND MUSTARD GLAZE

★

Sweet, tender and flavoursome, these roots make the perfect Christmas side dish

(serves 6)

INGREDIENTS

500g carrots 500g parsnips 4 tbsp olive oil 4 tbsp runny honey 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard Salt

HOW TO MAKE THE CARROTS AND PARSNIPS

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Peel and cut the vegetables into halves or quarters.
2. Place the vegetables in a roasting tray, sprinkle with salt, drizzle over 3 tbsp of oil and toss to coat the vegetables.
3. Roast for 15 minutes, then remove the tray from the oven and stir the vegetables. Roast for a further 15 minutes.
4. While the vegetables are roasting, whisk the honey, mustard and rest of the oil together.
5. Remove the tray from the oven, and pour the sauce over the vegetables. Toss until evenly coated, and return the tray to the oven for 10 minutes, or until tender and caramelised.

SEVEN TIPS FOR SUCCESS

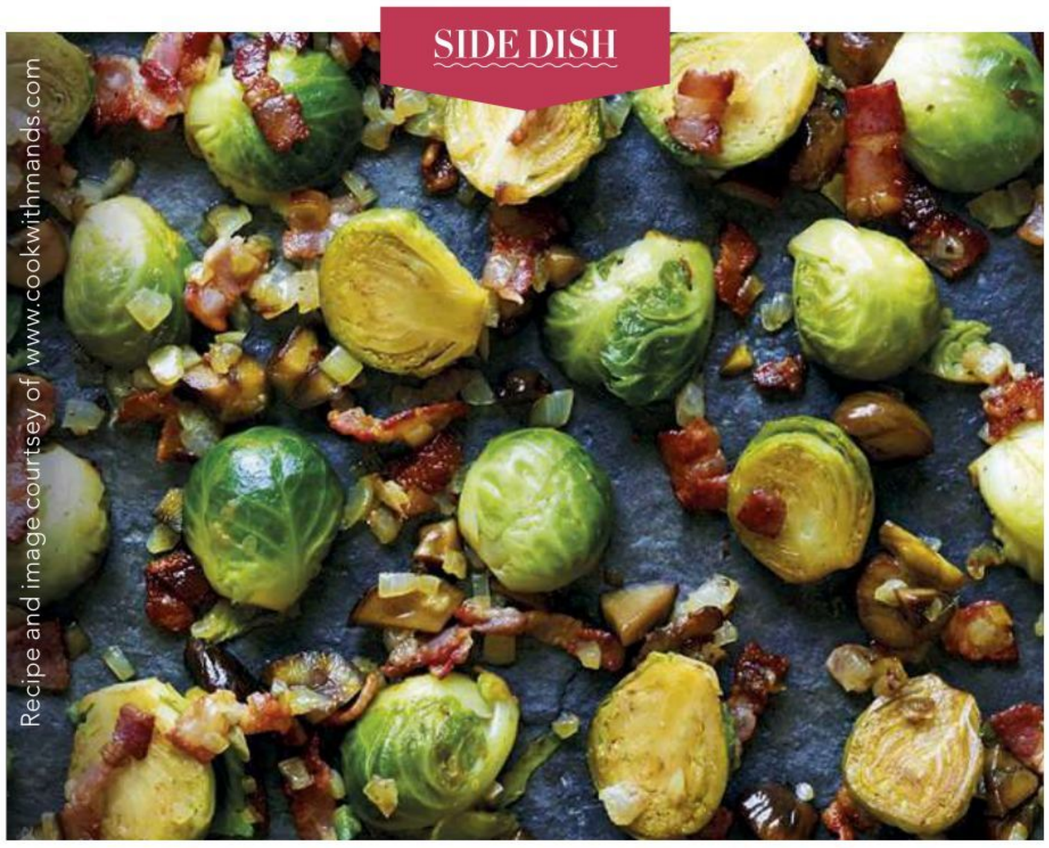
Add one or two non-perishable items to your weekly shop in the months before Christmas and minimise the panic when it comes to doing your festive food shop. You'll have fully stocked cupboards by the big day!

Make plenty of room in your fridge and freezer in advance, so that you're not trying to squeeze dishes in among jars and packets. If you've got six types of chutney, come up with a delicious way to downsize in time for the big day. Cheese and wine evening, anyone?

Give a frozen turkey plenty of time to defrost. Allow 10-12 hours per kg in a fridge set at 4C, or 3-4 hours in a cool room (below 17.5C). Once defrosted, cook your turkey immediately or keep refridgerated.

Your freezer is your festive friend! Make your gravy in advance, freeze it, then defrost on the day (adding the juices from your turkey before serving, if you like). Freeze stuffing in an oven dish, then you just need to defrost it and pop it in the oven. Mince pies can also be made, frozen, defrosted and warmed on the day.

SIDE DISH



Recipe and image courtesy of www.cookwithmands.com

STIR-FRIED SPROUTS

★

It wouldn't be Christmas without a generous helping of perfectly seasoned sprouts!

(serves 6)

INGREDIENTS

750g Brussels sprouts · 8 rashers smoked streaky bacon · 200g chestnuts · 1 onion · 50g butter · Salt and pepper

HOW TO MAKE THE SPROUTS

1. Trim and remove the outer leaves of the sprouts. Cut the bacon into small pieces. Chop the onions. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, add the sprouts and cook for 4-5 minutes. Drain and run under cold water. Drain again and set aside.
2. Sauté the bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove (leaving excess fat behind) and set aside. Add half the butter to the pan. Fry the onion for 2 minutes, until it starts to soften.
3. Add the rest of the butter, sprouts and chestnuts. Season and cook for 5 minutes, stirring gently, until the sprouts are golden. Add the bacon, season and serve warm.

COOK SMART!

Braised red cabbage will improve greatly in flavour overnight, so make it on Christmas Eve and keep it chilled in the fridge until you need it on the big day.

Decide what time you want to eat Christmas lunch and work backwards so you have enough time to cook everything. You can always serve a simple brunch that will keep your guests filled up until early evening if you'd rather not start cooking at the crack of dawn!

Lay your table a day early. If your Christmas table is in the kitchen, eat picnic-style in the living room the night before or serve a buffet if you have guests.

Vegetables can be chopped, par-boiled in advance and frozen – that's a huge time-saver!

SIDE DISH



Recipe and image courtesy of www.abelandcole.co.uk

HONEYED RED CABBAGE WITH BRAMLEY APPLES

★

A dash of honey, juniper berries that taste of winter and vibrant red cabbage – perfect!

(serves 6)

INGREDIENTS

1 red cabbage · 4 shallots · 2 Bramley apples · 8 juniper berries · 2 tbsp honey · 60ml red wine vinegar

HOW TO MAKE THE RED CABBAGE

1. Halve and quarter the cabbage. Slice out the thick, hard core in the middle. Peel off any torn outer leaves.
2. Finely slice the cabbage, then pop it into a colander and give it a good rinse.
3. Peel and finely slice the shallots. Peel the apples. Quarter them. Slice out the cores and seeds. Finely chop the apple.
4. Pop the juniper berries in a mortar or bowl. Crush them with a pestle or the back of a spoon. Add the honey and the vinegar, then stir to mix everything together.
5. Put a third of the cabbage in the bottom of a large casserole dish or heavy-based pan. Top with half the shallots and apples. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Top with another third of the red cabbage, then the rest of the shallots and apples. Season and top with the remaining cabbage.
7. Pour the honey mixture over the cabbage. Add 2 tbsp cold water. Pop on a lid and bring to the boil. Once it's boiling, turn the heat right down to low. Simmer for 1 hour till the cabbage is soft. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then it's ready to serve.

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SIDE DISH



SPICED BREAD SAUCE

★

A rich, creamy delicately spiced sauce
(serves 6-8)

INGREDIENTS

1 large onion · 12 whole cloves · 1 bay leaf · 1 tsp black peppercorns · 650ml full cream milk · Sea salt · 110g crustless white bread · 50g butter · 50ml double cream · Nutmeg

HOW TO MAKE THE BREAD SAUCE

1. Peel and quarter the onion. Stud it with the cloves. Pop it in a pan with the bay leaf, peppercorns, milk and a pinch of salt. Place over a medium heat and slowly bring to the boil. Take off the heat. Cover. Leave to infuse for 2 hours.
2. Blitz the bread in a food processor to make fine crumbs. Strain the milk through a sieve. Wipe the pan clean. Put the bread in the pan. Pour in the milk. Add half the butter. Gently heat, stirring, for 15 minutes until thick. Take off the heat and cover. When ready to serve, put back on the heat, add the remaining butter and cream. Grate in a little fresh nutmeg, gently warm and add a pinch more salt if needed.

SIDE DISH



CRANBERRY SAUCE

★

This sweet, tangy sauce is the essential accompaniment for roast turkey!

INGREDIENTS

1 orange · 175g caster sugar · 5 tbsp port · 359g cranberries · 1 eating apple, finely chopped

HOW TO MAKE THE CRANBERRY SAUCE

1. Finely grate the zest from the orange and squeeze the juice into a jug.
2. Dissolve the sugar in a medium pan with 4tbsp of the port and the orange juice.
3. Stir in the cranberries, apple and orange rind.
4. Cook uncovered for 8-10 minutes (or slightly longer if the cranberries are frozen) until the fruit is soft and the juices are slightly thickened.
5. Stir in the remaining 1 tbsp of port.
6. The sauce can be served warm or cold, and will freeze well until you need it.

FIVE TIPS FOR A BEAUTIFUL TABLE

- Well before the big day, give some thought to your choices – don't just go with red and green! Planning ahead removes the stress and adds to the fun.
- Will your other decorations follow a particular theme? If so, let your table reflect this, but be creative. Experiment with accessories that aren't necessarily festive, like sprigs of greenery, neutral table linen or vintage tableware.
- The problem with a table of four or more people is that accessories can get lost among cutlery and glasses. Adding a little height to the middle of the table fixes this – think cake stands or a pile of pretend presents.
- Make sure everyone knows where they're sitting. You can have great fun preparing homemade place markers in keeping with your theme. Use twine and twigs, baubles, mini chalkboards, candy canes, pine cones – the possibilities are endless!
- When it comes to the centrepiece, try a bowl filled with baubles to match your theme, or a vase filled with silver-sprayed eucalyptus. We also love using tabletop trees in varying heights and tree toppers, like angels or fairies.

Thanks to Clare Satchwell at The Contemporary Home (www.tch.net) for sharing her décor advice.

PUDDING



CHOCOLATE AND RASPBERRY ROULADE

★

A slice of this sumptuous dessert will round off your Christmas meal in indulgent style!

(serves 6-8)

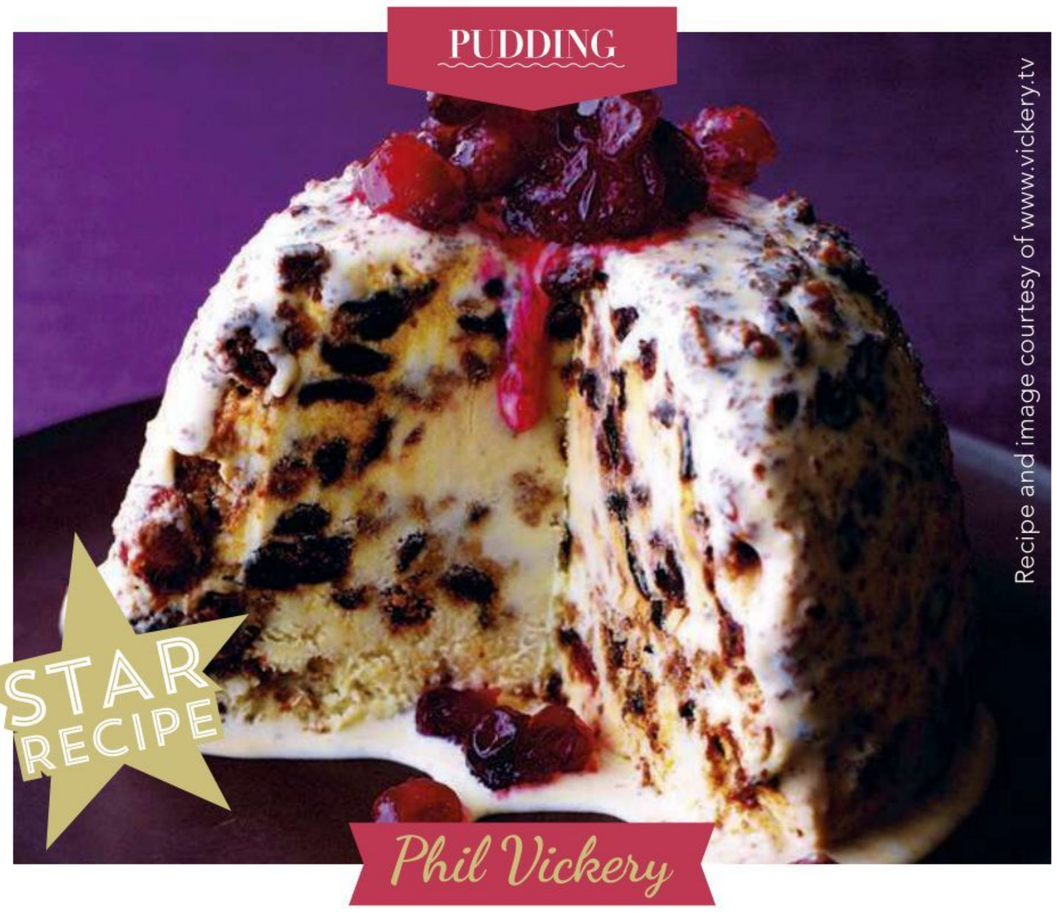
INGREDIENTS

175g dark chocolate 175g caster sugar 6 eggs, separated 2 level tbsp cocoa, sifted 500ml double cream 200g raspberries, plus 6-8 to decorate 2 tbsp icing sugar plus extra

HOW TO MAKE THE ROULADE

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°F. Break the chocolate into a heatproof bowl and melt over a pan of simmering water (do not let the base of the bowl touch the water). Remove from the heat. Leave to cool slightly.
2. Place the sugar and egg yolks into a bowl and whisk until light and creamy.
3. Add the cooled chocolate and stir until blended. Whisk the egg whites in a bowl until stiff. Stir a large spoonful of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture. Mix gently, fold in the remaining egg whites, then the cocoa.
4. Turn the mixture onto a Swiss roll tin and gently level the surface. Bake for 20 minutes or until firm to touch.
5. Place a sheet of baking parchment on top of the roulade, put a damp tea towel on top of that and leave until cold.
6. Whisk the cream until it just holds its shape. Remove the tea towel and parchment. Dust a large piece of baking parchment with icing sugar and carefully turn the roulade onto it. Spread with cream, arrange the raspberries in lines and roll up like a Swiss roll, using the baking parchment to help. Don't worry if it cracks slightly, that's part of its charm!
7. Place the 2 tbsp of icing sugar in a small bowl, then add 1 tbsp of water at a time, mixing, until smooth and syrupy then drizzle over the roulade. Cut the reserved raspberries in half and place them on top of the roulade. Finish with a dusting of icing sugar.

PUDDING



Phil Vickery

CHRISTMAS CAKE AND BRANDY PARFAIT

★

A brilliant alternative to Christmas pudding, this can be made the day before!

(serves 6-8)

INGREDIENTS

397g can condensed milk 450ml (¾pt) single cream 200ml carton crème fraîche tbsp vanilla extract 3tbsp brandy 450g (1lb) Christmas cake, crumbled Cranberry compote, to finish (optional)

HOW TO MAKE THE PARFAIT

1. Line a 2lb pudding basin with a double layer of clingfilm. In a large bowl, whisk together the condensed milk, cream, crème fraîche, vanilla extract and brandy until it is smooth and creamy.
2. Pour the mixture into a shallow plastic box and freeze until slushy (2-3 hours). Beat with a fork, then stir in the crumbled Christmas cake.
3. Pour the mixture into the pudding basin, cover and freeze overnight.
4. When you're ready to serve your parfait, turn it out onto a serving plate and remove the clingfilm.
5. Accompany your dessert with a spoonful of cranberry compote made from fresh cranberries, simmered until sticky in a syrup of sugar and water.

NEW RECIPES!



Phil Vickery has a brand new book out in October, in association with Diabetes UK. *Ultimate Diabetes Cookbook: Delicious Recipes To Help You Achieve A Healthy, Balanced Diet* is published by Kyle Books and available from 9 October 2017.

PUDDING



Recipe and image courtesy of www.asdagoodliving.co.uk

LIGHT AND ZESTY GINGER TIRAMISU

★

If you fancy something a little lighter after Christmas dinner, here's a zingy alternative

(serves 10)

INGREDIENTS

3 balls of ginger from a jar of stem ginger in syrup · 4 tbsp stem ginger syrup · 250g mascarpone · 300ml pot double cream · 6 tbsp sweet sherry · 3 tbsp orange juice · 200g gingernut biscuits

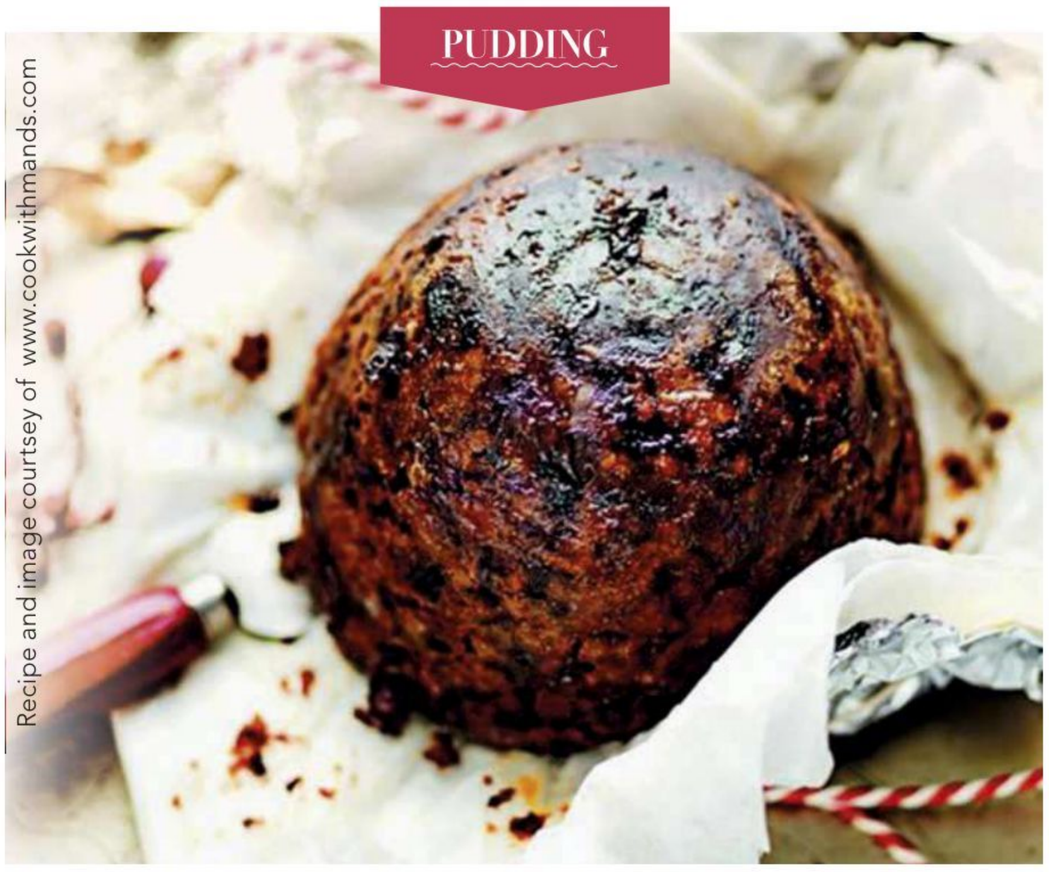
HOW TO MAKE THE TIRAMISU

1. Cut the ginger balls into small cubes and set them aside.
2. Mix the ginger syrup with the mascarpone until smooth. Whip the cream until it forms soft peaks, then gently fold into the mascarpone mixture.
3. In a shallow bowl, mix the sherry with the orange juice.
4. Spread about one third of the mascarpone mixture in the bottom of a 1100ml dish.
5. Dip the biscuits in the sherry and orange juice for about 5 seconds each until moist but not soggy, then arrange on the top of the mascarpone in a single layer.
6. Break the biscuits where necessary to fit the dish. Scatter on one third of the stem ginger pieces.
7. For the next layer, spread half of the remaining mascarpone on top and add another layer of soaked biscuits and chopped ginger. You won't need to use all of the biscuits.
8. Cover the tiramisu with the remaining mascarpone, sprinkle with the rest of the stem ginger and chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

COOK SMART!

For a simple finish to your Christmas meal, mull pears, figs and plums in spices and red wine, and serve with a scoop of creamy vanilla ice cream or a drizzle of cream.

PUDDING



Recipe and image courtesy of www.cookwithmands.com

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS PUDDING

★

Treat yourself to a traditional pudding, packed with fruits, aromatic spices and wine

(serves 10)

INGREDIENTS

100g vegetable suet, shredded · 75g self-raising flour · 125g white breadcrumbs · 4 tsp mixed spices · 225g dark muscovado sugar · 500g dried mixed fruit · 50g mixed nuts · 1 small apple, chopped · 2 large eggs · 200ml Norfolk Nip barley wine · 2 tbsp dark rum · Zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange

HOW TO MAKE THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING

1. In a large bowl, combine the suet, flour, breadcrumbs, mixed spice, sugar, dried fruits, nuts and apple.
2. Whisk the zest with the eggs, Norfolk Nip and rum. Pour onto the fruit mix and combine. The mixture should be sloppy – add a little more Norfolk Nip if needed. Cover and leave in a cool place overnight.
3. Lightly butter a 2 pint pudding bowl. Spoon in the mixture, levelling the surface. Cover the bowl with a layer of well-buttered greaseproof paper then a layer of foil, both pleated in the middle to allow room for the pudding to expand. Secure the greaseproof paper and foil with string. Tuck the foil under the paper to ensure no steam gets in.
4. Put the bowl into a steamer or saucepan of simmering water (using an inverted saucer as a trivet), making sure the water comes halfway up the side of the bowl. Cover tightly and steam, topping up with water as needed, for 6-7 hours.
5. Lift the bowl from the steamer or saucepan, leave to cool, re-wrap with fresh greaseproof paper and foil. It can now be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 3 months.

BOXING DAY



Recipe and image courtesy of www.sainsburys.co.uk

BOXING DAY CHEESE BOARD MAC 'N' CHEESE

★

Make the most of the ends of the cheese board with this warming winter recipe

(serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

500g macaroni 50g butter 50g plain flour 700ml milk 1 tbsp Dijon mustard 50g mixed cheeseboard cheese (Cheddar, Red Leicester, Stilton, brie or whatever you have), grated 6 tbsp cranberry sauce Handful of roast chestnuts 100g leftover stuffing (or to taste)

HOW TO MAKE THE MAC 'N' CHEESE

1. Cook the macaroni in a large pan of slightly salty water according to the pack instructions, but take off the heat 3-4 minutes before reaching the recommended cooking time so that the macaroni is still 'al dente'. Drain and set aside.
2. Warm the milk gently in a pan and then make a béchamel (white sauce) by melting the butter in a large saucepan, adding the flour and cooking for 1 minute, stirring continuously. Gradually add the warm milk, a ladleful at a time, stirring to avoid lumps until you have a smooth sauce.
3. Stir in the mustard and 400g of the grated cheese, then add the cooked macaroni, cranberry sauce and chestnuts and stir until coated.
4. Pour the mac 'n' cheese into an ovenproof dish and top with the remaining cheese and crumbled leftover stuffing.
5. Place in the oven for 30 mins at 170°C or until crisp and golden on top. Take it out of the oven and allow to set slightly before serving.

COOK SMART!

For a meatier version of the mac 'n' cheese you could add small bits of cooked turkey or leftover pigs in blankets (assuming fridge-raiders haven't got there first!).

BOXING DAY



Recipe and photography courtesy of Tesco. For more great recipes visit www.tesco.com/realfood

RED CABBAGE, PECAN AND BLUE CHEESE SALAD

★

Sweet red cabbage is great with tangy blue cheese in this refreshing salad

(serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

75g pecans 1 tbsp olive oil 1 small red cabbage, core removed and sliced 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar 1 orange, zested, peeled and cut into segments 1 large apple, cored and sliced 30g pack flat-leaf parsley, chopped 75g vegetarian blue cheese, crumbled

HOW TO MAKE THE SALAD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas Mark 4. Put the pecans on a baking tray and roast for 5 minutes. Remove and allow to cool slightly, then roughly chop.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and cook the cabbage over a high heat, stirring, for 3-4 minutes. Add the vinegar and continue to cook for 2 minutes.
3. Stir through the orange zest, orange segments, chopped pecans, apple and parsley. Season well.
4. To serve your salad, divide among four plates and scatter with the blue cheese. A perfect light lunch after any Christmas Day excess!

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SIMPLY
CHRISTMAS

CRAFT A PERFECT CHRISTMAS

Lots of projects to make and activities to enjoy – for all the family!

Homemade touches are a great way to put a personal stamp on the festive season, from decorations for your tree, table and front door, to cards and tags to give your gifts the perfect finishing touches. There's even wrapping paper to make with your free *Simply Christmas* stencils! After all that crafting you'll all deserve a treat, so we've found ten fantastic family days out to help you and your family feel well and truly festive. Plus, we've teamed up with the elves at LaplandUK to give one of you the chance to visit Father Christmas's magical home!

Photography: Simon Lees

PAPER DECORATIONS

★

Deck the halls – and any other room you fancy – with pretty papercraft garlands, baubles and stars in your choice of festive shades and patterns



YOU WILL NEED

- Patterned paper (thick wrapping paper is ideal)
- Twine
- Sticky tape
- Glue

Designed by Vicky Sheridan

Experiment with different papers to match your festive colour scheme.

HOW TO MAKE THE STAR

1. Cut six 12x12cm paper squares and fold them diagonally into triangles.
2. Mark along the fold at 2cm, 4cm, 6cm in from each end. Mark at 2cm, 4cm, 6cm down from the top point.
3. Join the 2cm marks, 4cm marks and 6cm marks to draw three triangles. Cut along the lines towards the points but stop before you cut them out. Open out the square, pull the points from each triangle together and secure with tape on alternate sides.
4. Repeat for the other five squares and join together, as shown.

