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Festive & fabulous

Whether Christmas is your favourite time of year, or you need a little bit of inspiration to help get into the spirit, you've come to the right place. We've filled these pages with **brilliant tips**, creative tricks, and **everything you need for a stress-free, fun-filled season!**

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Festive finds
yule love!



Discover trends to get excited about in **Step into Christmas** (p12), and also **The decorations that make Christmas** (p20), where 25 interiors pros tell us about their favourite ornaments – their treasures are magical, and super stylish!

We've also got hundreds of ways to **save money and avoid stress this December**. Find advice to **cut the cost of your big shop** (p108), **over 150 gift ideas** (p37), as well as hacks to **make holiday hosting easy** (p82).

Elsewhere, we have a gorgeous **living room makeover** (p28) and three **fab real homes** (from p51), all dressed for sparkle season.

I love **Jackie's cosy cottage** – she makes every room feel festive (p62).

In our food pages this month, we have **thrifty dishes for your feast** (p89), recipes for all the big **dietary needs** (p96) and **easy bakes** (p101), too.

Enjoy, and **Merry Christmas!**

Mel

MEL SHERWOOD
EDITOR



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Jackie's take on Christmas is calm and sophisticated



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Top tips to make your guests feel welcome

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HOT LIST

TOWNHOUSE TALES

Evoke the magical backdrop of a European Christmas market with these decorative delights



- 1 Baylis & Harding festive **hand wash** gingerbread house gift, £12.50, Boots
- 2 House scene oblong **cushion**, £12, Primark
- 3 Christmas **decoration**, £6.99, Homesense
- 4 Cotton Christmas Houses Blue double **bedding set**, £22, Argos
- 5 Townhouse **tea light holder**, £9.34, Søstrene Grene
- 6 Patisserie **light-up house**, £15, Matalan
- 7 Gingerbread house **mug with lid**, £4, B&M
- 8 Embellished Christmas tree **decoration**, £7.99, H&M Home
- 9 Cath Kidston Christmas at home **cushion**, £35, John Lewis & Partners

Feature Lara Watson

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THIS MONTH WE LOVE

HOT FROM THE HIGH STREET

Primark

Get a high-end look without the price tag by picking up a few choice pieces from Primark's extravagant new collection. These designs are absolutely covered in motif-of-the-moment bows, and have the kind of attention to detail we usually expect from more high-end brands.



Tea towels, £5 for 2



Gingerbread house plate, £6



Tree side plate, £4

Dove stencil mug, £3.50



Fabric bow placemats, £3.50 each; bow dinner candle holders, £3 each; bow coupe glasses, £7 each; scalloped edge bow side plates, £4.50 each; dinner plates, £6 each; cereal bowls, £4.50 each; small bow ramekin, £7; bow and stripe tablecloth, £10; bow table runner, £8; bow napkins, £5 for 2; bow pinch bowls, £5 for 3; bow coasters, £6 for 4, all Primark



THIS MONTH

FOR STOCKISTS SEE p112

Make the most of **December** with the best things to do, see and buy this month

we love...

Sofa switch up

Bring instant seasonal glam to your living room by switching up your cushions. Simply buy festive covers to fit the inners you already have. Take the opportunity to clean the regular covers, then fold away until you need to swap them back in January...

Printed 'Merry' cushion cover in Beige and Red, £6.99; printed 'Christmas' cushion cover in Red, £6.99; cushion cover set in Brown and striped, £6.99 for 2; paper fir tree decorations, from £9.99 each, all H&M Home



Cotton maché ornaments, £20 for 4, Talking Tables

WASTE NOT

Turn something discarded into something to treasure by displaying Talking Tables' new cotton maché collection with pride. These ingenious decorations are made from the fashion industry's shredded waste cotton fabric in India, which is upcycled by local women into these darling designs.



Shop our STYLE EDITOR'S Christmas list

Here's what our design expert, Hannah, wants to find under the tree

1. Pure cotton striped foliage **double bedding** set, £29.50, M&S
2. Ullerslev **sheepskin** in Light Brown, £35, IKEA
3. Cotton carpenter **apron**, £39.99, Zara Home
4. Old glass **comports**, from £16 each, RE
5. Harlequin **baubles**, £20 for 10, John Lewis & Partners

A welcome trend
Christmas door mats are one of 2025's biggest trends! Pick a design that matches your decs for a scheme that works, indoors and out.