HOW TO MAKE THE BAUBLE

1. Cut 12 circles, 7cm in diameter. Fold each one in half, pattern side out.
2. Secure each folded circle together by adding a blob of glue in the centre of the half circle near the edge.
3. Stick six folded circles together by gluing at the top and bottom of the half circle and near the folded edge. Repeat for the other six half circles so you have two hemispheres.
4. Tie a loop in a length of twine. Glue to the centre of one hemisphere, then glue the two halves together.

HOW TO MAKE THE GARLAND

1. For each ball, cut four 1x30cm strips of paper. Lay the strips side by side in pairs and secure with tape at one end.
2. Weave the four strands together as you would for a four-strand braid. The paper will curl and create a ball.
3. When you're nearing the end of the strips, tuck in the ends and trim any excess. Glue to secure. Repeat to make more, then thread onto twine.



FABRIC WREATH

★

Give guests a cheery welcome with a pretty fabric wreath. Stick to a few shades and keep it simple, or match it to your Christmas colour scheme and embellish with sequins, stars and winter foliage

HOW TO MAKE THE FABRIC WREATH

1 Cut strips of fabric measuring 2.5x23cm using scissors or a rotary cutter and cutting mat. To speed up the process, fold the fabric in half so you can cut two strips at a time. You need roughly 120 strips in various colours and patterns to create a varied and colourful wreath.

2 Tie the strips of fabric to the wire frame, placing each strip with the wrong side facing the back of the wire wreath and tying at the front. The fabric should sit flat on the back of the wreath with the right side of the fabric facing outwards.

3 Continue to tie the fabric in this way all the way around the wreath, mixing up the different fabrics as you go. You might find that the fabric frays a little as you work, but this adds to the shabby-chic effect of the wreath.

4 Tie a bow with the 2.5cm-wide ribbon and glue it to the wreath, then trim the ribbon ends to the desired length. If you want a hanging loop, fold the 10mm ribbon in half and glue the ends to the back of the wreath.

YOU WILL NEED

- Scraps of cotton fabric
- 30cm diameter wire wreath frame
- 2m of 2.5cm-wide ribbon
- 11cm of 10mm-wide ribbon
- Rotary cutter or scissors
- Cutting mat

Choose patterned or plain fabric, or a mixture of both!

Designed by Claire Watkins. Props supplied by The Contemporary Home (www.tch.net)

JAM JAR LANTERNS

★

When it's cold and dark outside, these cheery Christmas lanterns will create a warm, welcoming glow. Create your own designs for a perfectly customised look!



YOU WILL NEED

- Glass jars of various sizes
- 5cm-wide professional-quality masking tape
- Surface primer spray
- Red enamel spray paint
- Old cardboard box
- Ribbons
- Craft knife
- Cutting mat
- Baking paper
- Pencil
- Strong glue

Cookie cutters make great templates for your jam jar motifs.

HOW TO MAKE THE JAM JAR LANTERNS

1. Clean and dry the jars, making sure that any sticky residue from the labels is completely removed.

2. Draw heart and star motifs to fit on your jam jars on a sheet of paper. Cut them out to make templates.

3. Cut off a piece of masking tape big enough to cover your motif and stick it lightly onto baking paper. (Don't stick it firmly as you'll need to remove it later, and use good-quality masking tape to prevent the paint bleeding under it.) Put your template onto the baking paper with the masking tape behind, and draw around it. Use a craft knife and cutting mat to then cut out your design from the baking paper and masking tape at the same time. Peel off the masking tape.

4. Stick your masking tape motif onto the side of the jar, positioned where you'd like the motif to appear. Stick a piece of masking tape behind the motif on the inside of the jar to prevent any overspray going onto the clear motif area.

5. Place the jar inside a cardboard box and give it a coat of primer, using sweeping strokes. Leave to dry for about 20 minutes, then repeat if necessary. Once dry, apply your first coat of colour in the same way. It's easy to overload the jar with paint and create drips, so use an even stroke.

6. Leave to dry then repeat, building up layers of colour until you're happy with the effect. Spray around the inner lip of the jar for a neat finish.

7. When the jar is completely dry, remove the tape from the front and inside of the jar.

8. Cut a length of ribbon and wrap it around the neck of the jar, tying in a bow at the front. Dab some strong glue underneath the ribbon and the bow to hold it in place. The jars can get very hot when used with real candles, so you might prefer to use battery-operated tea lights.

Designed by Claire Watkins

GLITTER PAPER TREES

★

Create a sparkling centrepiece for your Christmas table with these recycled spruces. Make a larger tree and arrange tiny gifts underneath, or a festive forest of mini trees for your windowsill!

HOW TO MAKE THE GLITTER PAPER TREE

1. Use a craft knife to cut a piece of oasis from the block. Make sure the oasis fits into the plant pot snugly. Push a wooden skewer vertically into the centre of the oasis, with the pointed end at the top. You may want to trim the skewer, depending on the size of your pot.

2. Take your paper, in bunches of three or four pages, and rip these into squares of varying sizes. There's no need to be precise when you rip – uneven edges will look pretty.

3. Start pushing your bundles of paper onto the skewer. Turn the pot slightly as you add more bundles so that the edges of the paper aren't all lined up evenly. Gradually decrease the size of the torn squares to resemble the shape of a fir tree.

4. Use a small paintbrush to spread glue on the edges of the paper, then sprinkle with as much silver glitter as you want. Do this over a piece of old newspaper so you can catch and reuse the excess glitter.

5. Draw around a small star cookie cutter and cut out two star shapes.

6. Apply some glue to one of the stars and press the other star onto it with the tip of the skewer sandwiched in the middle. Use the peg to hold the star in place while the glue dries, and remove when the glue is dry. Paint the star with a little more glue and sprinkle with glitter to finish.

YOU WILL NEED

- Oasis block
- Terracotta plant pot
- Wooden skewers
- Paper (preferably old newspaper with a Christmas story or vintage sheet music)
- Silver glitter
- Craft knife
- Small paintbrush
- PVA glue
- Star cookie cutter
- Peg



Designed by Christiane Bellstedt Myers. Photography by Caroline Arber © CICO Books

If you can't get hold of old sheet music, you could buy vintage-style decoupage paper.

READER OFFER!

This project is taken from *Scandi Christmas* by Christiane Bellstedt Myers, published by CICO Books (RRP £12.99). *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £9.99 (including free P&P) by calling 01256 302699 and quoting LC6. For more details see www.makeetc.com.



CROSS STITCH GIFT TAGS

★

Spend a pre-Christmas crafternoon cross stitching a batch of these homemade tags. Once you've mastered them, why not try creating your own designs?



YOU WILL NEED

- 3.5x7cm brown gift tags
- Baker's twine
- Embroidery threads
- Perforating tool
- Cutting mat
- White paper
- Low-tack or Magic tape
- Needle
- Mini alphabet stamp set
- Black ink

HOW TO MAKE THE CROSS STITCH GIFT TAGS

1. Stamp a greeting across the top half of the tag using the alphabet stamps and some black ink. Leave to dry. (If you don't have stamps you could use a stencil instead.)

2. Print the charts on this page onto white paper. Cut out the chart you'd like to use and tape it onto the bottom half of the tag using low-tack tape. Make sure the design is positioned in the centre.

3. Lay the tag flat on a cutting mat and, using a slim perforating tool, pierce the paper and tag following the pattern on the chart, making a small hole in the corner of each coloured square of the chart. Apply enough pressure so that the tool pierces the tag but doesn't make too large a hole.

4. Once you've perforated the design, remove the paper and go back over each of the holes using an embroidery needle to prepare them for stitching. Thread the needle with cotton and stitch the design.

5. Cut a length of Baker's twine to 30cm, fold it in half, then loop through the hole in the top of the tag, as shown, to finish.

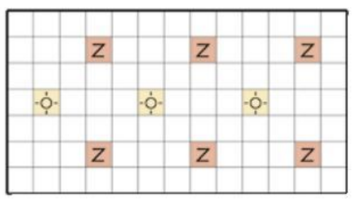
STITCHING KEY

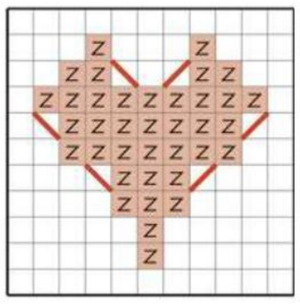
	Colour
Z	Red
◊	Blue
▽	Green
◥	Brown
☼	Cream

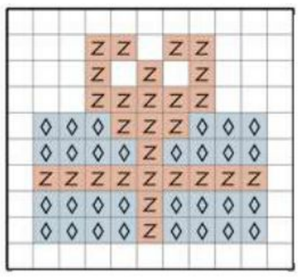
Backstitch in one strand

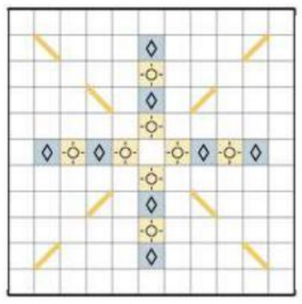
	Colour
--	Red
--	Cream

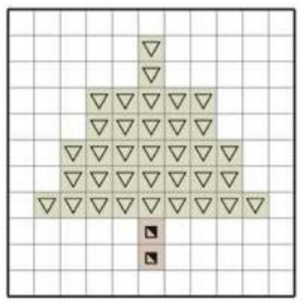
CHARTS











FLOWER POT CANDLES

★

Add a fresh, earthy scent to your home with these rustic table decorations. Fill them with bright berries and aromatic rosemary for a simple, natural set of candlesticks.

HOW TO MAKE THE FLOWER POT CANDLE HOLDERS

1. Soak an oasis brick by dropping it into a basin of water – don't push it down as this will create air pockets in the oasis. Soak it for 10 minutes or so, then remove from the water and cut a piece slightly smaller than your terracotta pot.

2. Wrap a piece of moss around the top half of the oasis brick and secure it in place with moss pins.

3. Push the oasis brick into the plant pot so that the moss rises above the top of the pot.

4. Make a hole in the moss and oasis and push a candle holder into it. Place a candle carefully in the holder, then arrange the moss so that it hides the candle holder.

5. Cut three short lengths of rosemary and push them down into the oasis, through the moss. Make sure you arrange them in such a way that they don't touch the candle flame. Do the same with three sprigs of berries. When you've finished, turn the pot around to make sure it looks good from every angle!

YOU WILL NEED

- Terracotta plant pot
- Moss
- Sprigs of berries
- Rosemary
- Candle holder
- Candle
- Oasis
- Moss pins

Add other herbs, such as bay leaves, for a beautifully scented display





Designed by Marie Parry

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activityhotelbreaks.co.uk 0800 955 0358

THUMBPRINT ROBIN CARD

These adorable cards are so quick and easy, you could even let the kids make them while you sit down for a well-deserved break!

The festive season wouldn't be the same without a visit from a robin or two!

YOU WILL NEED

- Thin white card (17x8.5cm)
- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Masking tape
- Black pen
- Red ink pad

HOW TO MAKE THE CARD

1. Fold the card rectangle in half to make an 8.5cm square greetings card. (You could also buy packs of card blanks to save time.)

2. Print this page, then use tracing paper to draw over one of the robins in the photograph on this page.

3. Turn the traced image over, then place it centrally on the front of the greetings card and go over the lines with a sharp pencil.

4. Remove the tracing paper and go over the pencil lines using a black pen. Make the lines thicker, and don't worry if they're a little wobbly in places – it looks good like that!

5. Press your thumb or forefinger onto the red ink pad, then carefully press down onto the card to make a print on the robin's breast. Leave to dry before popping in an envelope and sending!

Designed by Clare Youngs. Photography by Joanna Henderson © CICO Books

READER OFFER!

This project is taken from *A Year In Crafts* by Clare Youngs, published by CICO Books (RRP £14.99). *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £10.99 (including free P&P) by calling 01256 302699 and quoting code LD3. For more information about CICO books, go to www.makeetc.com.





CHRISTMAS STAR TABLE RUNNER

★

Whether it has pride of place at Christmas dinner or brightens up a console table or sideboard, this Liberty print runner is a quick-stitch showstopper!



YOU WILL NEED

- One Alice Caroline Christmas Table Runner kit, OR
- 20 fabric stars
- Linen (150cm x 35cm)
- Fabric for binding (12cm x 137cm, cut into 4cm-wide strips)
- Sewing machine
- Iron
- Co-ordinating thread

READER OFFER!

Alice Caroline MADE IN ENGLAND

To buy the kit containing everything you need to make this runner (RRP £25), visit www.alicecaroline.co.uk. *Simply Christmas* readers can get a 10% discount on the kit by quoting code 'XMAS2017AC2' at checkout.

Designed by www.alicecaroline.co.uk

HOW TO MAKE THE RUNNER

1. Lay the linen on a flat surface and pin or stick the stars evenly along it.

2. Stitch around the edge of the stars using co-ordinating thread. You can do this by hand using blanket stitch, or using zig-zag or blanket stitch on your sewing machine.

3. Sew your 4cm binding fabric strips together end to end (short ends together) to make a really long strip. Fold over 5mm along one long edge and press. Cut this strip into four bits: two 152cm long and two 40cm long.

4. Take one piece of 152cm-long binding and align the unfolded, unpressed edge with one of the longer edges of the reverse of the table runner, with right sides together. Sew the binding to the reverse of the runner, 5mm from the edge (fig 1).

5. Fold the binding around the edge of the linen to the front of the runner. Turn the runner over and, ensuring that the binding covers up the stitches from step 4, topstitch the folded edge of the binding to the runner (fig 2). Trim the ends of the binding level with the top and bottom runner edges.

6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 for the other long side of the runner.

7. Repeat step 4 along the top edge of the runner using one of the 40cm strips of binding, leaving an excess fabric of at each end (fig 3). Trim this overhang to 1cm at both ends.

8. Bring the overhanging end round to the front of the runner, then fold the rest of the binding strip over the top edge (fig 4) and topstitch as you did in step 5 (fig 5). Repeat to finish off the overhang at the other end.

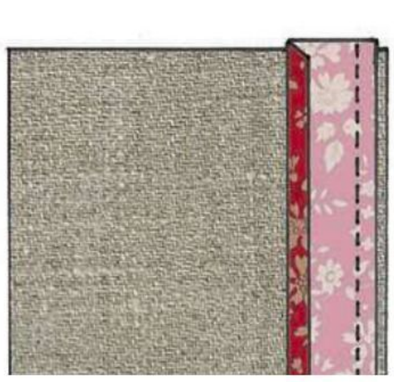


Fig 1

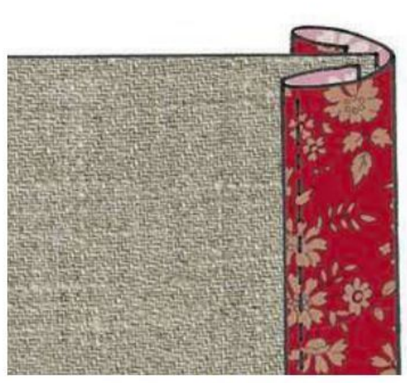


Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5

STENCILLED GIFT WRAP

Give gifts the wow factor by wrapping them in DIY paper. Use Christmassy stencils to create quick and easy Scandi-style prints!

HOW TO MAKE STENCILLED WRAPPING PAPER

1. Put one of your stencils onto white paper and trace around the edge of the stencil. Cut out the area inside the outline, creating an aperture that's about 5mm smaller than the stencil but the same shape. This is your mask.

2. Place the stencil over the aperture and use masking tape to stick it to the mask all around the edge. Turn it over and you're ready to go.

3. Dab a small amount of acrylic paint onto your stencilling brush or sponge and do a couple of practice dabs on some scrap paper to remove any excess paint. (If there's too much paint on the brush it could bleed under the edges of the stencil.)

4. Now place your stencil on to your plain wrapping paper and dab the paint through it. Hold the stencil firm as you apply the paint – if it moves, the design will smudge.

5. Once you've covered the whole stencil with paint, gently lift it up. Repeat in rows to build up a pattern. Leave to dry for 30 minutes.

6. Wrap your gifts and add ribbon or trims to suit your style!

7. You can use this technique to stencil patterns onto cellophane that you can layer over plain or stencilled brown paper. Try decorating gift bags and cardboard tags too.

YOU WILL NEED

- Acrylic paint
- Stencilling brush or sponge
- Christmas-themed crafting stencils
- White paper
- Masking tape
- Pencil and scissors
- Plain paper and cellophane
- Luggage tags
- Ribbon or twine



Designed by Zoë Williams. Props and ribbons supplied by The Contemporary Home (www.tch.net)

SPARKLING STAGS

★

Add the perfect finishing touch to your Christmas dinner table with a herd of golden stags standing proud among the cranberry sauce and sprouts!

YOU WILL NEED

- Gold glitter card
- Gold jingle bells
- Baker's twine
- PVA glue
- Craft knife
- Ribbon
- White tack (optional)



Make place markers by writing names on tags and hanging them around the stags' necks

You can hook one of these small stags over the edge of a glass for a quirky finishing touch.

HOW TO MAKE THE STANDING STAGS

1. Print this page then use a photocopier to enlarge the templates below to the size you'd like your stags to be. Cut them out and draw round them to create two stags on the reverse of some gold glitter card. Make sure they face in opposite directions. Carefully cut them out.

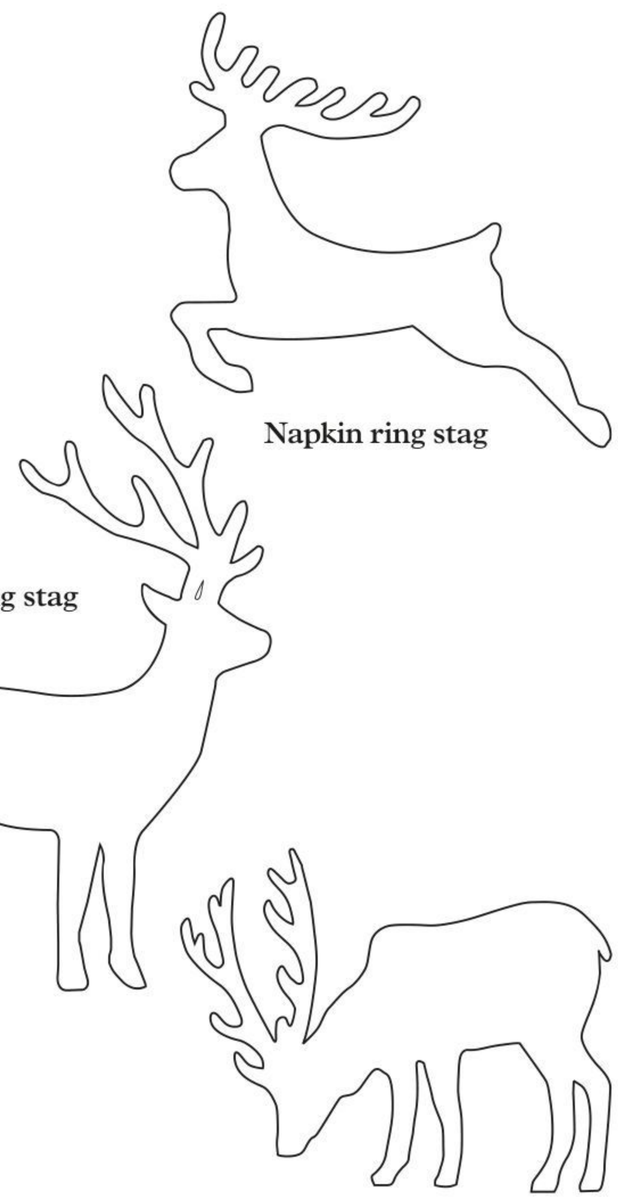
2. Add glue to the body of one stag piece and stick the front and back stag pieces together so that the glitter sides are facing outwards. Leave the four legs unstuck.

3. Once the glue has dried, gently ease the legs outwards until the stag stands. (You may need to use some white tack for extra support.) Thread a bell onto twine and tie it around the stag's neck.

HOW TO MAKE THE NAPKIN RING STAG

1. Photocopy the 'Napkin ring stag' template below, enlarging it if you like. Draw round it on the back of some gold glitter card.

2. Cut out the cardboard stag, glue to a short length of ribbon and tie the ribbon around a napkin.



Napkin ring stag

Standing stag

Bending stag

Designed by Zoë Patching

SCANDI BIRD GIFT TAGS

★

Easy to make and embroider, these pretty gift tags can be re-used for years. Or you could find them a new home on your Christmas tree!

HOW TO MAKE THE GIFT TAGS

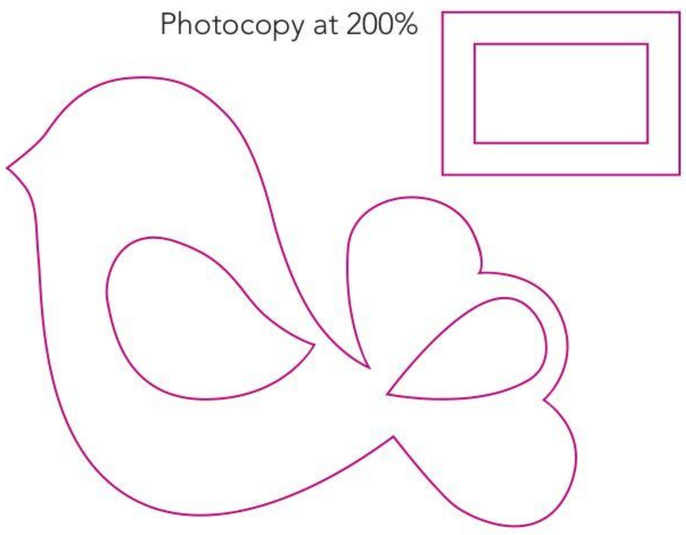
1. Print this page, enlarge the templates below on a photocopier, then use different coloured felt to cut out two body pieces, one wing, one rectangular card holder and three tail feathers for each bird. Cut a small heart from felt, too, for the wing.

2. Sew a running stitch along one of the short sides of the rectangular card holder piece. Attach the other three sides to one of the body pieces using a straight stitch. This will leave one short edge free to insert your piece of card for the gift recipient.

3. On the other body piece attach the heart, wing and tail feathers using decorative stitches in coloured threads. Make sure you sew them onto the opposite-facing side to the card holder so that you can glue the two pieces together.

4. On the side with the wing and tail panels, insert the black brad or sew on a small black bead for an eye. Glue the two body pieces together, securing the ribbon loop in between.

Photocopy at 200%





There's a pocket on the back of each tag for a card with the recipient's name.

YOU WILL NEED

- Felt in three different colours
- Co-ordinating embroidery threads
- Black brad or bead
- Small pieces of ribbon
- Small piece of card
- Glue

Designed by Jess Byrne

ADVERTISING FEATURE







BATHED IN GOOD CHEER

The famous Bath Christmas Market is back and better than ever this year, so discover the festive delights that this 18-day extravaganza has to offer

Now in its 17th year, Bath Christmas Market features more than 200 beautifully decorated chalets, dotted throughout the streets of this World Heritage City. And this year, more than 60 new businesses are joining in the fun, so whether you're a first-timer or a Christmas market veteran, there'll be plenty of new treats to discover.

With over 80% of stallholders coming from Bath and the South West region, there's a distinctive community spirit to this market, and you're sure to find unique gifts for everyone on your Christmas list, including artisan cheeses, bespoke homeware, tasty drinks, designer fashions and beautiful crafts.

Bath Street will once again see small and new start-up businesses take the opportunity to showcase their products, while the market's Charity Chalet will welcome 18 charities to raise awareness and much-needed funds.

Visitors can also enjoy an array of festive food, drink and on-street entertainment, as well as community events across the city. The Lodge offers shoppers a warm and cosy haven in which to get a drink and a bite to eat with friends, and relax amid the happy, bustling atmosphere.

Live in London? There's absolutely no need to miss out. Escape the Big Smoke and enjoy a hassle-free 90-minute trip with Great Western Railway. Book early to catch those midweek offers, and you could get your Christmas shopping done in one fantastic, festive day!

Bath Christmas Market runs from **23 November - 10 December 2017**
Find out more at bathchristmasmarket.co.uk

Brought to you by VISIT BATH



FESTIVE

FAMILY FUN

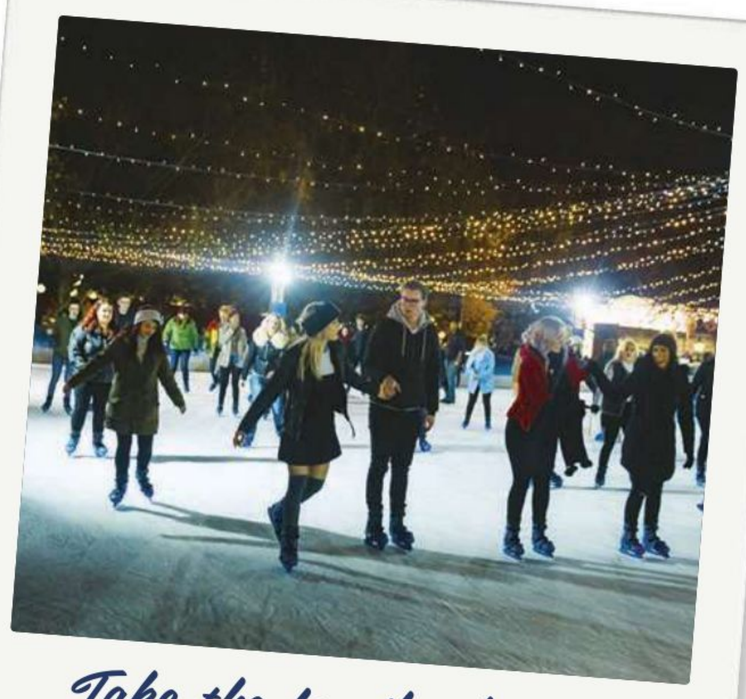
Create traditions, make memories and enjoy a great day out with our pick of some of the UK's best Christmas events. Start filling your December diary now!