Natural Christmas Deck the Halls coir **door mat**, from £14, Next

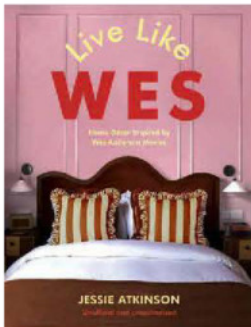
A WARM FRIENDSHIP

Treat yourself to a comforting companion from Warmies' collab with Aardman Animations. They've turned Gromit, Feathers and Shaun the Sheep into cuddly toys that can be heated in the microwave to provide safe and snuggly comfort for hours.

Shaun the Sheep and Gromit **microwaveables**, £29.99 each, Warmies



YourHome *inspiration*



We're reading...

Live Like Wes by Jessie Atkinson, £22, Greenfinch

From the cottagecore cosiness of *Fantastic Mr Fox* to the perfect pastels of *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, this will help you bring home the unmistakable aesthetic of Wes Anderson.



We're learning...

New skills with Hobbycraft

Get to grips with new techniques from the comfort of your own sofa with Hobbycraft's online workshops. You'll get to meet other crafters and have a kit delivered to your door. Head to classbento.co.uk/hobbycraft to book.



We're visiting...

Manchester Christmas Markets

Visit from 7th Nov to 4th Jan to see this much-loved event return to Albert Square. 'We're going all out this year to make Manchester the number one city for Christmas, not just in the UK, but the world!' says councillor Pat Karney.

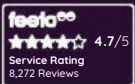
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Style & DECORATING

Get thrifty with our Christmas finds and ideas and embrace the season, whatever your budget

TESTER POT BAUBLES

Ensure your baubles coordinate with your decor – and use up leftover tester pots at the same time – with this genius project. Pick up some plain ceramic baubles from Hobbycraft (you can get 6 for £6) and get creative! Take inspiration from ribbon designs, such as grosgrain stitches, tartan patterns and coquette ribbon motifs, and personalise your baubles with initials or dates. Once you've finished painting, hang them to dry from a piece of string. Remember to replace the standard hanger with pretty ribbon for a bespoke touch.

Plain ceramic **baubles** painted in Sombreiro, Corlsbud Canyon, Gypsy Love and Oregano, all £5.95 for a sample pot, Benjamin Moore

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Room by room, our pick of the seasonal decor trends

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Interior designers, stylists and tastemakers share the festive flourishes they wouldn't be without

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Vicky Thomas and Luke Morgan created an elegant yet colourful living room for their family

32 Make your own beaded ornament

Get Vicky's look with a handmade velvet heart

Step into Christmas

Get to know this season's four biggest trends, with easy ways to sprinkle the magic throughout your home...

Swap a traditional wreath for a light-up version and create a glowing doorscape that you'll love to come home to.

TruGlow waterproof outdoor candles, from £6.99 each; 78cm cluster LED light wreath, £79.99; pre-lit snowy 60cm Christmas trees, £29.99 each; large Studley rattan stag & doe light-up reindeer, £544.99 for 2, all Lights4fun

Sparkling splendour

Make a stunning first impression – and cheer up your postie – with a luxury look for your door and hall

Put on the glitz this year with twinkling decorations that will light up the night! Metallics are always big this time of year but, for 2025, the trend is for a lustrous mix of subtle shimmer and standout sparkle. Put a twist on tradition by mixing metals – layer up silver, gold and copper for a rich effect that will make your scheme look even more opulent.

► Champagne pine cone & apple Christmas **wreath**, £25.99, Homescapex



Silver starry night **door mat**, £8.50, Matalan

▲ Large artificial rustic **swag** with bells, £39, Dunelm

Deck the hall with a showstopping display. Wrap several small garlands around each other to produce a full, generous effect that you can change up each year.

Kraft **wrapping paper** in Gold, £4; bauble and leaf **garland** in Champagne, £35; Etheridge **accent chair** in Manilla and Hay, £849; cotton velvet **cushion** in Green, £25, all John Lewis & Partners



► 9ft pre-lit wonderland **garland**, £25, B&Q



► Light up **parcels** in Rose Gold, £20 for 3, B&M



▼ Befästa **lantern**, £15, IKEA



► Antique **bell tree decoration**, £1.99, Homebase



▲ Gold princess carriage **bauble**, £9.95 for 3, Melody Maison

► Canterbury mirrored Christmas star **tree topper** in Antique Brass, £40, Garden Trading



▲ Give your space a designer look by creating asymmetrical botanical arrangements over mirrors and picture frames. Place your pieces off-centre, but balance the effect with tall decorations.