One alternative to spending your Christmas budget on toys that are destined to be gathering dust by February is to invest in a fantastic day out or an evening show with the family – guaranteed memory-making moments. There are so many venues to choose from: from stunning stately homes to funfairs and Christmas markets, to TV or film characters strutting their stuff on stage. Whatever you and your children are into, you'll find a festive event to suit.

When you're watching an exciting spectacle on ice or seeing the Christmas lights from the top of a big wheel, you won't doubt that a huge amount of effort goes into making festive events something you'd want to return to time and time again. But alongside the entertainment, there's the value of just spending time with each other, away from the home (with its lurking housework and homework) and, hopefully, away from the phone too. Many of the best memories are made from the little things, such as a little sister tugging Santa's beard, a brother being dragged up on stage to tell his favourite joke, or getting a free ride on the dodgems because Dad was wearing flashing antlers... Find the time to create those memories that will be the talk of the Christmas dinner table for years to come.

MAKING TRADITIONS

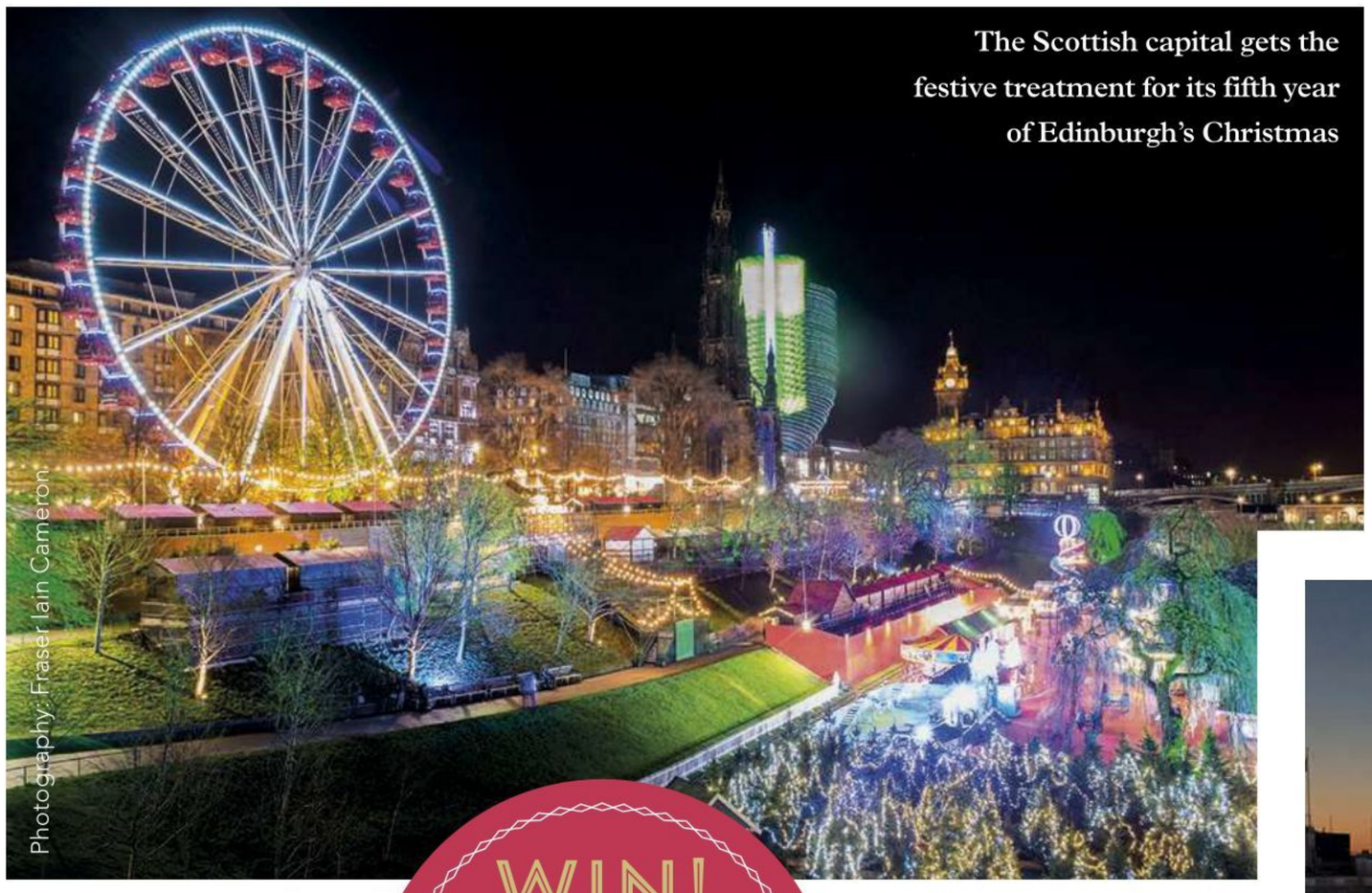
While your own family traditions from childhood may have seemed effortless, it's likely that they took some planning, and most likely a little expenditure. It takes commitment to do the same thing each year, but these can be the foundations of future Christmases with your children's families. Anything from seeing a local pantomime, buying a decoration every year at a Christmas market or going ice skating as a group will make great traditions. We've picked out ten events from around the UK that will fill you with the festive spirit. Keep your eye out, too, for local events in regional newspapers, where you may well find offers and discounts. ▶



Take the family skating in Hyde Park

Words: Vicki Atkinson. Main photo: LaplandUK

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS



The Scottish capital gets the festive treatment for its fifth year of Edinburgh's Christmas

Photography: Fraser Iain Cameron



Disney On Ice is touring the UK with characters, music and fun



Photography: Kew, Jeff Eden



Cardiff's own Winter Wonderland lights up City Hall Lawn

WIN! FOUR TICKETS TO LAPLANDUK
TURN TO PAGE 61

LAPLANDUK

18 NOVEMBER – 24 DECEMBER

For the tenth year running you can visit Father Christmas' wintry home via magical elven pathways in the Enchanted Forest near Ascot. Father Christmas is inviting children to help the elves prepare for the big day – the award-winning immersive journey through LaplandUK offers families a chance to explore a magical, mystical world, with a true flavour of Christmas. After arriving in LaplandUK you'll help out in the Toy Factory, learn how elves can read wishes, ice skate in the Elven Village and enjoy a personalised meeting with Father Christmas himself! Prices from £65 per person.

INFO *www.laplanduk.co.uk*

SKATE AT SOMERSET HOUSE

15 NOVEMBER – 14 JANUARY

For a truly festive ice-skating experience, SKATE at Somerset House with Fortnum & Mason is one of the best. The famed culture and arts centre in the heart of London will be taken over by a huge rink, 40-foot Christmas tree and stunning lights, with festive food and drink stalls offering a post-skate warm-up. Lessons will be available and on selected nights Skate Late brings cutting-edge DJs and artists to the rink. Tickets from £7.50.

INFO *www.somersethouse.org.uk*

EDINBURGH'S CHRISTMAS

17 NOVEMBER – 7 JANUARY

Now in its fifth year, Edinburgh's Christmas is a six-week season of festive entertainment with both free and ticketed events, including Santa's Grotto and an outdoor ice rink. Enjoy a stroll through the Christmas markets along Princes Street Gardens and you'll find food, glühwein and plenty of gift ideas. A highlight of the festival is the beautiful Speigeltent, which hosts the new headline spectacle, La Clique Noël, a circus and burlesque show (more suited to the grown-ups!). Keep an eye on the website as new events are revealed in the run-up to November.

INFO *www.edinburghschristmas.com*

DISNEY'S PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE

22 SEPTEMBER – 30 DECEMBER

This season, the ever-popular Disney On Ice will be taking audiences on a globetrotting tour of Disney destinations from *The Lion King*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Peter Pan* and *Frozen*. The show will explore the African Pride Lands with Simba, voyage under the sea to Ariel's underwater kingdom, fly to Neverland with Peter Pan and go on a frozen adventure with Anna and Elsa. All this, plus a pre-show warm-up with *Zootropolis*. *Disney On Ice Presents Passport To Adventure* will heading to Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Belfast and more. Ticket prices vary according to venue and seating.

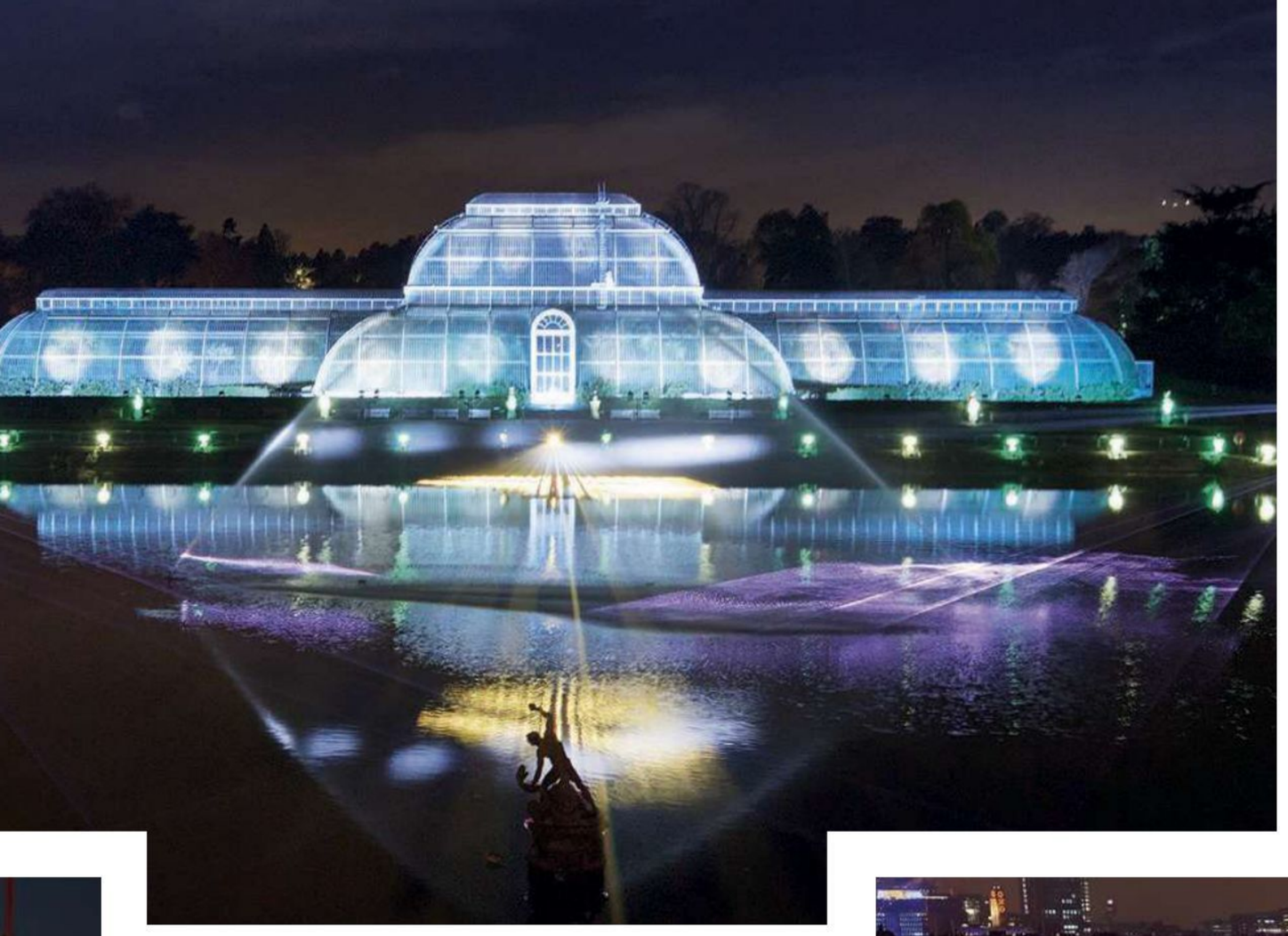
INFO *www.disneyonice.com*

NATIONAL TRUST, CROFT CASTLE

18 NOVEMBER – 17 DECEMBER (WEEKENDS ONLY)

Revel in the post-war festive spirit of the 1950s as The National Trust celebrates 60 years since Croft Castle and parklands in Herefordshire came under the care of the conservation charity. See the castle decorated for a '50s Christmas, with music, memorabilia and festive cheer. Little ones can visit Father Christmas for the first three weekends in December for an early Christmas pressie (£6 per child, booking essential, normal admission applies). National Trust venues up and down the country will also be hosting festive events – visit the website for the full rundown.

INFO *www.nationaltrust.org.uk*




Photography: National Trust Images, Arnhel de Serra



CARDIFF'S WINTER WONDERLAND

9 NOVEMBER – 8 JANUARY

This festive spectacular in the heart of the Welsh capital will be hosted at City Hall Lawn. There'll be undercover ice-skating, fairground rides – including a big wheel with views over the capital – and the 'Après Skate' Alpine Village with a bierkeller and authentic chalets serving delicious treats. Keep your eye on the website for more information about scheduled entertainment. Booking required for ice skating.

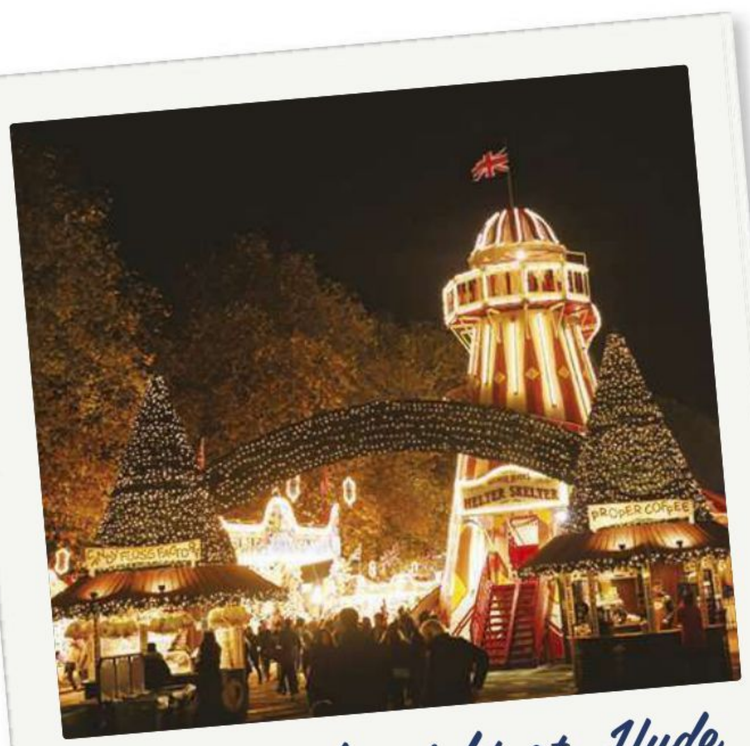
INFO *www.cardiffswinter wonderland.com*

HYDE PARK WINTER WONDERLAND

17 NOVEMBER – 1 JANUARY

Head to London's Hyde Park Winter Wonderland for a festive experience whatever the weather. Ice skate around the park's iconic bandstand (the largest outdoor rink in the UK) or take a ride on the Giant Observation Wheel and watch the festivities from a high point. Family favourites for 2017 include Zippos Circus performances, The Magical Ice Kingdom and the traditional fairground. All attractions booked separately.

INFO *www.hydeparkwinter wonderland.com*



Light up the night at Hyde Park Winter Wonderland



Photography: James Bryant

Top left The illuminated Palm House at Kew
Top right Meet Santa at Croft Castle, Herefordshire
Left A festive treat for Londoners – SKATE at Somerset house with Fortum & Mason

DRUSILLAS PARK WINTER WONDERLAND ILLUMINATIONS

18 NOVEMBER – 1 JANUARY

Drusillas Park, the well-known zoo in East Sussex, will be switching on their Winter Wonderland Illuminations and putting on a daily light show at 4.30pm, synchronised to music. Young revellers can expect to see a host of magical creatures in the ice-capped kingdom, as well as having the opportunity to visit Santa in his cottage, meet his reindeer or even hug a husky. See website for prices.

INFO *www.drusillas.co.uk*

KEW GARDENS

22 NOVEMBER – 1 JANUARY

The iconic Palm House at Kew Gardens doesn't escape the festive treatment – it becomes the grand finale of a brand new illuminated trail. Visitors will see over a million twinkling lights as they follow the trail, enjoying a walkway of giant bubbles, warming up in the Fire Garden and trying out the giant piano at the 'Play Me, Light Me' installation. Children will enjoy spotting Santa and his elves along the way and taking a ride on the carousel or helter skelter. As the trail ends, visitors will be greeted by the scent of mulled wine, mince pies and other treats from the stalls at Victoria Plaza. Tickets from £10.

INFO *www.kew.org*

PETER PAN CHRISTMAS SHOW, BLACKPOOL

16 DECEMBER – 7 JANUARY

There's no shortage of family shows to get you into the Christmas spirit this season, but Blackpool's *Peter Pan* will be a real treat. With a live band and amazing costumes, this adaptation of the children's classic will be a magical adventure as you watch Peter, Wendy and Michael team up with the Lost Boys to defeat Captain Hook, all in the impressive Opera House at the Winter Gardens. Tickets from £10.

INFO *www.wintergardens blackpool.co.uk*

Westonbirt
The National
Arboretum

Advance tickets only

BOOKING OPENS
25 SEPTEMBER

ENCHANTED CHRISTMAS

An illuminated celebration of Westonbirt's tree collection

FRIDAY 1 – SUNDAY 3, THURSDAY 7 – SUNDAY 10
& THURSDAY 14 – MONDAY 18 DECEMBER

Tickets & info:
forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt-christmas
Box office: 03000 680 400

Forestry Commission England

Westonbirt, The National Arboretum is cared for by the Forestry Commission.

WIN! A FAMILY TRIP TO Lapland UK



Meet the elves at the groundbreaking LaplandUK and stay at the luxury Coworth Park hotel!

What's the Christmas you remember from your childhood? We've put together a prize that we guarantee will create memories your family will look back on for a lifetime.

For 10 years, LaplandUK has been transporting families from The Enchanted Forest (conveniently located just outside Ascot!) to the magical world of the elves. And it's twice been the winner of the 'UK's Best Family Day Out' prize at the Little London Awards.

You'll immerse yourself in the four-hour experience, meeting Father Christmas and the elves vital to making Christmas happen. There's Whittle, head of the Toy Factory, Eeko, Mother Nature's friend, and Conker, the silliest elf!

We're delighted to be able to offer you the chance to win an invitation for a family of four to visit LaplandUK, to be used on Saturday 16 December. And after a busy afternoon making magical memories you can continue your first-class weekend at nearby Coworth Park, a luxurious country house hotel and spa set in 240 acres on the borders of Windsor Great Park.

In addition to this, you'll get 50 Jingles to spend at LaplandUK (the official elven currency!), a Conker The Silly Elf toy, and a copy of *Lapland: The Untold Story Of Father Christmas*, which reveals how a humble toymaker became Father Christmas.


The five-star Coworth Park

For your chance to win this ultimate Christmassy prize, just go to ***http://competition.immediate.co.uk/laplanduk*** *and answer a simple multiple choice question. The closing date is 10 December 2017, and we'll get in touch with the winner on 11 December. Good luck!*

TERMS AND CONDITIONS
The Promoter of this competition is Immediate Media Company Bristol Ltd. Entrants must be UK residents aged 18 years or older, excluding the Promoter's employees. Closing date for entries is 23.55.00 GMT on 10 December 2017. One winning entry will be chosen at random from all eligible entries. The winner will be contacted within 24 hours of the competition closing. Failure on the part of the winner to respond promptly or supply any necessary details within 24 hours of being contacted will result in the prize being offered to a runner-up. The tickets for LaplandUK are valid on the 2pm Tour on Saturday 16 December only. Your group of four ticket-holders must include at least one child (aged between 12 months and 16 years) and one adult. The hotel booking is for the night of Saturday 16 December only, in one family room. Travel expenses will not be paid. The hotel booking includes dinner in the Barn at Coworth Park and English breakfast. For full terms and conditions, please see page 98 or http://competition.immediate.co.uk/laplanduk.

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SIMPLY
CHRISTMAS

DECORATE YOUR HOME

Expert advice on everything from lighting to festive fragrances!

Dusting off the same old decorations, untangling fairy lights and hurrying out for replacement bulbs on Christmas Eve... If this sounds all too familiar then our guide should provide you with plenty of ideas to help you get your home and gardens looking suitably seasonal, with advice on creating a festive theme and using greenery in your decorating, to setting the scene with light and scents. And to give you extra inspiration we chat to the people who create magical festive scenes in London's shop windows every year!

Photography: www.amara.com

Creating a THEME

From timeless and traditional to eclectic and eccentric, a theme is a fun way to give every inch of your home a touch of festive magic!

This year, why not leave that faithful old box of decorations in the loft and plan your festive decorating around a theme instead? Whether you focus on a colour scheme, shape, style or trend, a strong theme can create real impact, and a truly memorable experience for you and your guests!

You may already have an idea of what sort of look you want to create in your home, but if you're not sure where to begin, Pinterest is a neverending source of inspiration. Browse the archives of interior design sites, and find out what themes are trending on wedding planners' blogs – especially if they've featured winter ceremonies.

Decide which area of the house is going to be the focal point of the festivities, whether it's the kitchen, dining room or living room, and work outwards, continuing your theme into the hallway and even in the rooms upstairs, with little touches like bunches of greenery on bedside tables and pine-scented toiletries in the bathroom. Choosing a wreath for your front door that references your decorating theme will give your guests an idea of what to expect. Holly, ivy and red ribbons hint at a traditional theme, while rustic wood and willow set the tone for more minimalist, Scandi-style celebrations.



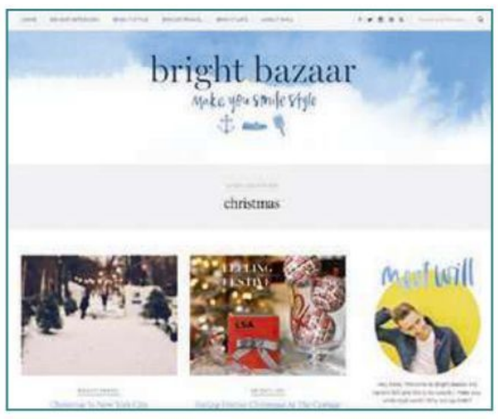
Photography: www.dunelm.com

If you're saving the pennies, choose a simple theme that won't cost too much to achieve. Many a treasure can be found in a charity shop, and DIY blogs are packed with thrifty ideas and craft projects for a rustic, homespun look. The understated Nordic style is on trend, inexpensive and easy to capture with evergreens and strings of white, twinkling lights.

One of the easiest ways to create a theme is to use the same colour palette throughout your home. Classic green and red is always popular, but a more contemporary look can be achieved with monochrome, or by pairing metallics and pastels. Resist the urge to go overboard if you're letting colour dictate your decorating, and don't overwhelm the space (and your guests) – a few accents are much better than a room that has so much going on that it's hard to relax. The festive season is about unwinding, after all!

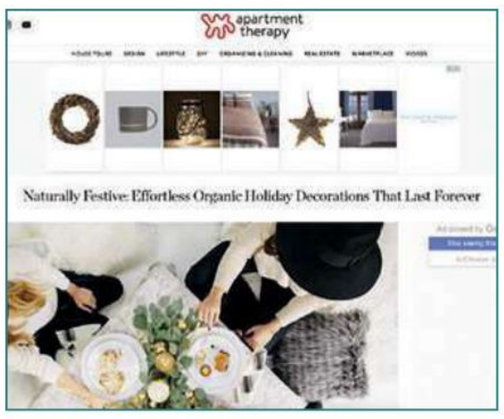
DESIGN INSPIRATION

Want to give your home a unique festive feel but aren't sure where to begin? Take inspiration from those in the know, whether you want to go bold and bright or embrace understated chic. Here are three of our favourite design and interiors sites, where you'll find design lessons, DIY tutorials and plenty of expert advice to help you find your own theme!



BRIGHT BAZAAR

Will is an author, creative consultant and lifestyle blogger whose mantra is 'beige is boring'! If colour happens to be your thing, you'll love *www.brightbazaarblog.com*!



APARTMENT THERAPY

This site is bursting with inspiration, from decorating tiny spaces to decluttering before Christmas, plus plenty of dreamy homes to lust after, too! *www.apartmenttherapy.com*.



HANNAH IN THE HOUSE

Half Danish, half British, Hannah has 'a healthy obsession with minimalism and simplicity'. Head to *www.hannahinthehouse.com* for understated interiors and Christmas styling ideas.



IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

If you want to involve the whole family, have an idea-sharing session to help you come up with a theme that everyone's happy with. You could have a different theme for each room, with each person in charge of picking the decorations. If you're worried about ending up with a Hello Kitty Christmas tree, ask kids to draw their ideal Christmas and choose decorations in the colours they go for – that way they'll still feel involved. Rachel Southern of interiors blog The Ordinary Lovely (*www.theordinarylovely.com*) suggests giving kids free rein in their own rooms: "Both my boys have trees in their bedrooms where I encourage them to go wild with *all* the styles and colours. They switch their night lights for twinkly lights during Advent, which gets them excitedly counting down the days to Christmas."

FUN IDEAS FOR FESTIVE THEMES

Pick one strong colour or shape and use it throughout the house for a theme that everyone will remember!



▲ BLACK AND WHITE

Minimalist decor provides the perfect blank canvas for monochrome details, like this paper made with Yellow Owl Workshop stamps. **From £12.95, www.papermash.co.uk**



▲ WHY SO SERIOUS?

Embrace the eclectic and fill your home with quirky decs and talking points that are bound to raise a smile! **From £5.25, www.paperchase.co.uk**

▼ STAR GAZING

Let galaxies and constellations be your decoration inspiration. With these baubles, stars aren't just for the top of the tree! **£6 for a set of nine, www.tch.net**



▼ BAKERS GONNA BAKE

Cookie cutter lights, gingerbread man decorations and edible treats on the tree are perfect for the home of a budding baker! **£39.95, notonthehighstreet.com/spotted**



3 TIPS FOR EASY THEMES

Who better to ask for tips on creating a festive theme than these interiors and decorating experts?