Cream and Gold **nutcracker**, £49.99; Gold **mistletoe bowl**, £29.99; eucalyptus and matt Gold berry **garland**, £49.99; matt Gold **berry bunch pick**, £2.49; Cream and Gold treetop **fairy**, £16.99; **candle** in Gold pot with lid, £11.99; Silver glass star **tea light holder**, £3.99; clear **bauble** with Gold glitter and pearl trellis, £3.99; two-tone Gold glittered glass **bauble**, £4.49; pale Gold sequin apple and pear **decorations**, £5.99 for 2; Silver brush **tree**, £6.99; Gold glitter brush **tree**, £8.99; Gold sparkling **treetop star**, £13.99, all Gisela Graham

DECORATING IDEAS



Take care of heirloom or fragile decorations by displaying them in bowls, rather than on your tree.

Bird **bauble**, £2.98; yarn **ornament**, £3.43; gingerbread house **bauble**, £2.98; Green embroidered heart **decoration**, £3.28; baguette **ornament**, £2.98; croissant **bauble**, £2.98; strawberry **bauble**, £2.98; mitten **ornament**, £2.98; glitter **bauble**, £2.08; van **ornament**, £2.98, all Søstrene Grene



◀ Quilted cotton Christmas **stocking**, £45, TBCo

▲ Festive **paper chain kit**, £16, East End Press

Quilted festive **throw**, £24, Primark

▼ Winterfint candy **cushion**, £19, IKEA

▼ Green rattan decorative **tray**, £15, Habitat



▶ Striped ceramic **candle holders**, £12.50 for 2, M&S

▼ Vintage indented pastel **baubles**, £10 for 4, Sass & Belle



▲ Paper Christmas **decorations** in Red stripe, £9.99 for 6, H&M Home

◀ Alpine hearts **decoration**, £6.99 for 2, Gisela Graham



For your tree



▲ Make your present pile even more exciting! Use patterned and plain wrap in nostalgic colours that match your favourite decs.

Polysilk bauble **garland**, £15; Brunswick spruce unlit **Christmas tree**, from £150; Harlequin **baubles**, £20 for 10; 1,000 compact LED Warm White **lights**, £45; beaded moon **bauble**, £8; juggler mouse **bauble**, £10; geometric drop multi **bauble**, £10; silk ball with tassel **bauble** in Red, £6; dancing mice **bauble**, £10; Harlequin **wrapping paper**, £4; simple star Gold foiled **wrapping paper**, £4; Kraft **wrapping paper** in Red, £4; Santa on horse **gift bag**, £4, all John Lewis & Partners

Festive folk

Cuddle up with a whimsical look that's packed with homespun charm and cosy traditional details

Celebrate the atmosphere of Christmases past by decorating with this richly nostalgic scheme. Create this look at home with a mismatched collection of perfectly imperfect pieces - you probably have the ideal array in the attic! Then, add to your selection with striped baubles in red, green and white. Use this trending pattern to bring a much-loved look up to date.

Make yourself comfortable with cosy soft furnishings paired with woolly pom poms and embroidered decorations.

Bobbin candlestick holders, £5; pom pom baubles, £6 for 4; stripe baubles in Red and Cream, £7 for 4; pom pom wreath, £18; wooden nutcracker, £10; star cushion, £10; Green Christmas printed slogan cushion, £8; Green checked throw, £15; Christmas chequerboard cushion, £10; brushed check cushion, £10; throw, £15, all George Home

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Evening *elegance*

Lean into seasonal darkness to create a deeply dramatic atmosphere that's perfect for intimate dinners

Rethink long and dreary winter nights – they're actually spot-on backdrops for a sophisticated look. This trend is the 'Little Black Dress' of decorating this year. Its chic, elegant, and surprisingly easy. Build your scheme around a palette of black and white, but add in hints of rich purple and forest green to provide an extra sense of occasion.

Get your Christmas table glowing with light-up decorations. Use a mixture of candles, fairy lights and LED baubles for a layered look.

Cream LED present **decoration**, £5; Black LED present **decoration**, £5; large Black **tree**, £12.50; LED lantern **tree**, £38; confetti **wine glasses**, £6 each; Black house **tea light holder**, £6; mono stripe **dinner plate**, £3.50; mono stripe **side plate**, £3.50; mono **bauble**, £3, all Matalan

DECORATING IDEAS



Reuse classic white crockery for a simple yet captivating tablescape. Pair with a dark tablecloth for rich contrast.

Metallic-rim scalloped-edge **dinner plate**, £3.50; cereal **bowl**, £2.50; Gold bow **crackers**, £8; ripple Gold-rim **wine glasses**, £7 for 2; Green velvet **bows**, £3 for 6; **tea light holder** on wooden stand, £8, all B&M



◀ Clio beaded **garland** in Champagne, £27, Curated Living

▶ Premium diamond-shaped Christmas **crackers**, £8 for 6, George Home



▼ Picardie **glass tumblers** in Plum, £13.99 for 4, Rinkit



▲ **Cutlery set**, £12 for 8 pieces, Flying Tiger Copenhagen



▲ Benedita stoneware bow **salt and pepper shakers** in Black, £22, Anthropologie



◀ The Edit cut-glass **decanter**, £14, Primark



▶ Stripe and tree Christmas **baubles**, £12.99 for 4, Very

▶ Black and White stripey bow **baubles**, £14 for 6, Next

◀ Diamante bow Christmas **tree topper**, £3.99, Home Bargains



Elevate your table with an assortment of cake stands. You can use them for more than just sweet treats – artistically arrange cheese, crackers, and even pots of sauce.

Dinner **candle holders**, £5 each; dinner **candles** in Gold, £6 for 4; textured 12-piece **dinner set**, £70; marble **cake stand**, £69, all M&S X Kelly Hoppen

Sweeten up your kids' rooms with a playful cast of characters and pick 'n' mix motifs

Indulge in festive excess with a riot of colour, texture and themes. This clashing combo creates an immersive wonderland that's simply bursting with surprises. Keep the balance by using pink and teal as your key tones, but let your imagination run free. Place traditional nutcrackers next to balloon sausage dogs, pop bow ties on dinosaurs – there's really no limit to the fun!

Jolly holiday

Decorate your tree like a pro!

Make sure your tree looks its best with Gisela Graham's secrets for perfect tree styling



Position your tree and arrange the branches. If your tree is real, let it settle for an hour so the branches drop to their natural shape. If it's faux, separate and splay each branch.

If you don't have a tree skirt, you can be creative – I often wrap empty boxes and arrange them to hide the base. I just need to remember not to hand them out on Christmas morning!

Aim for 100 lights for every 1ft of your tree. Plug in the lights to ensure they work. Begin at the bottom of the trunk and work towards the tips of the branches, then back again. Repeat this motion, moving slowly up and around the tree. Step back every now and again to check your progress.

If you feel the tree is looking a bit thin, add in extra foliage and berries now. Before you start adding the rest of your decorations, put your topper on. It's much easier to do it now, before the tree is full.

Then, hang your baubles – I always start at the top. Different-sized decorations will add interest, so mix up the sizes around the tree. Don't only hang decorations on the ends of branches, push them further into the tree to give extra depth.



Set the scene for bedtime with a storybook-themed tree. Find baubles that reference your favourite tales, from white rabbits to ruby slippers, and you'll create a theme for magical dreams.

Multicoloured mirror ball **bauble**, £3.99; Rainbow ribbed shiny **glass olive**, £4.99; **bauble** with multicoloured stars, £3.49; multicolour painted glass finial **dec**, £23.99 for 4; resin White rabbit **decoration**, £9.99; playing card men resin **decorations**, £19.99 for 2; fabric star **shelf sitter**, £4.99; nutcracker story **musical dome**, £39.99, all Gisela Graham

DECORATING IDEAS



▶ Felt star
garland, £6,
Habitat

▶ Penguin-
shaped
mug, £3.50,
George
Home



▶ Reindeer
sack, £5.99,
Home
Bargains



▶ Letter to
Santa **bedding**
set in Cream,
from £11 for a
toddler's bed,
Argos



▶ Christmas
tree **LED**
neon sign,
£19.99,
The Range



▲ Put a smile on your scheme with cuddly friends embodying festive favourites.