1 "Build on your own style. This makes it much easier for your Christmas decor to highlight your personal style rather than choosing something that contrasts too much with what's already in the space." Kimberly Duran, interiors and DIY blogger at www.swoonworthy.co.uk

2 "While red is not my favourite colour to have in the home for 11 months of the year, it adorns nearly every surface come December. I like a whimsical Christmas feel with fairy lights in abundance." Rachel Southern, award-winning blogger at www.theordinarylovely.com

3 "I decorate almost every room, including the bathroom, and I'm tweaking right up to Christmas Eve!" Janet Wardley, head of visual display at Harvey Nichols



Photography: www.theordinarylovely.com

Festive FOLIAGE

Bring nature inside this year and let the woodlands, hedgerows and even your own garden be the inspiration for your Christmas decorating!


Photography: www.interflora.co.uk

Festive colours are everywhere you look in winter, with glossy red berries, dark green holly and fluffy old man's beard in the hedgerows. Using greenery gathered from local woodlands is a tradition that originated in pagan times, when people would use evergreens to celebrate the winter solstice. These days, from wreaths to dramatic swags and garlands, the lush, natural look of foliage is the perfect way to balance all that Christmas glitter.

Before you venture out into the countryside armed with a pair of secateurs, see what you can gather in your own garden. A potted conifer by the front door makes an eco-friendly alternative to a Christmas tree, and bunches of herbs from the vegetable patch can be tied with ribbons and hung up in the kitchen – then you can pick what you need when you're seasoning your festive feast!

If you do decide to venture further afield to find your foliage, it's important to follow the forager's code. Don't be tempted to trespass on private land, and resist the urge to uproot wild plants without permission. Only take what you need so that the plant can continue to thrive, and always leave the area as you found it.

A hedgerow wreath on the front door is a lovely way to welcome guests, and the simplest ring can be made by bending slender, flexible stems such as willow or cotoneaster into a ring, then winding wire around the point where they meet to secure the ends.

Continue the theme throughout your home, incorporating foliage into your decorating. Evergreens can be twisted together with florist's wire and LED lights, then looped around banisters, over mirrors and above doorways. String pine cones onto twine to make rustic garlands, thread rosehips on wire with silver bells and bend them into heart-shaped tree decorations, and fill glass baubles with miniature fronds and cuttings.

Don't forget the dinner table! Greenery studded with walnuts, figs and slices of dried orange makes a striking centrepiece, mini rosemary wreaths are pretty napkin rings, and garden herbs will look beautiful on top of your Christmas cake.

FRESHEN UP YOUR FOLIAGE

Ellie Jauncey, one half of London florist team The Flower Appreciation Society, shares a few tricks and secrets of the trade, from making the perfect Christmas wreath to keeping your greenery fresh and fabulous throughout the festive period!

You can find out more about The Flower Appreciation Society at www.theflowerappreciationsociety.co.uk



MAKE THE CUT

To keep woody foliage fresh, cut the stems at an angle and add an extra cut directly up the stem to allow more water to pass through. Remove the leaves below the water line in your vase.



MIXED BUNCH

Make bunches of foliage before you start assembling your wreath, using pine, ivy and other hardy foliage you can find, then use the bunches to cover a moss-covered wire frame.



HAVE A BASH

Struggling to cut woody stems? Bash the ends with a hammer to allow water to travel up the stem, put them in a bucket in ten inches of water and leave for a few hours before you use them.

CHRISTMAS TREE ALTERNATIVES

If you're looking for unusual ways to incorprorate nature into your home this year, take some inspiration from these...



▼ TEEPEE TREE

Germarie Brewer from Homeology made a teepee structure from six pieces of bamboo, then wound foliage around it using twine and decorated it with baubles and stars.

http://homeology.co.za



▲ KEEP IT UNREAL

These silver mirrored leaf decorations may not be real, but they will last forever. Arrange some branches in a vase and hang them up for all to see! £12.95,

www.decoratorsnotebook.co.uk



▲ HANGING AROUND

Tie sprigs of greenery, fir cones and glass terrariums from a branch like Andrea Handojo, aka The Beauty Dojo – create mini winter scenes with tiny toys and a dusting of fake snow.

www.thebeautydojo.com

▼ IN THE FRAME

Ask for cuttings from a friend's Christmas tree or add winter fronds to these double-sided frames from Decorator's Notebook and display on the mantelpiece. From £14.95,

www.decoratorsnotebook.co.uk





5 TIPS FOR A GREEN TREE

Friends of the Earth explain how to buy an eco-friendly Christmas tree and lower your carbon footprint

1 **Artificial trees aren't biodegradable and need enormous amounts of energy to manufacture, so if you have one already, use it for as many years as possible.**

2 **Make sure your tree is UK grown. If you want a tree that is certified organic, check it's been approved by the Soil Association.**

3 **Buying a potted tree allows you to grow it outside and use it again, reducing its environmental impact.**

4 **Don't let your tree be part of the 90% that end up in landfill! Contact your local council to see if they recycle Christmas trees.**

5 **Don't buy a tree – borrow one! Visit www.christmastreerentals.co.uk to find out more.**

Tips from Environmental organisation Friends of the Earth (www.foe.co.uk)



MAGICAL MISTLETOE

Also known as birdlime, golden bough, all-heal, drudenfuss and devil's fuge, mistletoe got its name because the Anglo Saxons noticed that it grew in places where birds left their droppings – 'mistel' means 'dung' and 'tan' means 'twig' in Anglo Saxon! The ancient Celts believed that mistletoe had magical properties, as it stayed green and bore berries all through the winter while other plants died. Today a bunch is often hung in the hallway of a home, and according to tradition a single berry should be plucked each time a couple embrace underneath – no more berries means no more kissing! Tie a sprig with ribbon and hang it in your home, but some varieties of the plant can be toxic for pets, so make sure you pick up any berries that fall off.



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You Have a Choice!

Style of The Season is made entirely by hand to excite your imagination through a contemporary twist on Art Nouveau design. This year Nordic reds are seasonal favourites, but while red baubles may come and go, timeless design is something special. Whatever the style of the season may be, a piece of Moorcroft creates memories that can pass through the generations.

Visit our website now for a full array of Christmas inspired designs.

moorcroft.com/christmas

A WINDOW WONDERLAND

Every year, department stores pull out all the stops to create fantastical festive displays. Find out what happens behind the scenes to bring the magic to a high street near you…



Fortnum & Mason's 2016 windows were themed around togetherness



Harvey Nichols embraced Italian style with their spectacular 'Britalia' windows

We all remember those 'Christmas is coming' moments from our childhood: Slade and Wizzard blaring out in the supermarket, foil-wrapped Santas sneaking onto shop shelves, the scent of pine needles on the air. Now, as adults, the real festive kickstarter is often the sight of elaborately dressed windows in the nearest department store in November.

On the other side of the glass, Christmas begins much earlier in the year. In fact, the visual teams at Liberty, Fortnum & Mason, Selfridges and the like start planning for the following Christmas before the current year's fake snow has been swept away. And while the rest of the country are enjoying summer, the visual teams are more likely to be bulk buying glitter than sunblock. "We're a small team and busy with other window designs throughout the year, so the majority of the Christmas window work starts from around June," says Janet Wardley, head of visual display at Harvey Nichols.

With each store competing to give passers-by the most memorable experience, the pressure is on to create a display that's relevant, inspiring and shows the brand in all its glory. So where do the creatives get their ideas? For stores like Harvey Nichols and Harrods, fashion has a huge influence on the look and feel of the festive displays. "The catwalks play a role and we work closely with our buying and marketing teams to showcase themes and key trends," says Janet. "Galleries and exhibitions are a great resource too."

With John Lewis's Christmas TV adverts so popular every year, it's no surprise that the store chose to tie their Oxford Street windows in with their Buster the Boxer ad campaign in 2016. "We created a network of burrows with the animals using key products from the Christmas collection," says visual merchandise design manager Lucy Lines. "My favourite was the squirrel drying his tail with a Dyson hairdryer!"

HARVEY NICHOLS' 'BRITALIA' IN NUMBERS

- **1,500** hours to install
- **2** miles of wool
- **700** hand-painted stars
- **100,000** ice-white balls
- **1,300**kg of scrunched up paper
- **500** litres of paint

Festive fact

John Lewis used 2.93 tonnes of fake snow in last year's window displays!



John Lewis created burrows filled with Christmassy creature comforts

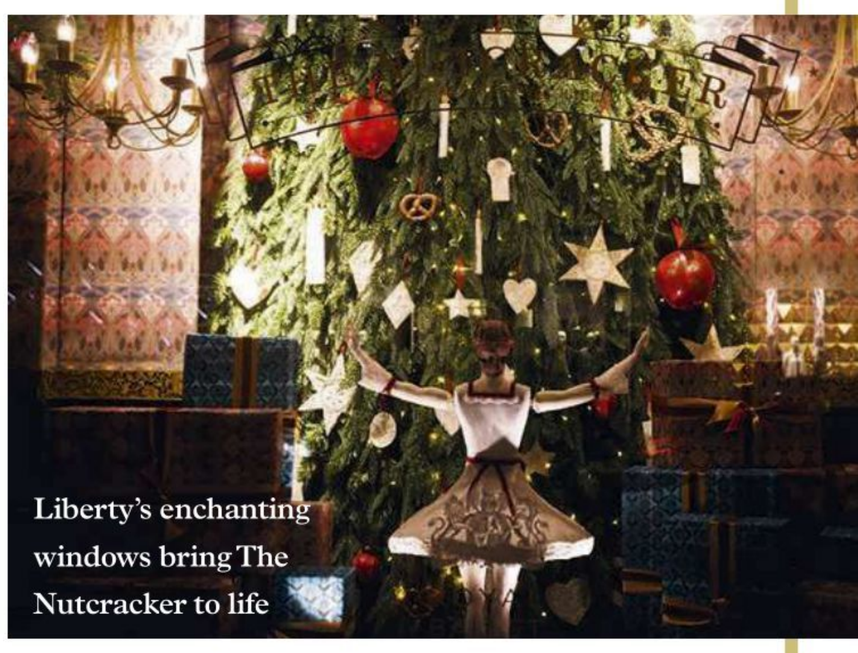
The festive displays play an integral role in the stores' marketing campaigns, but they're also windows to other worlds, allowing onlookers to leave reality behind for a few moments. "Window displays whatever the time of the year should evoke a sense of escapism, imagination and fantasy," explains Janet. Creating scenes to soothe a post-referendum Britain, Fortnum & Mason themed their 2016 windows around 'togetherness', with nine unlikely pairings illustrating the 'Together We're Merrier' theme, including a chef clinking glasses with a lobster.

Selfridges' 2016 windows saw Santa DJing and hitting the slopes, accompanied

Words: Cecilia Forfitt



The North and South Poles meet in one of Fortnum & Mason's Christmas displays



Liberty's enchanting windows bring The Nutcracker to life



A sequinned Santa leaves his private jet at Selfridges





A snowy scene at Peter Jones, complete with Gruffalos, polar bears and Paddington

"Window displays should evoke a sense of escapism, imagination and fantasy"

by mannequins clad in couture. No detail was overlooked, with the store commissioning a handmade sequinned suit for every window (each one took 193 hours to make). Liberty teamed up with the Royal Ballet, creating a mini theatre set in each window, with scenes from the ballet brought to life by moving puppets. Celebrating fashion as only the front row know how, Harvey Nichols created 'Britalia', a fusion of Brit chic and Italian history with mannequins draped in luxury garments, Roman columns and scenes of decadence bathed in blue light.

Once the presents have been piled up with mathematical precision and the last bauble has been polished, it's time for the visual teams to stand back and admire their work. But what's the big reveal like for those who have been tirelessly working on the finished look? "While we have one mock-up window in our studio, we don't know what the concept will look like until we start installing the design," Janet says. "When you finally complete the windows and turn on the lights, that's when you really see and feel the magic come alive."

The first displays go live in early November, but to see your favourite stores in all their finery, keep an eye on their social media – the best way to see them is always up close!

GET THE LOOK AT HOME

Want to decorate like a pro? Visual experts Janet Wardley and Lucy Lines share their tips…

REUSE, RECYCLE

Coat everyday objects with spray paint to give them a festive twist – just because an ornament isn't stereotypically 'Christmas' it doesn't mean you can't include it. – Janet

MAKE MEMORIES

Some of my most treasured decorations come from Paris and Copenhagen. I love decorating my tree to relive the happy memories attached to those places. – Lucy

FIND A GEM

You don't always need to buy a new set of decorations, although I do like to add at least one new find to my collection year on year. – Janet

KEEP IT REAL

I always have a real tree, so I wait until about two weeks before Christmas to put it up so it looks its best on Christmas day. – Lucy

Let there be LIGHT

Christmas wouldn't be half as magical without lights, and it's amazing what you can create with a little imagination and a box of bulbs!



Lighting up the Christmas tree is a time-honoured festive tradition, and somehow a home doesn't feel festive until it's twinkling away. There's no reason why you shouldn't light up every room of the house though – and the garden, driveway and porch while you're at it!

Build excitement among your arriving guests by lining your pathway with candle bags and bathing dark corners of the garden in light. Light-up animals under the trees create fairytale scenes that children will love ((www.lights4fun.co.uk have a range that includes deer and penguins). You can also illuminate birdbaths, bean poles, garden furniture and even the potting shed with a bit of imagination. String lights around the trunks of trees, starting at the base and working your way upwards, and hide lanterns filled with battery-powered lights in the roots.

The hallway is the first room your guests will see when they enter your home, so don't leave it in the dark when you're decorating. String multiple strands of LED fairylights across the ceiling to create a sparkling canopy of light, and wind them around banisters and boot racks to give everyday objects a magical glow.

Lighting is essential for setting the right mood at dinner, and soft candlelight and a few lamps are much more effective and relaxing than a bright, overhead glare. Creating a focal point in the middle of the table can also help to distract from less festive features, like the ever-growing pile of washing up! Make a spectacular centrepiece with lights twinkling in among baubles and greenery, and knock up an Instagram-worthy chandelier using a child's hula hoop – just cover it in masking tape, wind battery-operated lights around it, and suspend it from the ceiling above your dining table.

If you're entertaining guests in a small flat, reflected candlelight can create the illusion of a roomier space if you position mirrors cleverly. If you don't have room for a tree, create a minimalist outline on the wall using a long string of lights, and arrange your gifts underneath. Now all you need to do is flick the switch... Hey presto, instant Christmas!

ALTERNATIVE LIGHTING IDEAS

Twinkling away on trees all over the world, fairy lights have long been a part of the sparkliest day of the year, and candles will never go out of festive fashion. If you fancy going bigger and bolder this year, though, we've picked three alternative lighting options, perfect for creating impact and complementing contemporary Christmas decorating schemes.



MY WORD!

Spell out exactly how festive you're feeling with these swappable Scrabble string lights from *www.iwantoneofthose.com* (£13.99), which come with 60 re-usable sticker letters.



LIGHTS, CAMERA...

Switch on this kitsch vintage cinema-inspired lightbox before you settle down to a good old Christmas film and you'll feel just like a movie star. £39.99 from *www.festive-lights.com*.



NOËL, NOËL

This Scandi-style wooden lettering will look great on a windowsill surrounded by greenery, or even in the middle of the table as a quirky centrepiece. £13.99 from *www.lights4fun.co.uk*.

GET THE GLOW!

It wouldn't be Christmas without fairy lights. Follow our guide to find the right lights for your tree, trellis or table…


Photography: www.lights4fun.co.uk, © Oliver Perrott

◀ SIZE MATTERS

Work out how many lights you need to illuminate the space you're decorating. Make sure the string of lights is long enough, measuring the area first to make sure.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Think about what effect you want to create with your lighting. A string of lights with the bulbs spaced far apart will create a more subtle, elegant look, while less space between each bulb will generally give a bolder, brighter glow.


Image courtesy of: www.lisaangel.co.uk

◀ ECO FRIENDLY

LEDs are the eco-friendly, energy-efficient option, and they have a much greater lifespan than incandescent lamps. They're also much less likely to break.


Image courtesy of: www.houseology.com

OPTIONS, OPTIONS

When using LEDs, consider your colour scheme. Warm, golden light will create a welcoming feel, while cool white is better for a contemporary look, and children will love multi-coloured lights.

▲ IN AND OUT

Indoor lights aren't designed to be used outside, as they won't survive bad weather. Outdoor lights can burn hot, so can pose a fire risk if they're used inside.

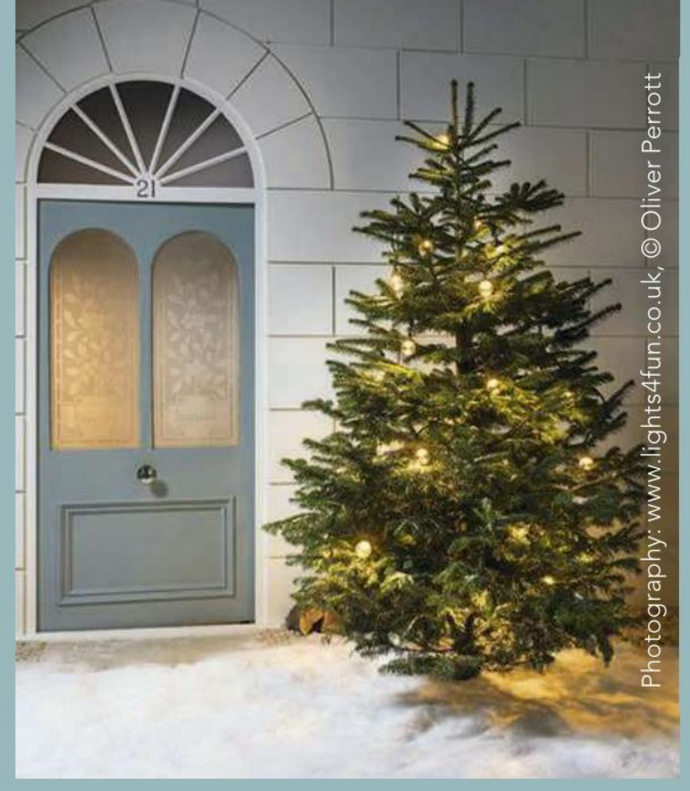
BACKGROUND INFO

Think about what you're pinning your lights to – choose a white flex if you're displaying your lights against a wall, and green if you're winding them around a tree.



ECLECTIC DREAMS

Traditional not your thing? There are so many novelty options in the shops around Christmas, like these funky pom-pom, unicorn and cactus lights, from www.paperchase.co.uk.


Photography: www.lights4fun.co.uk, © Oliver Perrott

5 GARDEN LIGHTS TIPS

Light up outdoor spaces of all sizes with these great ideas from the illumination experts at Lights4Fun

1 **Larger gardens with trees look incredible with connectable fairy lights and unlit cables between trees. They're easier than you think to set up, with all the power from one plug.**

2 **The smaller the space, the more important the detail. City balconies can create instant impact when you light them up with festoon lights.**

3 **Our outdoor battery lights, always the best seller at Christmas, are perfect for small front gardens with a porch. Wrap them around a bay tree for a welcoming glow.**

4 **Defined gardens with low hedges and borders look stunning dressed with net lights. Their uniform shape is perfect for creating a neat, elegant look that has timeless appeal.**

Tips from Jo Naughton, co founder of Lights4Fun (www.lights4fun.co.uk)

TANGLED UP?



We've all unpacked last year's decorations to find a tangled mess of fairy lights, hastily thrown into a box the year before with nobody owning up to the cardinal Christmas sin. If you're in charge of untangling, don't panic! Settle down in a comfy spot on the floor with lots of space in front of you, armed with a pen or blunt pencil to work into any knots, then try to find an end point and work your way backwards. Arrange untangled lights in straight lines so you don't get them tangled again, and be gentle, as you could break the bulbs in your hurry! Test each strand before you decorate your tree, too. When Christmas is over, wind the strands around spools or pieces of cardboard before packing them away, so you don't get in a tangle next time!



Charlotte strikes back

Seven-year-old, beats massive strokes – that's something to sing about!

Being young and healthy is no protection against stroke, as Charlotte and her mother Leila discovered. Charlotte was hit by a major stroke in the middle of the night and was rushed to the hospital. She remained in a coma for two days and suffered more massive strokes. When she came round she couldn't speak, move or even blink. The doctors prepared Leila for the worst.

But Leila didn't give up. While she was singing to her daughter, Charlotte struck back and smiled. Within two weeks she was speaking. Three years on, she is running and playing again. 'It's a miracle to have Charlotte with us' Leila says.

Charlotte's incredible recovery was helped by the huge advances in stroke research we funded, which has completely changed the way stroke is treated. But with only a tenth of the funding given to cancer research, there's so much more to do.

You don't need to wait for a miracle, or even sing! You can join Charlotte in striking back against stroke by leaving us a gift in your Will.

Stroke association

Together we can conquer stroke.

Call **020 7566 1505** email **legacy@stroke.org.uk** or visit **stroke.org.uk/legacy**

Registered office: Stroke Association House, 240 City Road, London EC1V 2PR. Registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in Northern Ireland (XT33805), Isle of Man (No 945) and Jersey (NPO 369). Stroke Association is a Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales (No 61274)

Perfect SCENTS

Spiced mulled wine, woodland walks and tangerines at the bottom of a stocking... set the scene for festive celebrations with deliciously Christmassy aromas

Along with music and lighting, scent can play an important role in your festive celebrations, evoking memories of Christmases gone by. Rich, spicy aromas create feelings of warmth and togetherness, while fresh pine and citrus are energising – perfect if everyone's feeling a little sluggish after some excesses!

One of the easiest (and most delicious) ways to fill your home with the unmistakable aroma of Christmas is to make mulled wine to serve when your guests arrive – it's the first thing they'll smell as they step through the door.

Arrange aromatic herbs and leaves like bay, rosemary and eucalyptus around candles to make table decorations, or tie them in bunches and fix them to the back of dining chairs. A pile of oranges in a bowl makes a beautiful centrepiece, and children will love studding them with cloves to make pomanders. As the orange dries, it will release a delicately zesty, spicy fragrance.



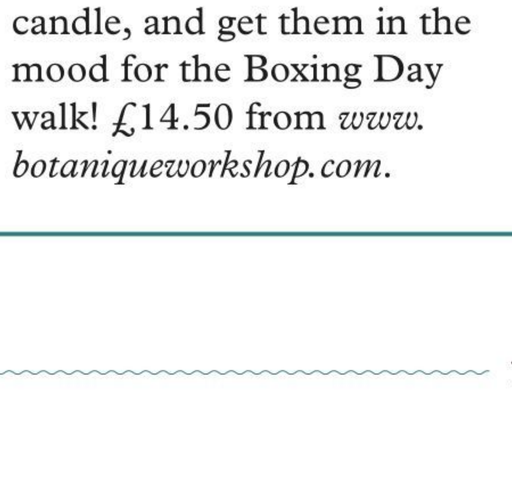
Pine needles are a pain for whoever's in charge of the vacuuming, but if you dry them and put them in muslin bags they can be hidden in drawers to keep that woodland fragrance lingering long after the decorations have been taken down.

Don't have a real tree? Fill a spray bottle with 100ml water, 1 tbsp vodka and 10 drops of pine essential oil, shake and spray around the room, or on an artificial tree.

Speaking of essential oils, a small selection is a smart pre-Christmas purchase. Make candles using soy wax and different concoctions of your favourite oils. Clove is a full-bodied aroma that's associated with all things festive (think spiced ham and mulled wine) while cinnamon is a comforting scent that's said to focus the mind – perfect if you're flagging while writing Christmas cards. Orange is a mood-lifting oil that's great if you have a case of the winter blues when the decorations are taken down, while Frankincense, apart from having obvious Christmassy connotations, is said to be a soothing oil, ideal for the hectic run-up to Christmas, and for calming overexcited children (and grown-ups!).

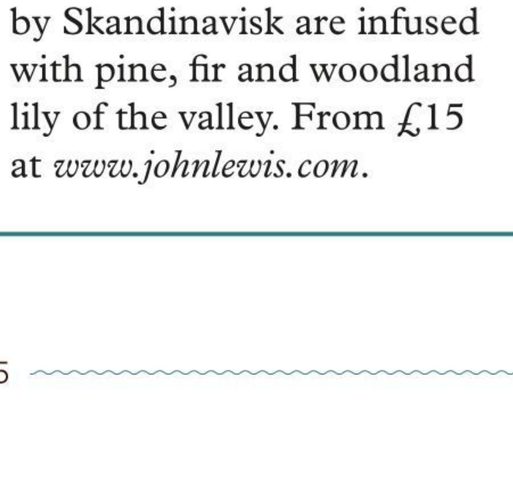
SCENTED CANDLES

When it's cold and drizzly outside, nothing creates a cosy atmosphere quite like a glowing scented candle or two. We've picked three scents to make you feel festive, from subtle botanicals to warm and spicy. They're all made from natural plant or soy wax, so they're vegan friendly, and they make great gifts for Christmas hosts, too.



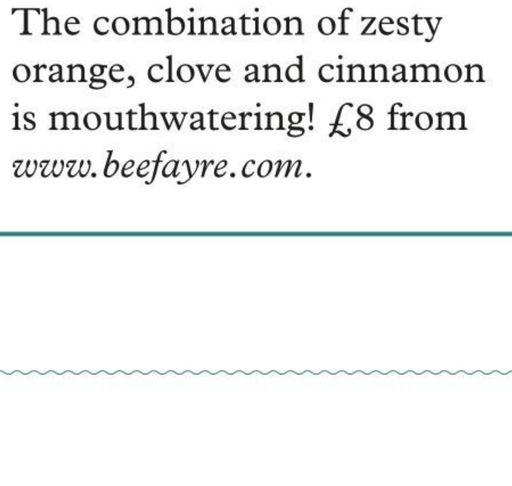
GET FRESH

Greet guests with the fresh, woodland aroma from this hand-poured eucalyptus soy candle, and get them in the mood for the Boxing Day walk! £14.50 from *www.botaniqueworkshop.com*.



WOODLAND WALK

Skog is Norwegian for 'forest', and this vegetable wax candle and diffuser set by Skandinavisk are infused with pine, fir and woodland lily of the valley. From £15 at *www.johnlewis.com*.



ORANGE ORGANIC

This set of three tea lights is made from natural plant wax and pure essential oils. The combination of zesty orange, clove and cinnamon is mouthwatering! £8 from *www.beefayre.com*.

Wrapper's DELIGHT

Don't limit your style ambitions to the usual decorations around your home – make sure your gifts are looking their best, too!

Whether you put all your gifts under the tree on Christmas Eve or add them over a few weeks, a stylishly wrapped present is not only thoughtful but can also be a decoration. If you're attempting a house-wide theme with your décor this year then you could find wrapping paper to match. Or if that seems too ambitious, try tailoring the wrap or trimmings to suit the recipient.

As with so many things, quality beats quantity, and putting a little effort into thoughtfully presenting one or two well-chosen gifts is bound to be appreciated more than shoving a stack of hastily bought presents into a gift bag.

For giftwrapping expert and designer Jane Means – who's trained staff at Harrods, worked with big names such as Dior, Armani and Selfridges, and even wrapped gifts for the Queen – it really is better to give than to receive. "One of the main reasons I love giftwrapping is that you can adapt the wrapping to the personality of the recipient," she explains. "I love to see the reaction when someone receives a beautifully wrapped gift."



PUT ON A SHOW

Do you want to make a display of your gifts? "When arranging gifts under the tree, ensure the largest ones are at the back and then decrease the sizes towards the front so you get a pyramid effect," says Jane. "You can stick to a single colour for your paper and ribbon, or choose contrasting colours such as red and gold. You can also thread the same ribbon that you've used in your gift wrapping through the tree branches."

All photography: Jane Means

So what's the secret of a perfectly wrapped present? According to Jane, it's all in the preparation. "The measurements are key, and I always measure twice and cut once to avoid any waste," she says. In fact, she explains, a common mistake is to use too much paper: "If you use too much paper it becomes bulky and spoils the overall impression. You only need a small overlap, and by using small amounts of paper you'll have less waste and find it easier to fold."

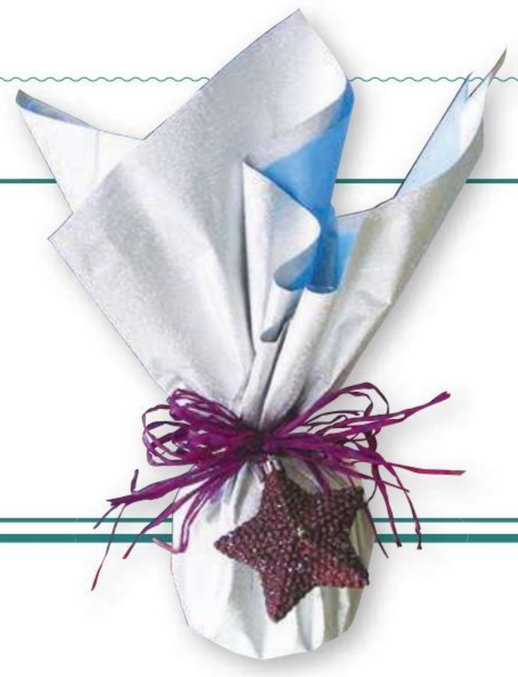
As with fashion and home décor, giftwrapping follows trends, and green is a big colour this year – "teamed with a rich copper it looks luxurious," Jane explains. But don't feel you have to bow to fashion. "Gifts for friends and family are a great opportunity to add a personal touch," she says. "If your friend loves gardening you could attach a sprig of fragrant foliage, like rosemary or bay, to appeal to the senses."

Unfortunately, it's often the case that the wrapping gets left late or you run out of paper, but there are ingenious ways to rustle up good-looking gifts using everyday items. Jane recommends trying fabric remnants, cellophane (from bunches of flowers), netting and plain brown paper as alternative wrap. And for large objects, paper tablecloths make a great substitute for giftwrap. Another option is to stick contrasting pieces of wrapping paper together to create larger sheets – see opposite for tips on how to do this.

Of course, the big question is whether Jane is a careful unwrapper or a paper-tearer. The answer? "I try to unwrap presents carefully so I can recycle papers and ribbon," she says.

However you choose to open the gifts you receive, take a little extra time to wrap the ones you give – it's bound to be appreciated!





TRICKY GIFTS MADE EASY

If you're out of ideas for how to wrap awkwardly shaped items such as bottles and biscuit tins, Jane Means' advice will have you wrapping like a pro in no time!

BOTTLE

Avoid wrapping paper, as you need something flexible like tissue paper or cellophane – or both! On a flat surface, lie a large square of tissue paper on top of a large square of cellophane. Stand the bottle in the middle of the tissue paper and gather the cellophane up around the neck of the bottle. Secure it all with a pretty bow.



TIN OF BISCUITS

Round objects can be tricky as your paper can end up crumpling round the curved edges. For the best look, place the item on its side and gradually fold in flaps of paper as you roll it over. You should end up with a tidy, concertina-like effect. Simply repeat on the other side and finish with a Christmassy sprig on the top.



GIFT VOUCHER OR MONEY

A bespoke envelope is the nicest way to give a gift voucher or cash. Cut a rectangle from thick paper, make a 'hem' along both long edges, and fold over a large section from one short edge to make the pouch (secure with double-sided tape). Pop in your gift, then 'hem' the flap and stick it down. Finish with a ribbon around the outside.



A TOO-BIG BOX

Here's an ingenious solution for wrapping a box that's too big for one piece of paper. Place two sheets of paper side by side. Neatly fold under the edge of one sheet and stick it to the edge of the other sheet using double-sided tape. Now wrap the box as you normally would. Cover the join in the papers with a thick ribbon.





READER OFFER!

Stock up on beautiful paper and ribbons at www.janemeans.com. *Simply Christmas* readers can get a 20% discount by entering the code 'SC17' at checkout. This offer is valid until 31 December 2017 and excludes Early Bird Gift Wrapping Courses.



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www.redlilly.co.uk

TWO OF THE BEST FOR CHRISTMAS

Magformers has magnetic construction kits to suit all children. With sets starting from £14.99 the simplicity and high-quality of these class-leading toys has seen them become the world's #1 magnetic construction toy. Pieces click simply together using rotating neodymium magnets safely sealed in every edge. Here are two sets to suit all ages and pockets this Christmas.

WOW SET (RRP £32.99)

Makes 20 different fun vehicles using a simple combination of Magformers magnetic pieces, two wheel sets and a special driver accessory. Plus illustrated set cards teach the properties of shapes and colours and show how to make eight different 3D models from flat 2D 'nets'.



MINI DINOSAUR SET (RRP £49.99)

Perfect for the dino-loving child, the Magformers Mini Dinosaur Set includes 40 pieces in 10 different shapes that form six cute baby dinosaurs. It's super-easy to make detailed mini herbivores Apatosaurus, Stegosaurus and Triceratops and carnivores Pteradon, Elasmosaurus and Tyrannosaurus.



WWW.MAGFORMERS.CO.UK @MagformersUK @Magformers_GB

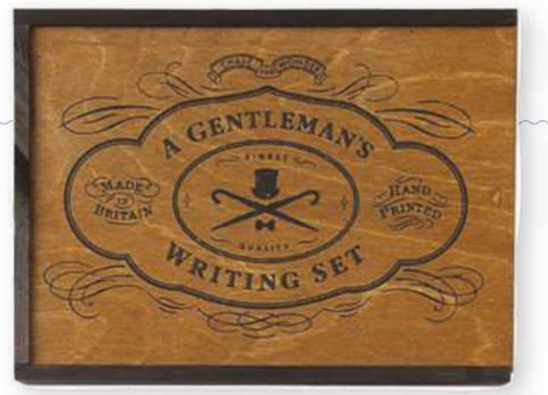
SIMPLY CHRISTMAS

THE ULTIMATE GIFTS

Use our guides to find the right present for everyone on your list

Watching a loved one's face light up as they unwrap your carefully chosen gift has to rank pretty high on everyone's 'top Christmas moments' list. And we all remember the excitement of waking up to find a stocking stuffed with treats! With that in mind, we've hunted high and low to fill this year's gift guide with presents for everyone on your shopping list, from gardeners and crafters to kids and keen cooks. Plus, we've made it our mission to find stocking fillers and under-a-fiver treats for all your favourite people!

Photography: Roberto Nickson





▲ A GENTLEMAN'S WRITING SET
£30, www.chaseandwonder.com

GRAY AND WILLOW CHARCOAL STRIPE MUG ▶
£8, www.houseoffraser.co.uk





▲ WINTER ANIMALS SOCKS IN A BOX
£17.50, www.whitestuff.com

GIFTS FOR MEN

Whether you're shopping for a traditional chap or a modern man, these gifts are sure to be a hit!

JONATHAN ADLER APOLLO SALT & PEPPER SET ▶
£78, uk.jonathanadler.com

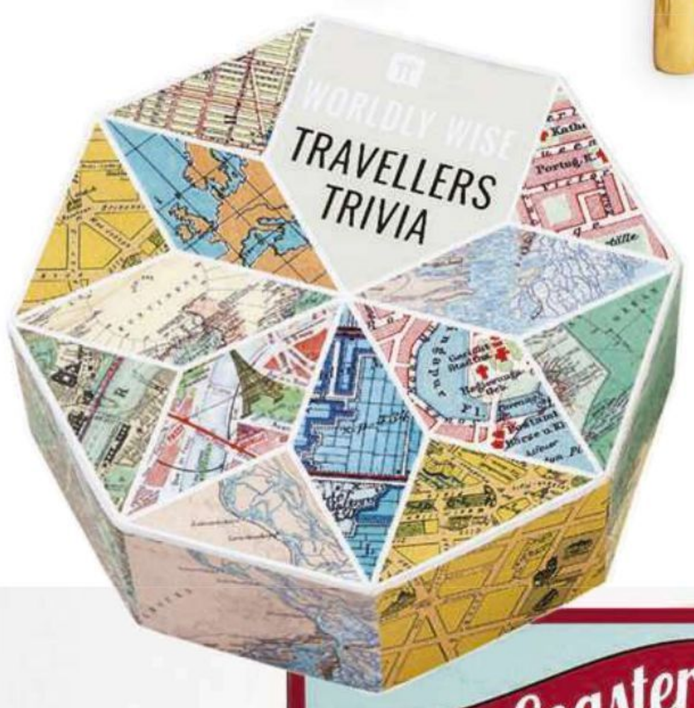


▼ BEER SCENTED CANDLE
£21.50, www.notonthehighstreet.com/hearthandheritage



▼ RHINO HAMMER
£29.99, www.firebox.com

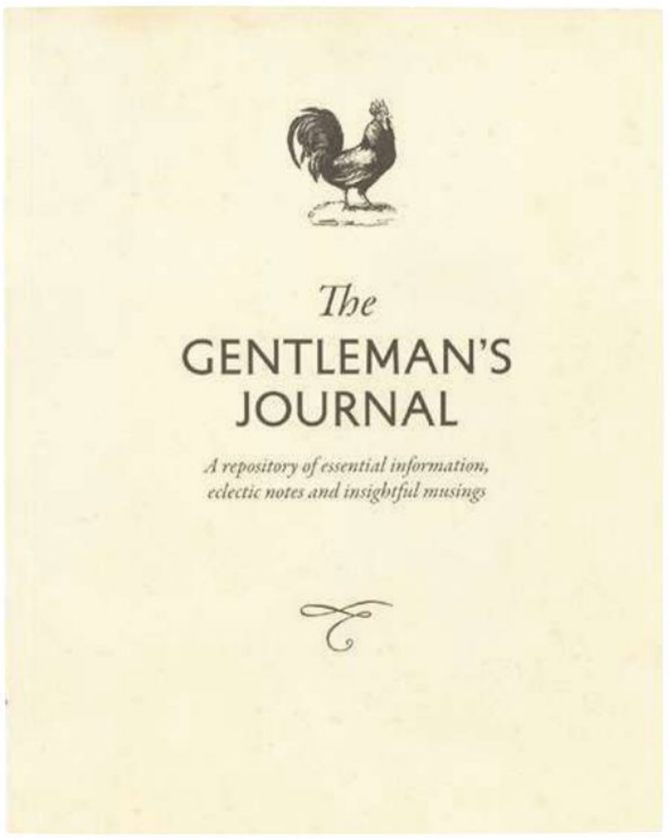




◀ WORLDLY WISE TRAVELLERS' TRIVIA
£9.99, www.talkingtables.co.uk

ROCKABILLY VINYL COASTERS
£9.99, www.prezzybox.com

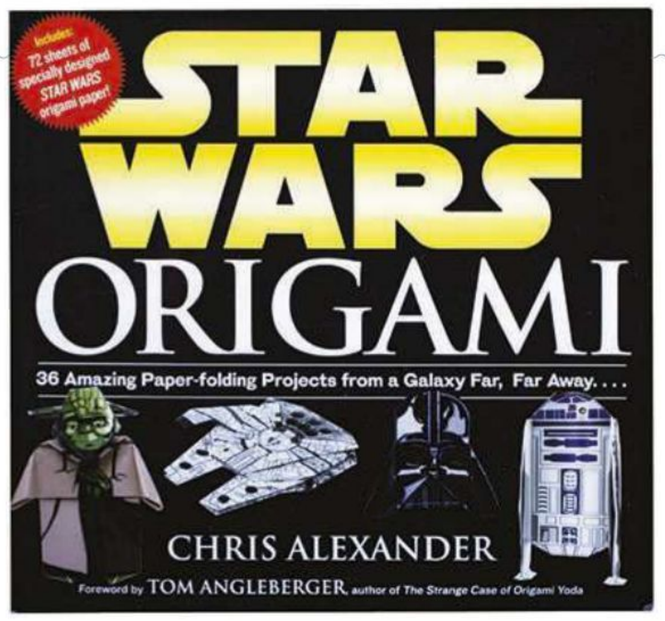




▲ GENTLEMAN'S JOURNAL
£8, www.paperchase.co.uk

KNITTED SNOWFLAKE SCARF ▶
£30, shop.nationaltrust.org.uk





▲ STAR WARS ORIGAMI
£10.99, www.prezzybox.com



▲ BIBA ROYALE DECANTER
£40, www.houseoffraser.co.uk



▲ GOLD PINEAPPLE BOOKENDS
£45.90, www.thefarthing.co.uk



▲ CAMO TRAVEL CASE
£45, www.notanotherbill.com



▲ BEST OF BRITISH LETTERBOX HAMPER WITH WHISKY
£27.95, www.notonthehighstreet.com/letterboxhamper



▲ PERSONALISED WOODEN ARROW CUFFLINKS
£30, www.etsy.com/uk/shop/cloudsandcurrents



▲ PYROPET CANDLE 'DREKI'
£27, www.glow.co.uk



▶ COPPER BOTTLE OPENER
£29.50,
www.marksandspencer.com



◀ BATTERY BEAR
£29.99, www.firebox.com

◀ RORY DOBNER DOMED PAPERWEIGHT
£34.99, www.amara.com



◀ PICNIC RUCKSACK
£64.95, www.annabeljames.co.uk



▲ DUCKHEAD COMPACT UMBRELLA
£22, www.printerandtailor.com



▲ 'BIRDS' COASTERS
£10, www.magpieline.com



GIFTS FOR HER

Trinkets, treats and other irresistible under-tree gifts to make her happy on Christmas morning!



◀ ROSE GOLD COCKTAIL SET
£25, www.debenhams.com



▼ GLASS PAPERWEIGHT
£29, www.englishantiqueglass.co.uk

PURRFECT PRINTED SCARF ▼
£45, www.sophieallport.com





▼ TOTES FAIRISLE GIFT SET
£25, www.houseoffraser.co.uk

RILEY FINGERLESS GLOVES ▶
£22.50, www.whitestuff.com



WIN!*
A Latest In Beauty subscription for Christmas at *http://competition.immediate.co.uk/beauty*

▼ BEAUTY BOX SUBSCRIPTION
From £9 per month, www.latestinbeauty.com



▲ ASTRATTO TEACUP AND SAUCER SET
£48, www.oliverbonas.com



▲ PREPPY HAT
£69.50, www.samanthaholmes.com

6 O'CLOCK GIN TRIO GIFT SET ▶
£55, bramleyandgage.com





▲ LOUNGE & SLEEP SOCKS
£14, www.debenhams.com



CELESTIAL TWO-TONE GLASS SCENTED SOY WAX CANDLE
£22.95, www.notonthehighstreet.com/berylune



CLOUD BRACELET
£31.19, www.etsy.com/uk/shop/bijouxeliseetmoi



LIME, TANGERINE AND MANDARIN BATH ESSENCE ▶
£15.95, www.notonthehighstreet.com/kataromatherapy





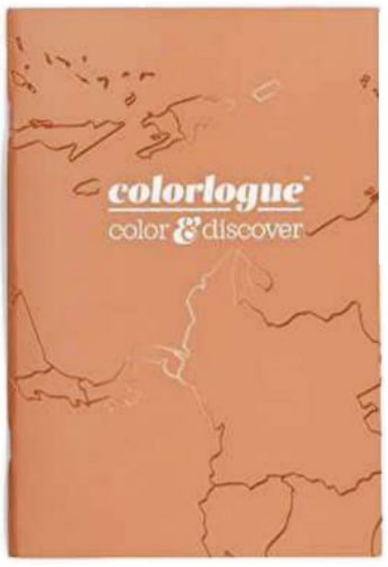


◀ BIBA GOLD ZIP POUCH
£39, www.houseoffraser.co.uk

◀ QUEEN BEE LINEN MIX CUSHION
£15, www.athomeinthecountry.co.uk

▼ 'COLORLOGUE' TRAVEL RECORD
£15.95, www.theletteroom.com





PERSONALISED PROSECCO AND CHOCOLATES ▶
£42.99, www.prezzybox.com

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THEATRE PLAYHOUSE
From £220, www.wingreen.co.uk

WIN!*
A WinGreen playhouse for Christmas at *http://competition.immediate.co.uk/playhouse*



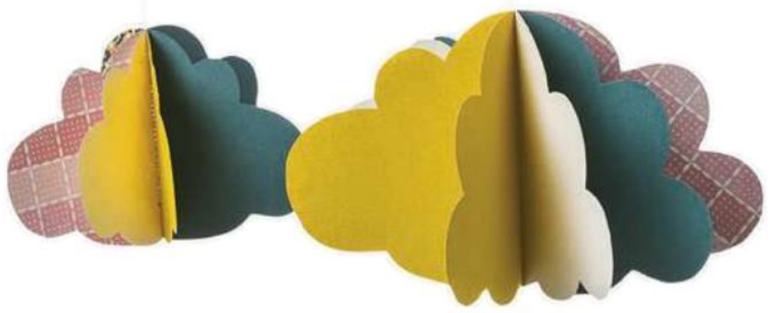
▲ WOODY THE SHEEP KNITTING GAME
£20, www.bobbyrabbit.co.uk



▲ PAPER CLOUDS MOBILE
£27.54, hautecomme3pommes.etsy.com

GIFTS FOR KIDS

Whatever their age and whatever they're into, here's our pick of Christmas gifts for kids!





◀ WOODEN TOOLBOX SET
£24.50, www.lilyandlime.co.uk



▼ MAGIC MUSIC MONKEY SPEAKER
£29.99, www.red5.co.uk



▲ LE TOY VAN CAFE MACHINE
£29.95, www.cuckooland.com



▲ PIRATE PLAY SET
£20, www.burblebaby.co.uk



▲ ROSIE & MAE ROCKING HORSE
£94.95, www.littlebirdtoldme.co.uk



▲ SKIP HOP LUNCH BAG
£13.99, www.beckyandlolo.co.uk

WALL-MOUNTED DOLL HOUSE
£165, www.themodernnursery.com





▲ ARCTIC EXPLORERS PROJECT BOX
£19.95, www.trunkaroo.com

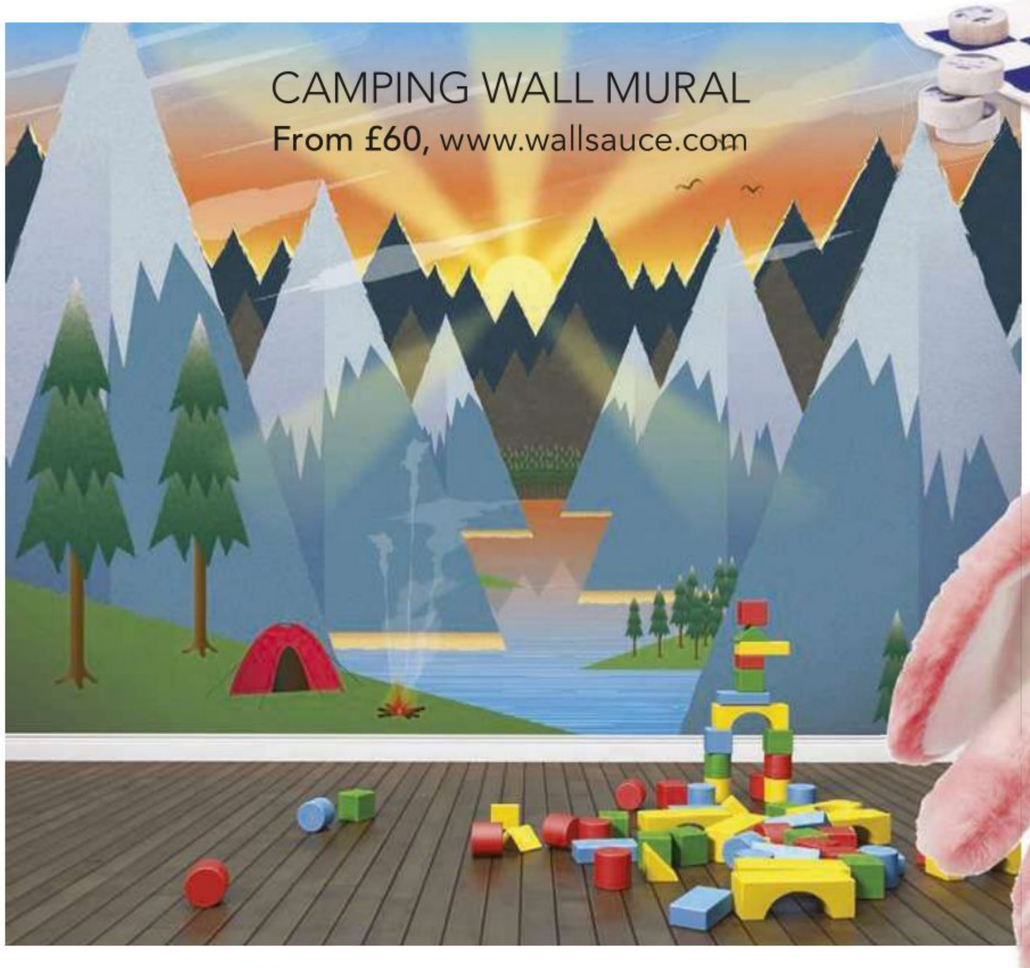


▲ CHECKERS GAME
£15, www.bobbyrabbit.co.uk

HARLEQUIN TOY GUITAR ▶
£30, www.burblebaby.co.uk



CAMPING WALL MURAL
From £60, www.wallsauce.com





LETTER JIGSAWS WITH FRAMES ▼
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▲ MAGFORMERS MONSTER RANO CONSTRUCTION SET
£34.99, www.magformers.co.uk



▲ STEIFF STARLET RABBIT
£19.90, www.steiff.com



▲ RICEANANAS SOFT TOY
£19.50, www.bobbyrabbit.co.uk

▲ WILDFIRE TEEPEE
£135, www.themodernnursery.com

▼ HEART-SHAPED BLOCKS
£44, www.rume.co.uk

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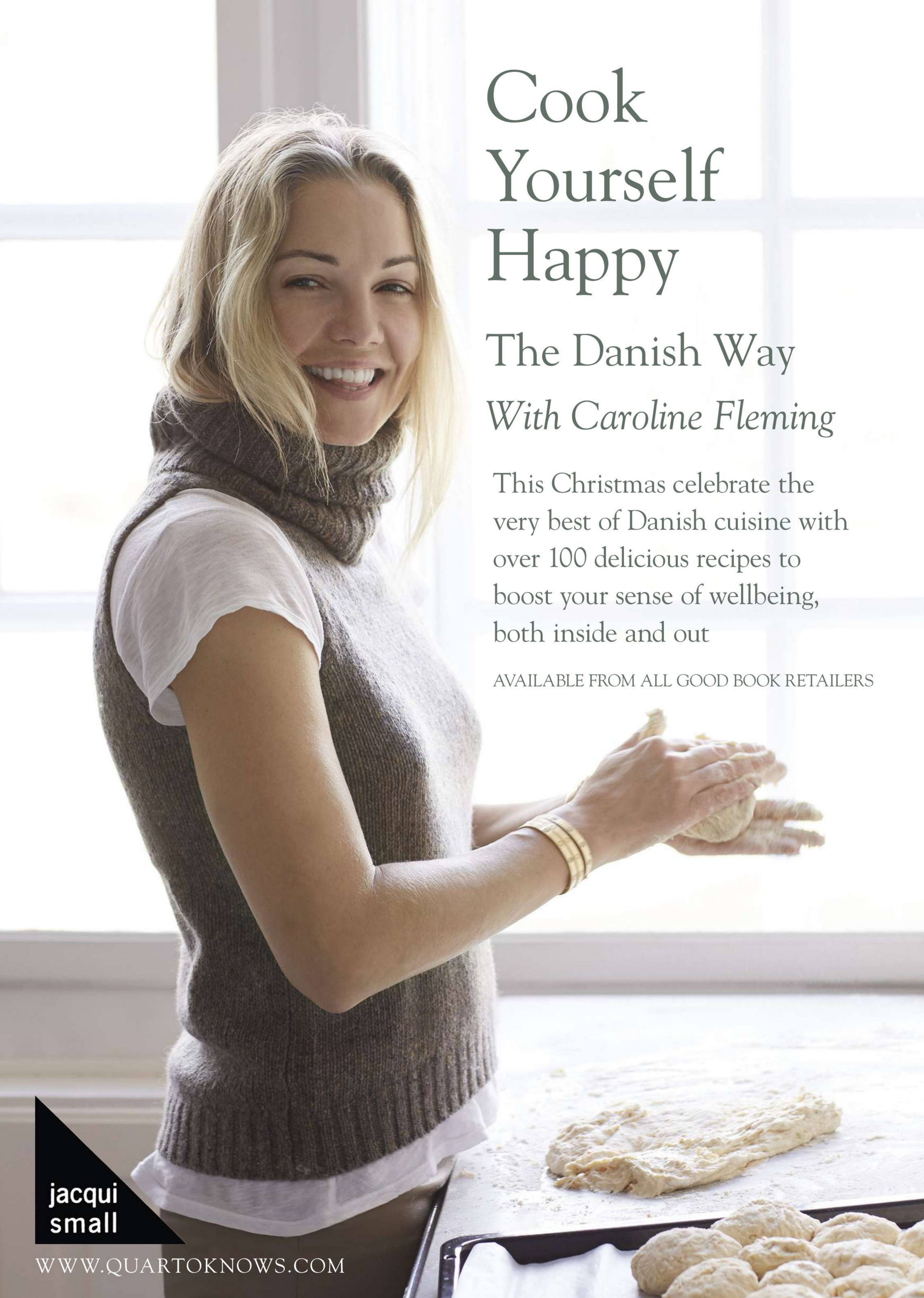
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GIFTS FOR COOKS

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£75, www.cloudberryliving.co.uk

▲ MUSSEL POT
£40, www.gardentrading.co.uk



▲ NESSIE SPOON SET
£34.95, www.redcandy.co.uk



◀ WIREWORKS SPICE LAB
£40, www.black-by-design.co.uk



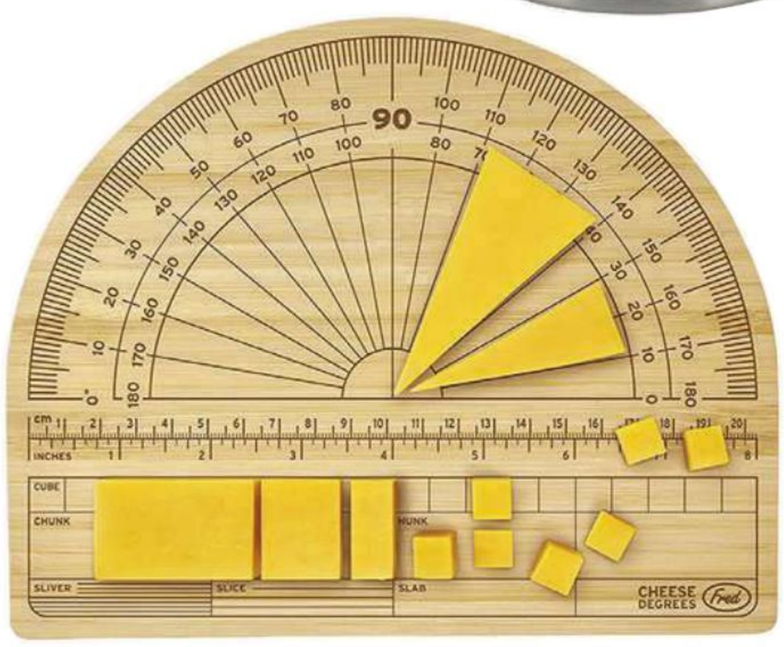
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▲ SQUIRREL NUTCRACKER
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▶ TWIST N SPROUT TOOL
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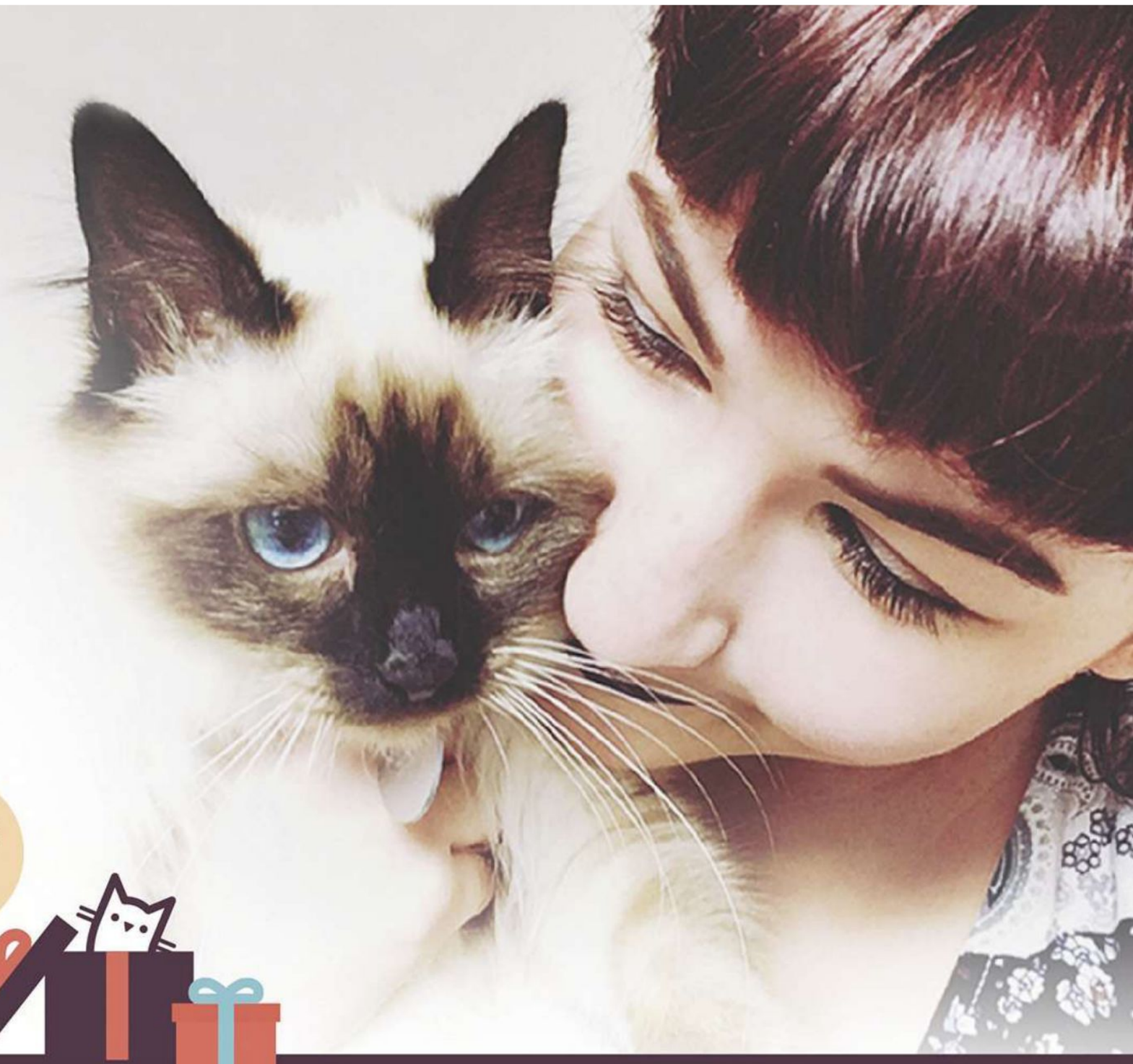
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SIMPLY CHRISTMAS

GIFTS FOR CRAFTERS

Treat creative friends to craft room essentials and kits to keep them busy on Boxing Day!



▲ JOHANNA BASFORD COLOURING CANVAS **£5,** www.hobbycraft.co.uk

▼ LIBERTY PRINT WASHI TAPE
£5.99, www.candleandcake.co.uk





▲ MARKET TOTE BAG KIT
£19.95, www.alicecaroline.co.uk



WIN!*
This We Are Knitters kit for Christmas at *http://competition.immediate.co.uk/knitkit*

▲ HAPPY CUSHION KNITTING KIT
£35, www.weareknitters.co.uk



◀ MASON JAR SEWING KIT
£11, www.kikkerlandeu.com



▲ BEAR SEWING KIT
£14.95, www.sianzeng.com



CRAFTING PRINT
£15, www.houseofjack.co.uk



▲ HABERDASHERY HOUSE
£22.50 www.berylune.co.uk



▲ ULTIMATE PRO PAPERCRAFT CASE
£29.99, www.johnlewis.com

▼ POLKA DOT KNICKERS KIT
£14.95, www.themakery.co.uk





▲ MAKE YOUR OWN LAVENDER BAGS
£15.50, www.lollyandboo.co.uk



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FOR CHRISTMAS

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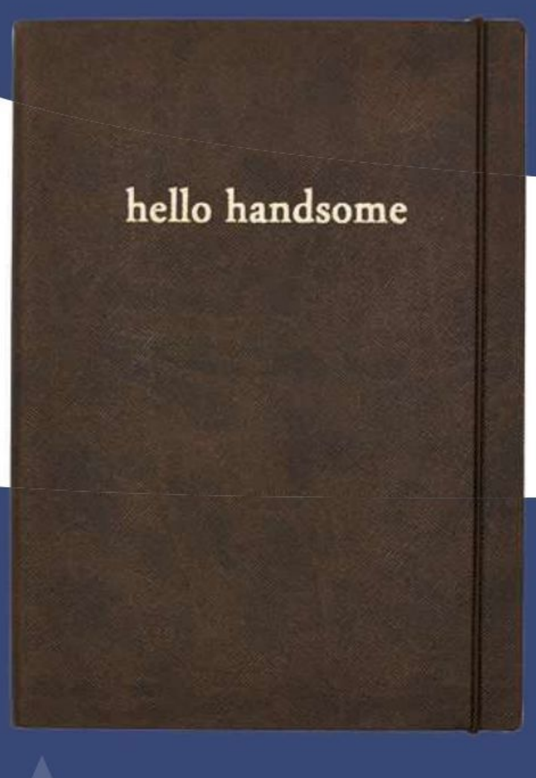
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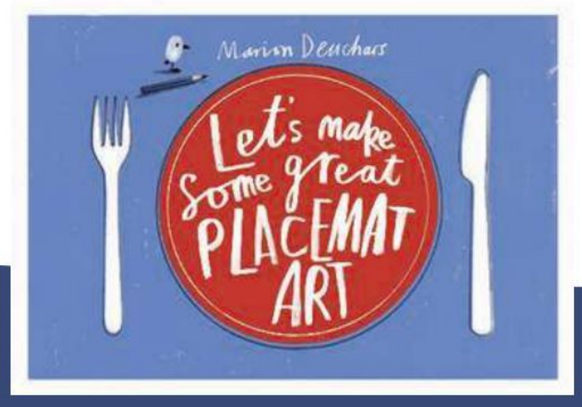


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10 EASY TIME-SAVERS FOR CHRISTMAS 2018

It's never too early to start planning! A few quick jobs in January could save you time and money next December…

1 When Twelfth Night rolls around, make sure you pack your fairy lights away neatly to avoid hours of untangling when they reappear. Lay them out in straight lines and then gently wind them around a thick strip of cardboard.

2 Before you recycle your Christmas cards, make a note of any new addresses or updated details that might have been scribbled inside by the sender. That'll save you having to rummage around for contact details when you're sending cards.

3 Another pre-recycling use for those Christmas cards: cut the fronts off and turn them into gift tags. Make sure there's no writing on the back, then trim around any eyecatching designs, punch a hole in them and thread with ribbon or brightly coloured embroidery thread. Store them with your wrapping paper.

4 Give baubles a quick dust before you put them away so they're ready to hang fresh from the box nex year. If anything's broken or past its best, don't put it back in the loft!

5 If Christmas away from home is an appealing idea, think about booking early, particularly if you're looking to rent a large house for all the family. A cosy getaway for two can more easily be booked nearer the time, but coastal or country retreats for 20 people are harder to come by.

6 Start saving. Whether it's a penny jar or a regular transfer into your savings account, £10 a month will give you £120 by December to spend on panto tickets, party food, gifts or whatever else takes your fancy.

7 Check the freezer and store cupboard in January. Did you massively overstock on certain things for Christmas? Make a note for next year that your family don't want that many tinned peaches or bake-from-frozen croissants. (Donate any unused non-perishable items to your local food bank.)

8 While you're checking the store cupboard, make a note of anything you ran out of and leave yourself a long-term reminder to buy extra next time. Who knew that your brother-in-law liked sprouts that much?

9 If you didn't get round to making those crafty gifts you promised yourself you would, why not start in the new year? You could even learn a new craft from scratch, like knitting or crochet, and you'll be able to make presents while improving your skills.

10 Finally, take time to remember what Christmas means to you and try to make it happen. If you'd love your extended family to all get together, suggest it to them sooner rather than later so people can make plans. If you'd rather take a break next year and have a quiet Christmas away, make that booking and then relax knowing it's already sorted!



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INSIDE!
EXCLUSIVE NADIYA INTERVIEW
★
PLUS HER CRANBERRY SHORTBREAD RECIPE

Treat yourself to Kirstie Allsopp's Christmas cake!

Perfect bakes
CUPCAKES **GIFT IDEAS** MINCE PIES **INDULGENT NOUGAT**

SIMPLY CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS *Baking*











Welcome

When you're expecting more guests than usual, it's always a good idea to have a tin of homemade biscuits or batch of buns ready for sweet-toothed cravings. From after-dinner treats to a spiced Christmas cake, we've got your festive baking covered, including a recipe from Nadiya Hussain!



CONTENTS

3 CINNAMON BUNS
Bake them before guests arrive to fill your house with a spicy aroma!

4 INTERVIEW WITH NADIYA
We talk cooking with the kids and Christmas traditions

5 WHITE CHOCOLATE AND CRANBERRY SHORTBREAD
A festive treat from Nadiya

6 APRICOT AND PISTACHIO NOUGAT
Sweet, chewy and irresistible – the perfect gift for a food-lover

7 FRANGIPANE MINCE PIES
A delicious twist on the traditional Christmas favourite. Make sure you remember to make enough for Father Christmas, too!

6 STAR BISCUITS
Quick and easy to make!

6 SWEDISH-STYLE CHRISTMAS TOFFEE
Add a little Nordic-style sweetness to your coffee break!

7 EGGNOGG CUPCAKES
Pop a batch of these in the oven and you'll be crowned Star Baker!

8 CARIBBEAN CHRISTMAS CAKE
A showstopping cake by Kirstie Allsopp that's packed with fruit and bursting with flavour. Great with icing or on its own

9 PARTY RING BISCUITS
Impress family and friends with this grown-up version of the popular perfect party nibble

1 SWEDISH KANELBULLAR (CINNAMON BUNS)

These traditional spiced cinnamon buns would put even Scrooge in a festive mood! Dunk then in hot coffee for a Swedish-style coffee break.

INGREDIENTS

250ml warm milk • 100g unsalted butter • 500g strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting • 1 tsp salt • 50g caster (superfine) sugar • 7g sachet of easy-bake yeast • 1 egg • Oil • 30g caster sugar • 2 tsp ground cinnamon • 1 tsp ground cardamom • 75g unsalted butter, softened • 1 egg yolk • 2 tbsp milk • Sugar nibs

1. Heat the milk and butter in a small pan and remove from the heat once the butter has melted, then set to one side and allow to cool until tepid.
2. Secure the dough hook to the mixer and place the flour, salt, sugar and yeast in the bowl, keeping the yeast apart. With the mixer running, pour the liquid into the dry ingredients and crack in the egg. Leave the machine to knead the dough for about 8 minutes, after which the dough will be soft and a little sticky. If it feels overly sticky and is clinging to the sides of the bowl, add a few dessert spoons of flour, one at a time, kneading until it is less sticky.
3. Lightly oil a large bowl and put the dough into it. Cover with clingfilm then leave to rise for at least 1½ hours in a warm place, or until doubled in size.
4. To make the filling, beat the sugar and spices into the softened butter, then set aside.
5. When the dough has doubled, transfer to a flour-dusted surface. Roll out to a 45x35cm rectangle. Trim the edges, then spread the spiced butter over one half of the dough, working lengthwise. Fold the other half down, covering the filling, then press down to secure. Gently re-roll the rectangle, neatening any uneven edges.
6. Cut the dough into long strips about 1cm wide. Twist each strip to resemble a rope, then roll up and twist to form a knot, tucking the loose end underneath. Place each bun into a muffin tray (or onto a pre-lined baking sheet) and cover loosely with clingfilm. Leave to rise for about 30-60 minutes in a warm place, or until doubled in size.
7. Preheat the oven to 200°C fan/220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7.
8. Beat the egg yolk and milk and brush each bun evenly. Sprinkle over the sugar nibs and bake for 12 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. Leave to cool on wire racks.

Makes 18



Photography: Lisa Linder

READER OFFER!

This recipe is taken from *Soulful Baker* by Julie Jones (photography by Lisa Linder), published by Jacqui Small, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £20. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for £16 at *www.quartoknows.com*, using code XMAS20. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.

INTERVIEW WITH NADIYA

"CHRISTMAS IS A JOYOUS PARTY!"

Bake Off-winning presenter and author Nadiya Hussain chats about festivities and family…

WHAT INGREDIENTS SAY 'CHRISTMAS' TO YOU?

Christmas is all about spices and citrussy flavours. I don't drink, but I make mulled wine with loads of grape juice, star anise, cloves and cinnamon.

WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR COOKING AT CHRISTMAS?

Being prepared in advance is really important, especially if you're cooking for lots of people. I always brine my turkey a week in advance. I stick it in the fridge with lots of salt, sugar and peppercorns, and that makes it really lovely and moist. I par-cook sprouts and freeze them, and I make roast potatoes in advance and do the same, so I'm not messing about with jars of goose fat on the day. When it comes to desserts I make things that I can just put in the fridge, like tiramisu and cheesecake, and scones that can sit in tupperware.

WHO WOULD BE YOUR FANTASY FESTIVE PARTY GUESTS?

David Attenborough and Steve Backshall. They're both wildlife presenters but they're very different, so it would be interesting to see what they'd talk about. I would feed them to within an inch of their lives and just listen to them talk!

WHAT DESSERT WOULD YOU DAZZLE GUESTS WITH AT A DINNER PARTY?

For the wow factor, it has to be a croquembouche, as you can pile that up as high as you like!

AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE COMFORT FOOD FOR WINTER?

Sometimes the simplest things are the most satisfying. I'm just going to say this out loud: instant mash made with butter, hot milk and lots of cream and salt, with a whole can of tomato soup poured on top!

DO YOU HAVE ANY FESTIVE FAMILY TRADITIONS?

Just before Christmas or any festive celebration we bake biscotti and tie them up in cellophane with lovely bows. We stand at the front door, and all the people who live behind the doors we can see from our door get biscotti.

YOUR BIRTHDAY IS ON CHRISTMAS DAY. DOES IT GET OVERSHADOWED BY CHRISTMAS A LITTLE BIT?

Absolutely not, it's my day! My dad always said that we were celebrating my day and Jesus's too. It's a joyous party! It's a time to get together, eat, argue and watch mindless amounts of television.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR NEW BOOK, *BAKE ME A FESTIVE STORY.*

My book is all about cooking and storytelling. The word 'festive' conjures up celebration, being together and having fun. It's great to cook and read, then create something from that story – and to do that together as a family.

YOUR CHILDREN FEATURE IN THE BOOK. HOW INVOLVED WERE THEY IN THE WHOLE PROCESS?

My kids have been a massive part of the creative process for the book. When I'm writing stories they're my guinea pigs. If I read them a story and they don't laugh, then it's not good enough. When I'm writing a recipe I ask them if they fancy making it, and I see how they get on – if they get on really well that's good, but if there's something they don't like I'll change it. I do all my market research on them!



Right Nadiya's children star in the illustrations in her new book, enjoying all sorts of culinary, Christmassy adventures. Will you transform your cranberry shortbread into a magical snowman?

Get baking with the kids for Christmas!









2 CRANBERRY AND WHITE CHOCOLATE SHORTBREAD

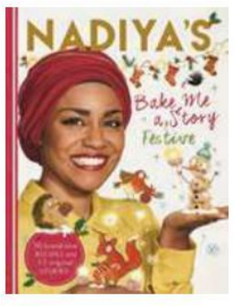
These biscuits by Nadiya are a moreish combination of sweet white chocolate and the lovely tartness of cranberries.

INGREDIENTS

- 125g unsalted butter, softened
- 55g caster sugar (plus an extra 20g for rolling)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 180g plain flour
- 60g white chocolate (chips or finely chopped)
- 60g dried cranberries

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C fan/ Gas Mark 5. Line two baking trays with greaseproof paper.
2. Add the butter and sugar to a large bowl. Cream until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla extract and mix well.
3. Add the flour to the mixture and mix to make a smooth dough.
4. Add in the chocolate and cranberries, stirring until they are evenly spread throughout the dough.
5. Separate the dough into 18 small balls. Dip and roll each ball in the extra sugar so they are coated. Place the balls on the trays, spaced about an inch apart.
6. Bake for 20 minutes, until they are golden brown.
7. Leave the biscuits to cool on the tray for 15 minutes, then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.

THERE'S MORE!



This recipe is taken from Nadiya's *Bake Me A Festive Story* (illustrations by Clair Rossiter) which is out now, priced £14.99, from Hodder Children's Books. Packed with 30 new recipes and original stories by Nadiya, it's the perfect way to get all the family baking this Christmas!



Photography: Peter Cassidy

3 APRICOT AND PISTACHIO NOUGAT

A batch of this gluten- and dairy-free treat would make a wonderful gift for a foodie. Wrap it in cellophane and tie up the package with pretty ribbon for a gift that looks as good as it tastes!

INGREDIENTS

- 420g golden caster sugar
- 100g liquid glucose
- 75ml water
- 125g orange blossom honey
- 2 large egg whites
- 125g flaked almonds, roasted
- 125g roasted whole hazelnuts
- 75g roasted pistachios
- 75g naturally coloured glacé cherries or dried cherries
- 75g chopped apricots
- 2 x A3 (or 4 x A4) sheets of rice paper

1. Place 400g of the sugar in a saucepan with the glucose, with just enough water to cover. Melt over a medium heat and continue until the temperature reaches 135°C/120°C fan/275°F/Gas Mark 1 on a thermometer. Add the honey and continue to heat to 145°C/125°C fan/293°F/Gas Mark 2.
2. Meanwhile, place the egg whites and the remaining caster sugar in a clean bowl and whisk to the stiff peak stage. Whisking at medium speed, pour the hot syrup steadily into the meringue.
3. Once all the syrup has been poured in, continue to whisk on full speed for 5 minutes until the meringue has cooled, thickened and is glossy and lukewarm to touch. Carefully fold the nuts and fruits into the meringue.
4. Lay one sheet of rice paper on a baking sheet and spread the nougat evenly onto the paper. Place the other sheet on top and use a rolling pin to achieve an even finish (if you're using A4 sheets, make two smaller batches). Leave to set overnight.
5. Use a large knife to cut the nougat into bite-sized pieces, and enjoy! It will keep for up to 14 days in an airtight container at room temperature but isn't suitable for home freezing.

Makes 48 bite-sized pieces

TIP *Crystallised ginger and figs are delicious alternatives to the glacé cherries used in this recipe. You can also experiment with different kinds of honey to find the one you like best.*

READER OFFER!

This recipe by Mich Turner MBE (photography by Peter Cassidy) is taken from *Have Your Cake And Eat It*, published by Jacqui Small, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £22. *Simply Christmas* readers can save 20% off the RRP at *www.quartoknows.com*, using code XMAS20 at the checkout. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.



Try an icing sugar stencil design on your bakes!



Recipe by Jessica Sharp

4 FRANGIPANE MINCE PIES

Remember to save one of these sweet, crumbly treats for Father Christmas!

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PASTRY

210g plain flour • 125g cold butter, diced • 50g icing sugar • 40g ground almonds • 2 egg yolks mixed with 1 tbsp cold water

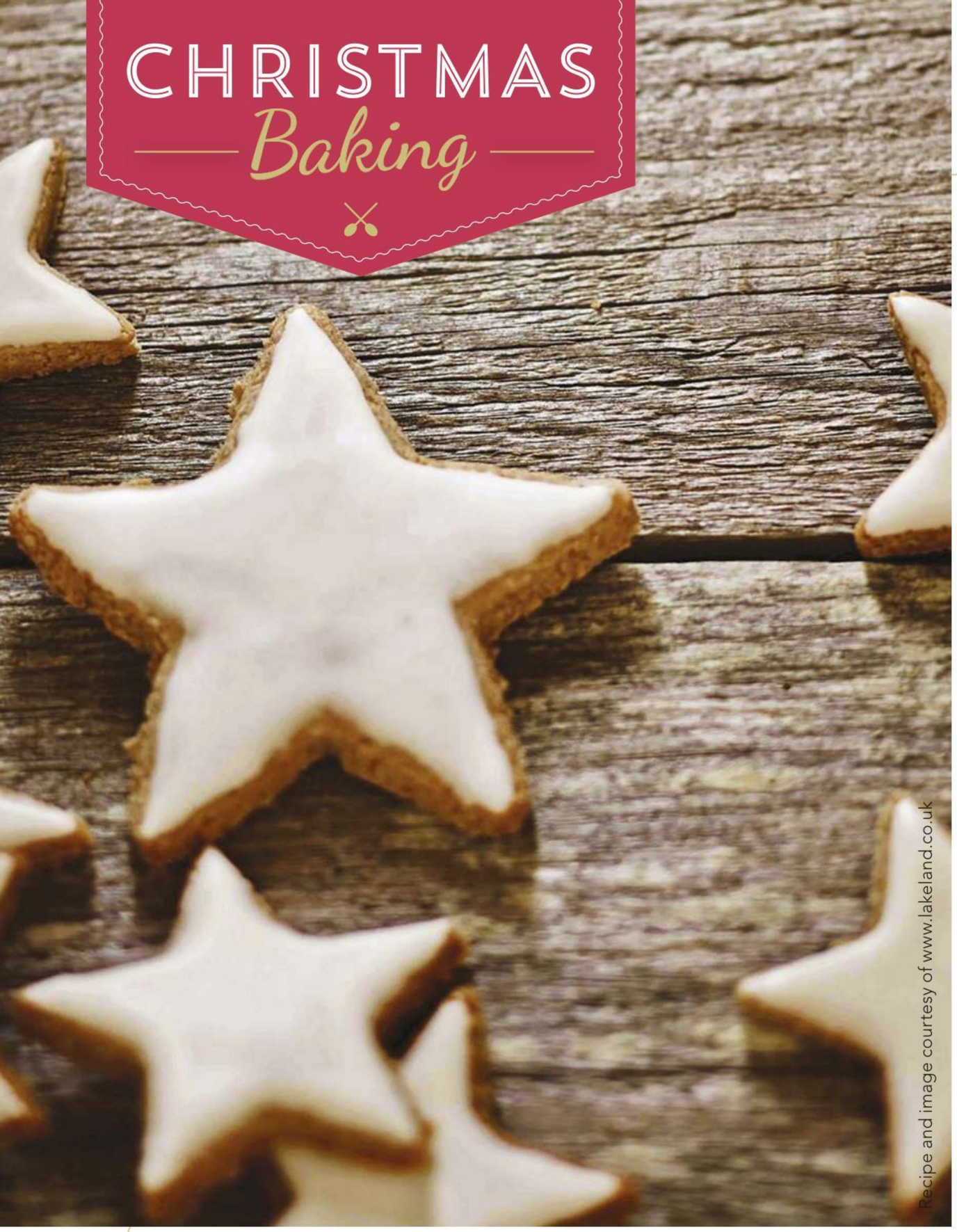
FOR THE FILLING

250g mincemeat • 2 eggs • 100g caster sugar • 100g melted butter • ½ tsp almond extract • 100g ground almonds • Flaked almonds

Makes 24

1. To make the pastry, put the flour in a bowl and rub in the butter until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar and ground almond. Gradually add the egg mixture, using as much as you need to form a dough. Divide the dough into two balls, wrap in clingfilm and refrigerate for 30 mins.
2. Place a ball of pastry onto a well-floured surface and roll around 3mm thick. Cut out 12 rounds, slightly larger than the holes in a 12-hole bun tin. Gently press the circles of pastry into the holes of the bun tin. Refrigerate for 15 mins and preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
3. To make the frangipane, whisk together the eggs and sugar. Add the melted butter and almond extract and whisk again. Stir in the ground almond.
4. Remove the pastry cases from the fridge and place a teaspoon of mincemeat into each. Top each with a dessert spoon of frangipane, sprinkle over the flaked almonds, and bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 15-20 mins or until lightly browned.
5. Leave the mince pies to cool in the tin for 5 mins, before transferring to a rack to cool completely. Once the tin's cold, make the second batch of pies.

TIP *These pies will keep in an airtight container for up to a week, though we expect they'll be eaten before that!*



CHRISTMAS *Baking*

Recipe and image courtesy of www.lakeland.co.uk

5 CINNAMON STAR BISCUITS

These cute cinnamon biscuits are sure to be a hit with the kids this Christmas

INGREDIENTS

2 egg whites • 1 tsp lemon juice • 200g icing sugar, plus extra • 250g ground almonds • 2 tsp ground cinnamon • 1 tsp ground ginger • Zest of 1 lemon

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C/130°C Fan/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
2. Whisk the egg whites in a bowl until frothy. Add the lemon juice and whisk until they form soft peaks.
3. Add the icing sugar, little by little, and whisk until the mixture is stiff. Set aside a quarter of the mixture. Add the almonds, cinnamon, ginger and zest to the remaining mixture. Mix to form a stiff, sticky dough.
4. Place the dough on baking parchment dusted with icing sugar. Top the dough with parchment and roll to about 5mm thick. Peel off the parchment and cut cookies with star cutters. Place on the baking sheet.
5. Cover the stars with a little of the reserved meringue mixture. Bake for 12-15 minutes until the meringue is set but not browned then leave to cool.

Number made depends on size of cookie cutter

6 KNÄCK (SWEDISH CHRISTMAS TOFFEE)

Host your very own Swedish-style adventskaffe – a cosy Advent celebration with plenty of coffee and a plate piled high with knäck!

INGREDIENTS

180g raw cane sugar • 140g butter • 1 x 400g can of sweetened condensed milk • 150g golden syrup • 50g chopped almonds

1. Place the sugar in a saucepan and melt over a low heat. When it's melted and golden, add the butter, condensed milk and syrup, stirring well, then let the ingredients gently simmer over a low heat for about 10 minutes.
2. Add the almonds, stir well, then allow to cool a little.
3. Pour into miniature paper cake cases, then put in the fridge until ready to serve.

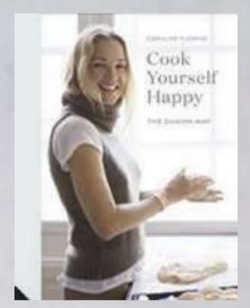
Makes 20 pieces

TIP *Knäck means 'break', referring to the toffee's hard consistency. Reduce the simmering time to get a chewier texture.*



Photography: Lisa Linder

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Cook Yourself Happy: The Danish Way* by Caroline Fleming (photography by Lisa Linder) published by Jacqui Small, RRP £25. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £20. To order, go to *www.quartoknows.com* and use code XMAS20 at checkout. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.



Recipe by Jessica Sharp



7 ICED EGGNOG CUPCAKES

Topped with a dollop of rum-spiked buttercream, these spicy, indulgent cupcakes will go down a treat.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CUPCAKES

175g unsalted butter, softened 175g caster sugar 175g self-raising flour 3 large eggs, lightly beaten 1 tsp baking powder 1 tsp vanilla extract 1 tsp cinnamon Quarter of a nutmeg, freshly grated 1 tbsp brandy, plus 2 tbsp for brushing

FOR THE BRANDY BUTTERCREAM

175g unsalted butter, at room temperature 350g icing sugar 1tsp vanilla extract 2½ tbsp brandy 6 cinnamon sticks, snapped in half, to decorate

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with foil cases.
2. Place all the cupcake ingredients into a bowl. Using a freestanding mixer or electric hand-whisk, beat the ingredients for a couple of minutes until everything is combined. Divide the cake batter equally between the muffin cases and bake for 20-25 mins – the cakes should be risen and lightly browned when you take them out of the oven.
3. Remove the cakes from the oven and, if you want to make them extra boozy, brush the hot cakes with a little brandy before placing them on a wire rack to cool completely.
4. To make the buttercream icing, whisk the butter until it is very soft, then gradually incorporate the icing sugar into the mixture. Add the vanilla extract and brandy to the mix, and whisk for a few minutes until light and fluffy.
5. Fit a piping bag with a star tip. Fill the piping bag with buttercream and pipe little swirls of icing on each cupcake.
6. Finish with a grating of nutmeg and half a cinnamon stick. The cakes will keep in an airtight container for five days.

Makes 12

TIP *Use red, silver and gold cupcake cases for an added dose of festive appeal! You can buy metallic cases in a range of colours from www.lakeland.co.uk*

8 KIRSTIE'S CARIBBEAN CHRISTMAS CAKE



You can knock this cake together the day before your guests arrive and decorate it simply with almonds and a dusting of sugar.

INGREDIENTS

900g of your favourite mixed dried fruit (cranberries, cherries, a vine fruit mix of raisins, sultanas and currants, some extra juicy raisins, apricots and – if you dare – stem or preserved ginger; I used about 300g) 300ml dry cider 225g butter, softened to room temperature 225g soft brown sugar finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon and 1 orange 1 tbsp black treacle (optional) 4 large eggs, beaten 225g plain flour 1 tsp ground mixed spice ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg 170g chopped mixed nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, pecans) about 6 tbsp apple brandy (or ordinary brandy, whisky or rum)

FOR THE MARZIPAN

225g ground almonds 180g caster sugar 110g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting 1 large egg, beaten 1 tbsp alcohol (more of the same you used in the cake) a few drops of vanilla extract, rosewater or orange flower water

FOR THE APRICOT GLAZE

½ jar cheap apricot jam juice of 1 lemon

FOR THE ROYAL ICING

1kg icing sugar 3-4 egg whites 1-2 tbsp glycerine (available from chemists) juice of ½ lemon

TIP *If you do want to go the whole hog with marzipan and icing, you can split the work over a couple of days, making the cake the day before you decorate it.*

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2. Line a deep 20cm cake tin or springform tin with baking parchment, which should come well above the rim.
2. Wash the fruit (if not pre-washed), then chop the larger pieces so they're about the size of the sultanas. Put all the fruit into a large pan with the cider, bring to the boil and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Set aside to cool. The fruit should absorb all the liquid, but if there's any left, drain it off.
3. In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and sugar with the orange and lemon zests. Add the treacle (if using). Pour in the beaten eggs and mix well.
4. Sift the flour with the mixed spice and grated nutmeg and fold into the egg mixture. Now stir in the soaked dried fruit, the chopped nuts and some of the citrus juices to produce a mixture that has a soft dropping consistency. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, smooth the top, then make a shallow dent in the middle with a wooden spoon so that the cake will rise evenly as it cooks.
5. Wrap a thick layer of brown paper or newspaper around the outside of the tin – as high as the lining paper – and secure with string. Place the tin on a baking tray lined with more brown paper and bake for 3-4 hours, checking it halfway through: if the top is getting too brown, cover it with a piece of brown paper.
6. Check the cake is cooked by inserting a skewer in the middle – it should come out clean. Remove the cake from the oven, prick it all over with a fine skewer and carefully pour apple brandy into the holes. Allow to cool completely before removing from the tin (about 2 hours). It must be cold before adding the marzipan, or the cake might crumble and the marzipan could melt into a sticky mess.
7. To make the marzipan, sift the dry ingredients together into a bowl. Add the egg, alcohol and vanilla and mix until you have a pastry-like consistency. Knead until smooth (not too long or it will go oily), then wrap tightly in clingfilm. Set aside to rest in a cool place for at least 1 hour.
8. Place a large piece of clingfilm on a clean work surface and sift a generous amount of icing sugar over it. Put the chilled marzipan in the middle of the clingfilm and roll it into a circle that is big enough to cover the top and sides of the cake. Use a pastry brush to remove all excess icing sugar.
9. To make the glaze, put the jam and lemon juice in a saucepan, heat until combined, then push through a sieve to remove the bits. Return the glaze to the pan and continue to simmer until thick.
10. Turn the cake upside down and brush the flat



Photography: Rita Platts



STAR RECIPE

surface – which will be the top – with the glaze. Place it glaze-side down on the marzipan. Press down lightly to make sure it sticks, then carefully brush the sides of the cake with more glaze, being careful not to slop it over the marzipan. Very carefully lift up both the clingfilm and marzipan all around the cake, smoothing it on to the sides through the film. Make sure it sticks properly.

⓫ With the clingfilm still in place, turn the cake right way up and press it firmly all over with your hands. Peel off the film, trim off any excess marzipan and, if necessary, glue any loose areas with more glaze.

⓬ Place the cake on a board and roll a straight-sided jam-jar around the sides to get a flat vertical surface. If necessary, dust with a little icing sugar. Allow to dry overnight, or even longer if possible.

⓭ To make the icing, sift the icing sugar into a large bowl. Put the egg whites into a separate bowl and whisk until foamy. Gradually add the sifted icing sugar to the whites, whisking slowly at first as the sugar will go everywhere if you mix too fast. Add the glycerine and lemon juice, then beat hard until the mixture is smooth and shiny. It should be the consistency of plaster of Paris.

⓮ Press clingfilm directly onto the surface of the icing and set aside for several hours to allow the air bubbles to come out.

⓯ When you're ready to apply the icing, place the cake on a turntable, or centre the board on a large saucepan that you can turn to get good coverage. Using a palette knife, spread the icing on the sides of the cake, occasionally dipping the blade into a jug of hot water to make it easier. Ideally, allow the sides to dry overnight before icing the top.

⓰ Add any cake-top decorations, such as a sprig of holly, an hour or so after icing, before the surface sets hard. For the perfect finish, tie a bow around your Christmas cake.

Makes at least 24 slices

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Kirstie's Real Kitchen* by Kirstie Allsopp, published by Hodder & Stoughton, RRP £25 (photography by Rita Platts © Hodder & Stoughton 2017). *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £15 by calling 01235 827702 and quoting the code ALLSOPP40. This offer is valid until 31 December 2017.



9 PARTY RING BISCUITS

Everyone will love this melt-in-the-mouth version of the party favourite! Hand them round when everyone's settling down to a good old Christmas film.

INGREDIENTS

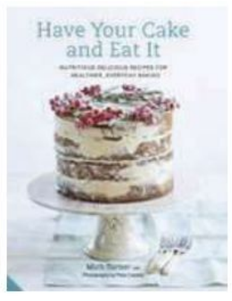
250g unsalted butter, softened 75g golden icing sugar 250g plain flour 50g cornflour 60g ground almonds 2 tsp vanilla bean paste 50g dark chocolate, melted Sprinkles, to decorate

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking sheet with non-stick baking parchment.
2. Place all the ingredients, except the chocolate and sprinkles, in a food processor or blender and beat on a medium-high speed until the ingredients are well combined and smooth.
3. Fit an open star nozzle on a large piping bag and fill it with the biscuit batter. Pipe fingers, rounds or S-shaped biscuits on the prepared baking sheets.
4. Bake for 12-15 minutes until very lightly browned. Remove the biscuits from the oven and leave them to cool for about 3 minutes before lifting them onto a wire rack with a palette knife and leaving them to cool completely.
5. Melt the chocolate in a bowl and fill a piping bag. Snip the end and drizzle chocolate all over the biscuits. Decorate with sprinkles, then leave to set.

Makes 16-18

TIP *These biscuits will keep for up to three days in an airtight box but aren't suitable for freezing.*

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Have Your Cake And Eat It* by Mich Turner MBE (photography by Peter Cassidy), published by Jacqui Small, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £22. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy with 20% off at *www.quartoknows.com*, using code XMAS20. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.

CHRISTMAS *Entertaining*

EASY RECIPES FOR SHOWSTOPPING PARTY FOOD AND DRINKS



WIN!
THE ULTIMATE PARTY KIT
TAP HERE!

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
LAKELAND



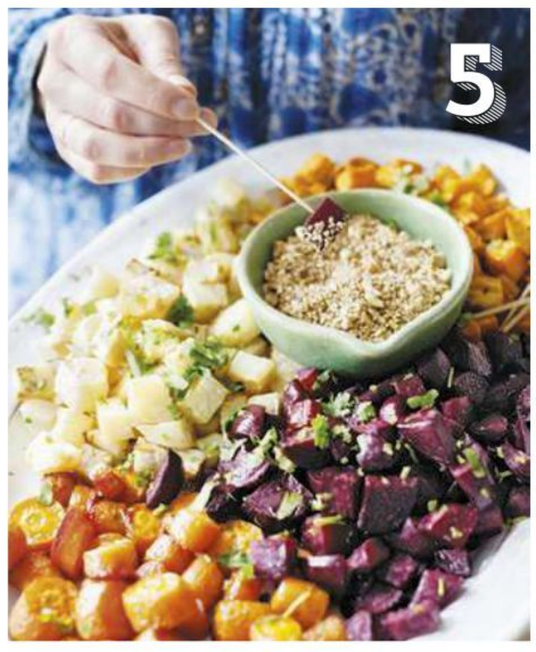
Let's party!
CANAPÉS **MULLED WINE** PLATTERS
MIX & MATCH COCKTAILS

SIMPLY
CHRISTMAS

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Welcome



Christmas gatherings are a breeze when you have a host of winning recipes up your sleeve! From tasty canapés and cocktails to sip after dark, to indulgent treats for sweet-toothed guests and mulled wine for cosy evenings with friends, we've thought of everything you need!

CONTENTS

3 GRISSINI
The tastiest twisted treats!

4 SALMON, LEEK & DILL TARTLETS
Elegant, easy and quick to make before the guests arrive

4 GOAT'S CHEESE BITES
Tangy bite-size treats

5 ROASTED ROOTS WITH DUKKAH
Deliciously vegetarian fingerfood with a savoury dip

6 GLAZED HAM
The perfect buffet dish for a Boxing Day gathering

7 YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS WITH BEEF & HORSERADISH
A classic combination!

8 MARMALADE AND CRANBERRY SAUSAGES
Sweet, sticky and very moreish

8 STILTON AND NUT BITES
A super-simple canapé to wow your party guests

9 BOTTLE DAISY
Lay on a spread of DIY high balls for a festive shindig

10 CHICKEN YAKITORI SKEWERS
A light and tasty appetizer

10 PARMESAN SHORTBREADS
The perfect party nibble to serve with something fizzy

11 WHITE MULLED WINE
Cosy up with good friends and a cup of this rum-spiked delight!

11 RED MULLED WINE
Warm, spicy and guaranteed to make everyone feel merry

12 MINI ICED DOUGHNUTS
Pass round a plate piled high with these dinky iced doughnuts. They're hard to resist!

12 GINGER AND CHOCOLATE CREAMS
Round your party off in style with a pot of coffee and a plate of these chocolatey treats

1 SEASONED GRISSINI

Experiment with savoury flavours then serve with aperitifs or a glass of fizz!

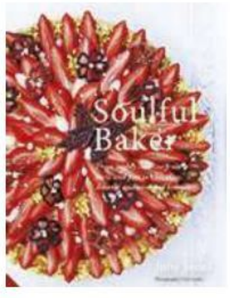
INGREDIENTS

280g plain (all-purpose) flour • 1 tsp salt • 40g fine semolina • 100g softened butter • 50g finely grated Parmesan • 7g sachet of easy-bake yeast • 200ml milk • Seasoning ideas: Chilli flakes, fennel seeds, chopped rosemary, sesame seeds, black pepper, sea salt flakes, olives (stoned, blitzed to a paste and patted dry), tomato purée

1. Line 2 baking sheets with non-stick baking paper.
2. Secure the dough hook to your mixer and place the flour, salt and semolina into the bowl, along with the softened butter, Parmesan and yeast. Warm the milk until tepid and pour it into the bowl. Start to mix on a slow speed. The ingredients should come together, forming an oily-looking dough. Leave the machine to knead the dough for 10 minutes or so. If after this time the dough seems too wet, add a sprinkling of semolina and knead for a few minutes more. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and let the dough rise for an hour. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/400°F/Gas Mark 6.
3. Split the dough into four equal-sized pieces and roll one of the pieces into a 30x20cm rectangle.
4. For straight cut grissini, sprinkle over your choice of seasonings and cut into lengths about 1cm wide. Transfer carefully to a baking sheet. Bake for 10-15 minutes, turning halfway through. The time can vary depending on the width and thickness. Remove from the oven and place on wire racks.
5. For twisted grissini, sprinkle seasoning across the bottom half of the rolled dough, folding down the top half to cover. Press down slightly then re-roll, sandwiching the flavourings in the middle. Neaten the edges with a knife and cut into lengths 1cm wide. Lift up each end and twist in opposite directions. Bake as before, but for slightly longer.

Makes about 80

READER OFFER!

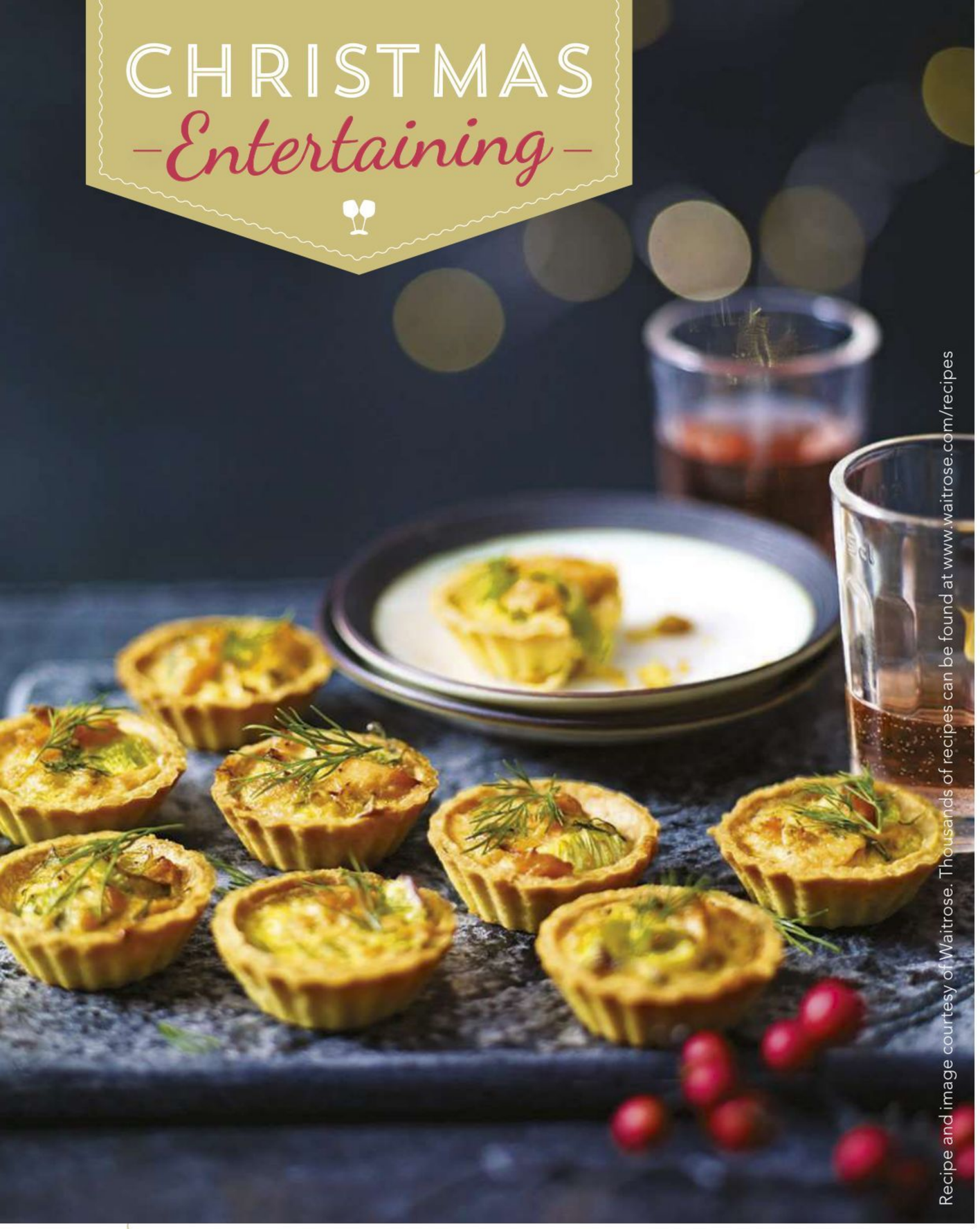


This recipe is taken from *Soulful Baker* by Julie Jones (photography by Lisa Linder), published by Jacqui Small, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £20. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for £16 at *www.quartoknows.com*, using code XMAS20. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.



Photography: Lisa Linder

CHRISTMAS *Entertaining*



2 SALMON, LEEK & DILL TARTLETS

These deliciously buttery tarts will be a real hit at cocktail parties, and can also be served with salad as a light starter.

INGREDIENTS

25g unsalted dairy butter • 1 leek, thinly sliced • 1 clove garlic, crushed • 170ml double cream • 1 medium free range egg • 213g can wild red salmon, drained • 1 tbsp chopped fresh dill, plus extra fronds • 2 x 117g packs of 18 party tartlet cases (all ingredients available from Waitrose)

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Melt the butter in a small frying pan and add the leek and garlic. Cook over a medium heat for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.
2. Beat the cream and egg together then fold in the leek mixture along with the salmon and dill. Divide between the tartlet cases.
3. Sit the tartlets on 2 large baking sheets and bake for 10–15 minutes, or until the filling is just set. Garnish with dill fronds and serve.

Makes 36

3 GOAT'S CHEESE, HONEY & THYME BITES

Experiment with different herbs and cheese to make these canapés – Camembert with rosemary is an equally mouthwatering option!

INGREDIENTS

1 x 375g pack ready-rolled puff pastry • 150g goat's cheese • 1 egg, lightly beaten • 3 thyme sprigs, leaves picked • 2 tsp clear honey, plus extra to serve

1. Line 2 baking sheets with baking paper. Cut the pastry into 36 4cm squares. Score a 5mm border inside the edges of each square. Prick the centres twice with a fork, then transfer to the baking sheets. Chill for 10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7. Cut the cheese into 36 small pieces. Remove the squares from the fridge and brush with egg. Top each square with a piece of cheese, then scatter over the thyme. Drizzle with honey, but not too much or it will catch in the oven.
3. Bake for 10 minutes, or until puffed and golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on the tray for 5 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and drizzle with a little honey.

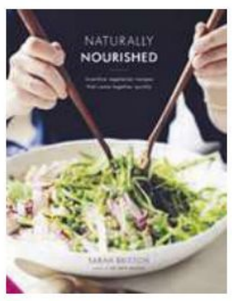
Makes 36





Photography: Sarah Britton

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Naturally Nourished* by Sarah Britton (photography by Sarah Britton), published by Jacqui Small, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £20. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £16. To order, go to *www.quartoknows.com* and use code XMAS20 at checkout. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.

4 ROASTED ROOTS WITH DUKKAH

Serve a rainbow of vegetables with a tempting savoury dip as a refreshingly healthy party option

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg mixed root vegetables, such as sweet potato, carrot, beetroot, parsnip, swede, turnip and onion
- 1 tbsp coconut oil or ghee
- Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Garnishes of your choice, such as lemon zest, crushed chilli flakes and fresh herbs (parsley, coriander, basil, mint, rosemary, thyme)
- Dukkah, to serve (following ingredients make about 225g): 140g raw, unsalted hazelnuts
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1½ tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp whole black peppercorns
- 75g raw, unsalted sesame seeds
- 1 tsp sea salt, plus extra

HOW TO MAKE THE ROASTED VEGETABLES

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas Mark 4.
2. Peel any vegetables that require peeling. Cut all veg into similar-sized pieces so they cook evenly. Place on a rimmed baking sheet with the coconut oil and transfer the baking sheet to the oven.
3. Roast for about 5 minutes until the oil has melted, then remove from the oven and toss to coat. Place them back in the oven and roast for 25-30 minutes until the vegetables are tender but not mushy.
4. Once cooked, season with sea salt and pepper and garnish with herbs, citrus zest and chilli flakes.

HOW TO MAKE THE DUKKAH

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C Fan/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Spread the hazelnuts on a baking sheet and roast for 20-30 minutes until the skins have turned darker. Remove from the oven and, when cool enough to handle, rub the nuts together to remove the skins. Place the nuts in a food processor.
2. While the hazelnuts are roasting, heat a dry frying pan over a medium heat. When hot, toast the coriander and cumin seeds, stirring often, until fragrant (about 2 minutes). Remove the pan from the heat, leave the seeds to cool, then place in a mortar and pestle and add the peppercorns. Grind the seeds and peppercorns until pulverised. Set aside.
3. In the same pan, toast the sesame seeds for about 2 minutes until they are fragrant and begin to pop. Leave to cool slightly. Place the sesame seeds in the food processor with the hazelnuts. Pulse to chop until you get a chunky-sand texture (don't blend!).
4. Add the pulverised spices and salt to the food processor and pulse once more to combine. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

Serving size variable



Photography: Rita Platts

5 KIRSTIE ALLSOPP'S GLAZED HAM

This succulent ham looks impressive and tastes even better. Carve off thin slices for your guests, or let them help themselves.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 4.5kg boneless unsmoked gammon joint
- Equal parts cider, apple juice and water (try 1 litre of each to start with)
- 1 tbsp cloves, plus extra for garnishing
- 2 cinnamon sticks

FOR THE GLAZE

- 60g dark brown sugar
- 125g honey
- 1 tsp English mustard powder
- 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- Sprinkling of cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Splash of cider vinegar

1. Place the ham in a large stockpot. Pour in enough cider mixture to cover it (add more water if necessary) and add the cloves and cinnamon sticks. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer with a lid on for about 3h 20min to 3h 45min, depending on the joint's thickness.
2. Once cooked, let the ham cool in the liquid before removing from the pot. It will still be hot, so you could drain off and reserve the liquid first. Set the ham aside to cool, then carefully carve off the skin, leaving a thin layer of fat on top of the ham.
3. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Fan 160°C/Gas 4.
4. Put the glaze ingredients except the vinegar into a saucepan. Add 1-2 tablespoons of reserved cooking liquid. Bring to boil and continue boiling to reduce a little. Add the vinegar and simmer.
5. Score the fat in a diamond pattern. Pop the ham in the preheated oven for 10 minutes to crisp up.
6. Take the ham out and spoon over some glaze. Pop the ham in the oven for 10 minutes, until it looks like it's starting to roast – it will turn golden at the edges. Repeat two or three times, then stud the centre of each diamond with a clove.

Serves at least 12, with plenty of leftovers

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Kirstie's Real Kitchen* by Kirstie Allsopp (photography by Rita Platts © Hodder & Stoughton 2017), published by Hodder & Stoughton, RRP £25. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £15 by calling 01235 827702 and quoting the code ALLSOPP40. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.



Recipe and image courtesy of www.lakeland.co.uk

6 MINI YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS WITH BEEF AND HORSERADISH

These scaled-down Yorkies will be a real hit with party guests. And they're quick and easy to put together!

INGREDIENTS

- Slices of beef (leftovers from a roast are good)
- Fresh rosemary
- Horseradish sauce
- 1 egg
- 50g flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 50-75ml milk
- Olive oil
- Mini Morsel Tin from Lakeland

1. Beat the egg and whisk in the flour and baking powder. Add milk until the batter is the consistency of double cream. Leave to rest for one hour.
2. Heat oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5.
3. Pour a little oil into each hole of the tin and put in the oven to get hot.
4. Remove the tin from the oven, put a teaspoon of mixture into each hole and bake for 10 minutes or until well-risen and golden brown.
5. Assemble with slices of beef, a dollop of horseradish and a sprinkle of chopped rosemary.

Makes 48



WIN! THE PERFECT PARTY KIT FROM LAKELAND

FROM SERVING BOWLS TO SHOT GLASSES, HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO THROW A PARTY TO REMEMBER

Christmas is a great time for a get-together, and you'll make any party a hit with this fantastic bundle of entertaining essentials from Lakeland. Whip up canapés like those delicious bite-size Yorkshire puds (above) with a Mini Morsel Set, and serve nibbles in style with the Naturals range of dishes and bowls. Give your fizz some pizzazz with flavoured shimmer Popaballs, and create a selection of tempting drinks with cocktail mixers and botanical gin infusions. See below to find out how all this could be yours!

WORTH £200!

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning these treats, visit **http://competition.immediate.co.uk/lakeland**, where you'll need to answer a simple multiple choice question. The competition closes on 11 December and we'll contact the winner on 12 December so that we can get the prize sent out in time for a Christmas celebration. Good luck! (You can find more party inspiration at **www.lakeland.co.uk**.)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS The Promoter of this competition is Immediate Media Company Bristol Ltd. Entrants must be UK residents aged 18 years or older, excluding the Promoter's employees.Closing date for entries is 23.55.00 GMT on 11 December 2017. For full terms and conditions, please see page 98 of the main magazine, or visit http://competition.immediate.co.uk/lakeland



Recipe and image courtesy of www.sainsburys.co.uk

7 MARMALADE AND CRANBERRY SAUSAGES

Turn cocktail sausages into a deliciously sticky delicacy with a marmalade glaze, perfect for Christmas nibbles

INGREDIENTS

566g pork cocktail sausages • 3 tbsp fruit marmalade • 3 tbsp cranberry sauce • 1 tbsp honey • 3 tbsp fresh cranberries • Zest of 1 orange

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/360°F/Gas Mark 6. Place the sausages in a single layer in a large roasting tin. Cook for 10 minutes.
2. Mix the marmalade, cranberry sauce, honey and fresh cranberries together in a bowl, then pour over the sausages, stirring well to coat them with the glaze.
3. Cook for a further 15 minutes, turning occasionally, until sticky and golden.
4. Garnish the sausages with orange zest to serve.

Serves 12

8 STILTON AND NUT BITES

A good canapé recipe is handy to have up your sleeve if you're throwing a party, and these mini melt-in-the-mouth bites fit the bill!

INGREDIENTS

175g plain flour • Pinch of cayenne pepper • Large pinch of dry mustard powder • Pinch of salt • 125g cubed butter • 50g grated Stilton • 75g grated extra mature Cheddar • 75g finely chopped walnuts • 1 large egg • 2 tbsp poppy seeds (all ingredients available from Asda)

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Line three baking trays with baking paper. Sift the flour, cayenne, salt and mustard powder into a bowl and stir. Rub in the butter.
2. Add the cheese and walnuts, and stir to mix evenly. Beat the egg and add half to the walnut mix. Mix with your hands to make a dough.
3. Shape the dough into 40 small balls. Put on the trays, leaving a gap between each one, and flatten slightly with the palm of your hand. Brush the tops with the rest of the beaten egg, then sprinkle with poppy seeds.
5. Bake for 15 minutes. Cool the bites on the baking trays for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks to finish cooling.

Serves 40



Recipe and image courtesy of www.asdagoodliving.co.uk

Photography: Kim Lightbody



9 BOTTLE DAISY (CITRUS VODKA, VANILLA PINEAPPLE SYRUP & DIY HI-BALLS)

Whip up a batch of a unique flavoured vodka, then supply bowls of berries, herbs and citrus for your guests to mix and match their own DIY cocktails! What's your favourite combination…?

INGREDIENTS

100g sugar • 6 cubes fresh or tinned pineapple • Half a vanilla pod • Pinch of salt • 6 black peppercorns • 1 tsp coriander seed • 400ml citrus vodka • Bowls of strawberries, raspberries, blackberries • Wedges of lime, lemon, orange, grapefruit • Bunches of basil, mint, rosemary, thyme • Dasher bottles of orange bitters and Angostura • Tabasco • Chilled bottles of soda, ginger ale, ginger beer, fresh lemonade

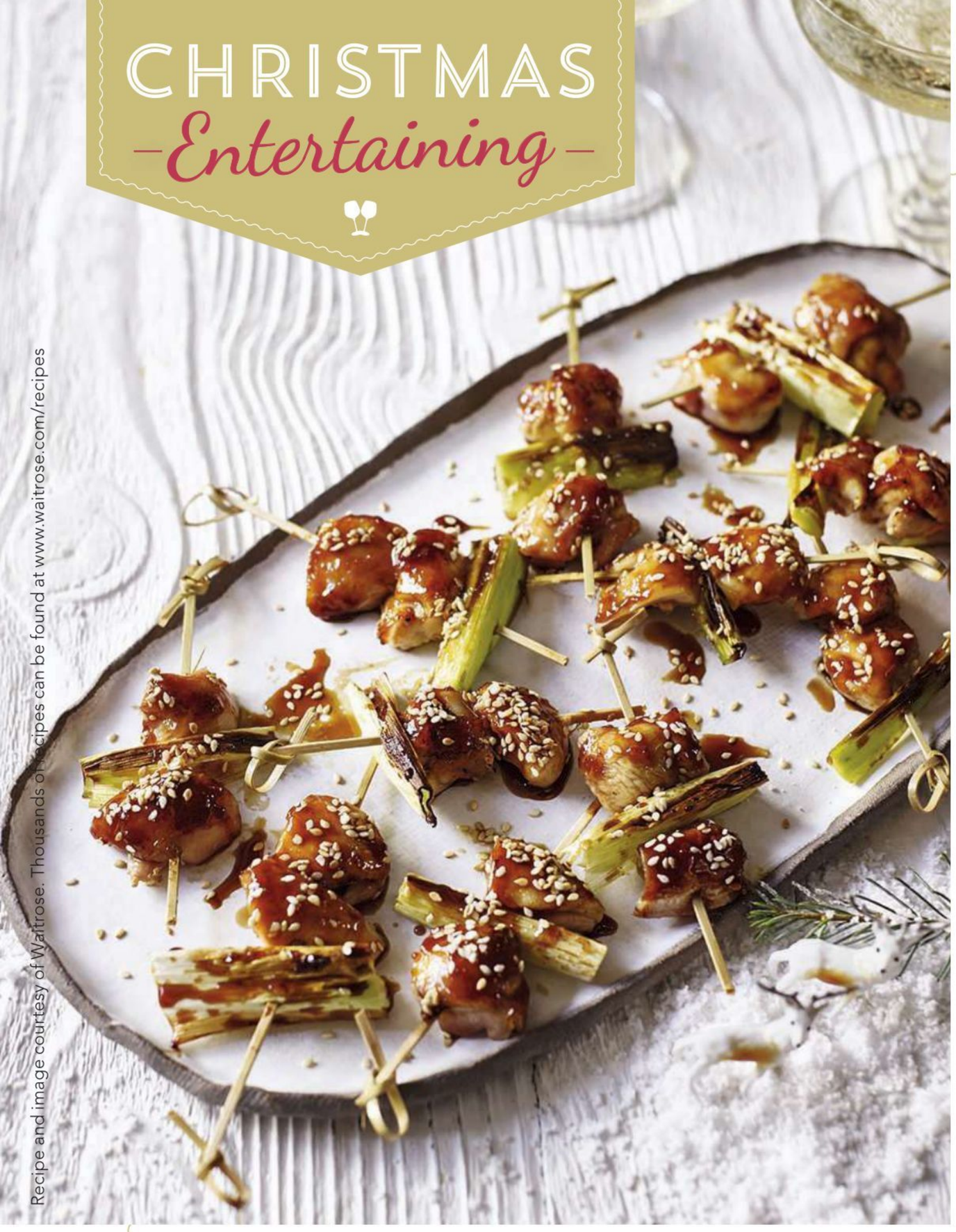
1. Heat a pan with 120ml water and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and immediately add the sugar, pineapple, vanilla – seeds scraped into the pot – salt, peppercorns and coriander seed. Swirl about, allow to infuse as it cools, then strain.
2. In a clean bottle, mix the vodka with the cold syrup. Keep cold until ready to use.
3. To serve, set a big bowl of ice on a table and some hi-ball glasses along with the bottle of flavoured vodka, ingredients and some teaspoons and chopsticks. Chopsticks are better than spoons for getting in among the ice and giving your drink a stir. Use this basic formula for building a drink, but allow people to chop and change according to taste: 2 shots bottle mix + 2 squeezes citrus + dash bitters + a couple of berries, and mixer. Garnish with herbs.

Makes 1 bottle, serves plenty!

READER OFFER!



This recipe is taken from *Good Together* by Ryan Chetiyawardana (photography by Kim Lightbody), published by Frances Lincoln, an imprint of the Quarto Group, RRP £20. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £16. To order, go to *www.quartoknows.com* and use code XMAS20. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.



Recipe and image courtesy of Waitrose. Thousands of recipes can be found at www.waitrose.com/recipes

10 CHICKEN YAKITORI SKEWERS

Make these in advance and pop them in the oven just before you serve them – the longer they marinate the better!

INGREDIENTS

6 chicken thigh fillets, about 600g, cubed • 1 pack trimmed leeks (cut into 4cm lengths) • 4 tbsp mirin • 4 tbsp soy sauce • 1 tbsp rice vinegar • 1 tbsp caster sugar • 2 tsp cornflour • 1 tsp finely grated fresh ginger • 1 tbsp sesame seeds • 1 tbsp sunflower oil

1. Thread the chicken and leek onto 18-20 bamboo skewers, two chicken cubes and one piece of leek on each. Brush with oil. Arrange on a foil-lined grill pan.
2. Preheat the grill to medium. Cook the skewers for 7-8 minutes on each side until nicely browned and cooked through. Drain off any excess liquid.
3. Meanwhile, place the mirin, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, cornflour and ginger in a small pan. Cook gently, stirring for 2-3 minutes, until bubbling.
4. Brush the chicken with the sauce and sprinkle over the sesame seeds. Return to the grill for a further 1-2 minutes until the seeds are toasted. Serve warm.

Makes 18

11 PARMESAN SHORTBREADS

The perfect pairing for a cocktail or two, these shortbreads should satisfy cheese addicts!

INGREDIENTS

150g plain flour • 75g finely grated Parmesan • 100g soft unsalted butter • 1 large egg yolk • 1 tbsp freshly chopped rosemary

1. Mix the ingredients together until they start to form a dough. Turn the dough onto a clean surface and knead briefly. Split into two and roll each half into a cylinder approximately 3cm wide. Wrap each cylinder in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for at least an hour. Alternatively you can make the dough ahead and chill it for up to two days before baking.
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Remove the dough cylinders from the fridge and cut into slices approximately 5mm thick. Arrange on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment, and put in the oven for approximately 15 minutes, or until golden at the edges.
3. Remove the shortbread from the oven, then leave to cool on the tray for a couple of minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool.

Makes 35-40



Recipe by Jessica Sharp



Photography: Lisa Linder

12 HVID GLØGG (WHITE MULLED WINE)

White mulled wine is a less conventional, lighter choice. A steaming cup made with rum will warm up the chilliest evening!

INGREDIENTS

1.5 litres white wine • 10 whole cloves • 3 star anise • 2 tbsp candied orange peel • 200ml elderflower cordial • 8 cardamom pods • 160g raw cane sugar • 2 cinnamon sticks • 1 whole vanilla pod, halved lengthways • 3cm long slice of fresh ginger • Peel of one organic lemon (keep the lemon flesh for slices in each cup) • 200ml white rum • 200ml Cointreau • 200g flaked almonds • 200g sultanas

1. Put wine, cloves, cardamom, star anise, citrus peel, cordial, sugar, cinnamon sticks, vanilla pod and ginger in a saucepan. Leave for at least 12 hours with lid on.
2. The next day, add the rum and Cointreau and bring to a gentle boil. After simmering for 10 minutes, strain through a sieve to remove all the spices and lemon peel, then add the almonds and sultanas and gently simmer for a further 10 minutes.
3. Serve in glasses or mugs with a slice of lemon.

Serves 8

13 RØD GLØGG (RED MULLED WINE)

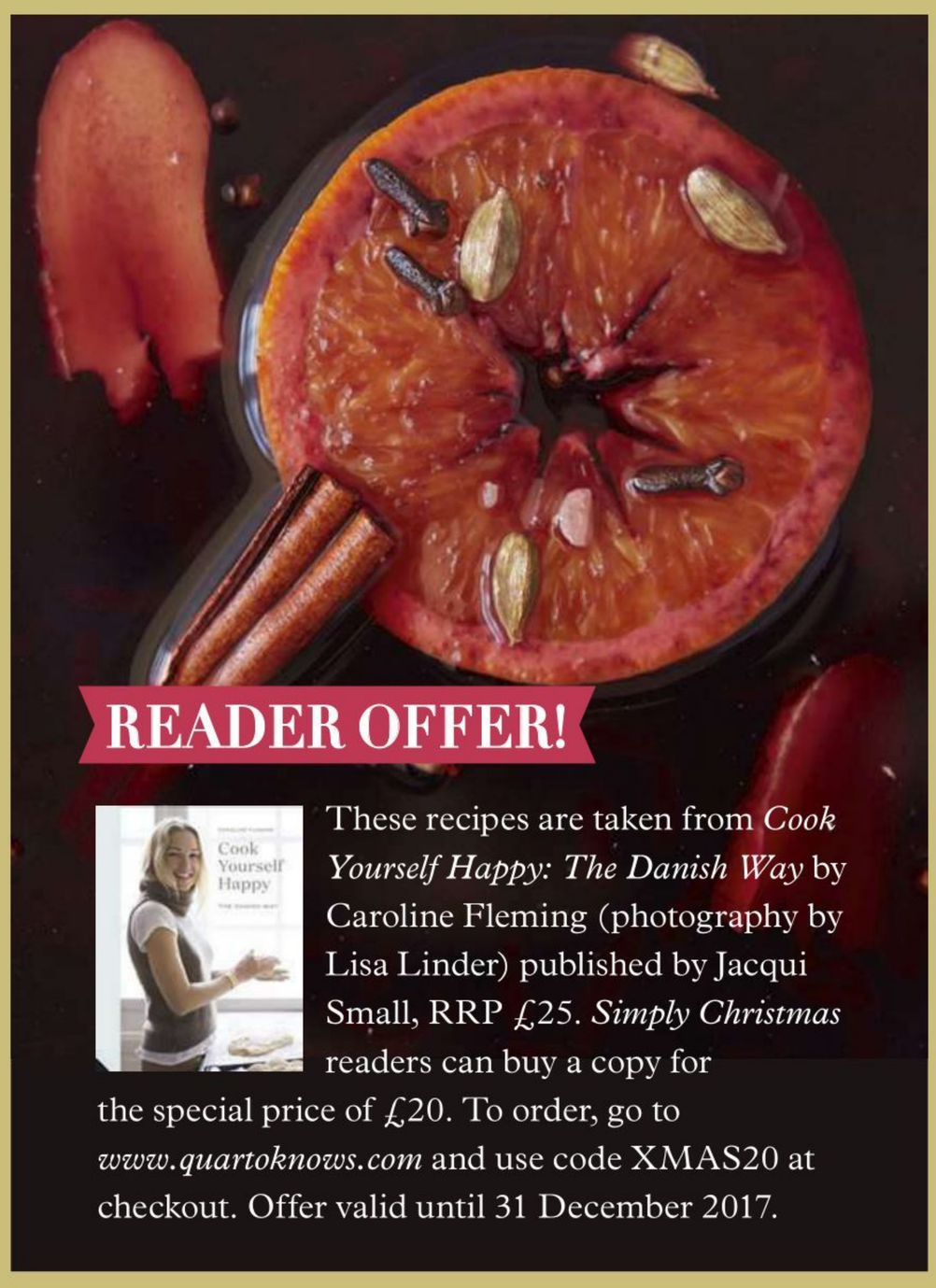
This traditional warming drink is made a little heartier with nuts and raisins to nibble

INGREDIENTS

1.5 litres red wine • 18 whole cloves • 12 cardamom pods • 2 cinnamon sticks • 1 whole orange, sliced • 3cm long thin slice of fresh ginger • 200g raw cane sugar • 300ml sweet vermouth • 200ml vodka • 200g flaked almonds • 200g raisins

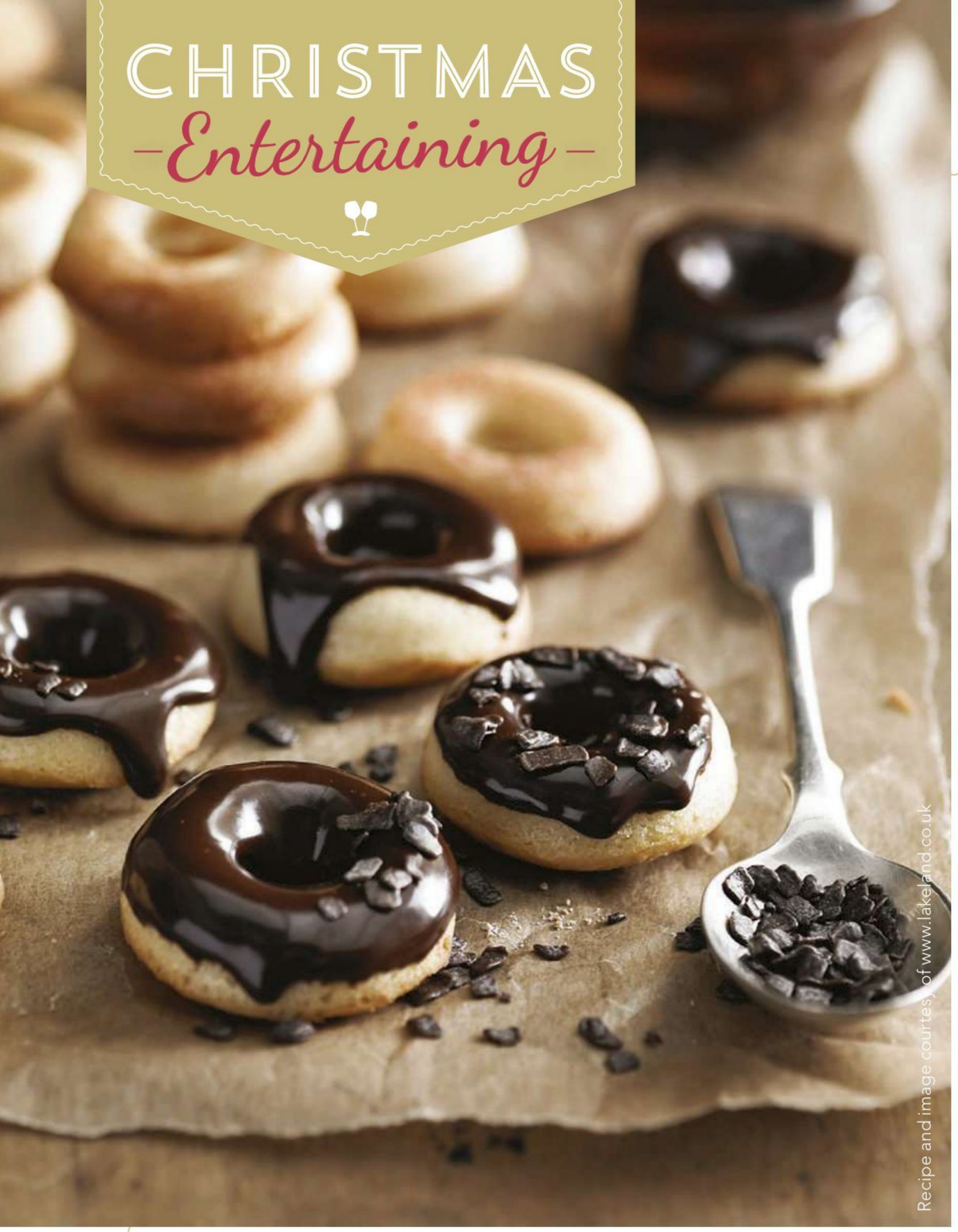
1. Put the red wine, cloves, cardamom pods, cinnamon sticks, orange slices, ginger and sugar in a large saucepan and allow to stand overnight (or for at least 12 hours) with the lid on.
2. The next day, add the vermouth and vodka and bring to a gentle boil. After simmering for 10 minutes, strain through a sieve to remove all the spices and orange pieces, then add the almonds and raisins and gently simmer for a further 10 minutes.
3. Serve in glasses or mugs, with teaspoons for easy eating of the raisins and almonds.

Serves 8



READER OFFER!

These recipes are taken from *Cook Yourself Happy: The Danish Way* by Caroline Fleming (photography by Lisa Linder) published by Jacqui Small, RRP £25. *Simply Christmas* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £20. To order, go to *www.quartoknows.com* and use code XMAS20 at checkout. Offer valid until 31 December 2017.



Recipe and image courtesy of www.lakeland.co.uk

14 MINI ICED DOUGHNUTS

Decorate these treats with sprinkles or nuts to make them even more irresistible!

INGREDIENTS

225g plain flour • 2 tsp baking powder • 1 tsp salt • 175g caster sugar • 175ml milk • 2 eggs, beaten • 1 tbsp olive oil • 1 tsp vanilla extract • Extra sugar for dusting

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Lightly brush a mini doughnut pan with cooking oil.
2. Take a large, roomy bowl and sift the flour, baking powder and salt into it.
3. Add the sugar and give it a stir round to combine.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk the milk, beaten egg, olive oil and vanilla extract together and add this to the dry ingredients, mixing thoroughly.
5. Using a teaspoon, fill each of the doughnut cups three quarters full with batter. Bake for eight minutes, until firm, but springy to the touch. Cool slightly.
6. Sprinkle caster sugar onto a plate. Turn the doughnuts out and dip them into the sugar, or into melted chocolate and allow to set on a wire rack.

Makes 36

15 GINGER AND CHOCOLATE CREAMS

These rich, melt-in-the-mouth creams will round off any party in style

INGREDIENTS

1 egg white • ½ lemon, juice only • 1 tsp ginger extract • 425g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting • 175g dark chocolate • A few pieces of crystalized ginger (optional)

1. Whisk the egg white until stiff peaks are formed. Slowly whisk in the lemon juice, ginger extract and icing sugar until a stiff paste is achieved.
2. Tip the mixture onto a work surface liberally dusted with icing sugar. Roll out thinly.
3. Use a small round cutter to shape the creams, then place them onto a baking tray and chill in the fridge for 1-2 hours, or until they have set.
4. Melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water (do not let the base of the bowl touch the water).
5. Dip each ginger cream into the chocolate until covered and set aside on a baking tray. Top with chopped, crystalized ginger (optional) and chill until set.

Number made will depend on size of cookie cutter



Recipe and image courtesy of www.lakeland.co.uk