Merry & Bright bauble wreath, £10; plush tree decorations, £2.50 each; cup tree decorations, £3.50 for 3; nutcracker baubles, £2.50 for 4; presents tree decorations, £3.50 for 3, all B&M



Make it magical by letting your child decorate their own tree. It'll give them a sense of ownership over the space and (hopefully) they'll be encouraged to keep their rooms tidy for the holiday period!

Assorted 'It's Christmas' baubles, from £2.99; Jolly Santa stocking, £9.99; Festive-val crimbo cushion, £24.99; candy cane cushion, £14.99, all Dobbies

▼ Mouse with present decoration, £5, B&Q



▶ Sophie Robinson Quinn cotton maché bauble, £3, Dunelm

▶ Dog with sequins ornament, £2.50, Flying Tiger Copenhagen



For your tree

آموزشگاه احساس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی

December 2025 YourHome 19

The decorations that *make* Christmas

We asked **25 interior designers, stylists and tastemakers** to unwrap the festive pieces that they never celebrate without

The magic of Christmas is in the familiarity, the ritual and routine. So, while we love talking about the latest trends and hottest new looks, we know that part of the joy of decorating is rediscovering the pieces you've packed away. Whether it's a set of elegant icicles, or a glitter-covered pine cone brought home by your child from nursery, each piece has its own special story. We chatted to 25 of our favourite stylish people to get to know which decorations they love to unpack.

Chalk paint in Tyrian Plum, Frida Blue, Capri Pink, Arles, Antibes Green, Florence and Original, all from £7.95 for 120ml; Metallic traditional **gold paint**, £12.95, all Annie Sloan



Annie Sloan *Painted* candlesticks

'One of my favourite traditions is turning unwanted glass bottles into colourful Christmas candleholders with chalk paint. Start by cleaning and drying bottles and removing any labels. Paint two base coats in your chosen colour - no priming needed. Once dry, decorate with patterns using a bright or muted palette, or classic red and green. This year, I've drawn inspiration from Matisse's bold cut-out shapes. For a final flourish, outline designs or add details with metallic paint in gold. It's a fun project for children too, and the finished bottles look striking with vibrant candles on a fireplace.'

Annie is an artist, inventor and founder of Annie Sloan



Molly Mahon *Ravishing* ribbons

'My go-to decorations are always the ones that feel joyful and handmade. I love bright, colourful ribbons and the way block-print patterns add such charm to a festive table or wrapped gift. Natural foliage is another essential for me. I find bringing greenery inside makes everything feel fresh and alive. These simple touches create a home that feels both welcoming and celebratory, filled with colour, warmth and a bit of playful spirit.'

Molly is a printmaker, textile designer and founder of interior band Molly Mahon



▲ **Wrapping paper** from Molly's block-printing kits, from £38.50, Molly Mahon

◀ **Burgundy bows**, £5 for 6, Sainsbury's

◀ **Shocking Pink 20mm satin ribbon**, £2 for 15m, Hobbycraft

A peek into Anna's colourful Christmas

Meri Meri X Liberty **paper chains** set, £20, Meri Meri



Anna Campbell-Jones *Recycled* paper chains

'I love to reuse decorations year after year, mixing them up in fresh ways, depending on my mood. If a beloved bauble doesn't feel quite right for the tree this year, I'll tuck it into a leafy garland over my old family portraits instead. I always like to decorate my old Chopper bike for a bit of fun, too. But my favourite pieces are the colourful paper chains I made with offcuts from homemade cards some 15 years ago. Draped across my hallway, they create a bold, cheerful statement and a wonderfully festive welcome.'

Anna is an interior designer, retailer and a TV presenter on Scotland's Home of the Year



Photo Andrew Jackson @scottishluminary

Star from holly heart, tree and star hanging decoration set, £10.49 for 3, Gisela Graham

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Gisela Graham Shooting stars

'After spending the entire year working on Christmas, I'm always very excited when December finally arrives and I can decorate my own home. Every year I add a new star, and this year it will be one of our beautiful, patterned tin ones. Straw stars were the very first decoration I made as a child with my mother, so the tradition is strong for me. Plus, they're wonderfully versatile, and can be hung anywhere, from the tree to door handles, and in every room of the house. Once the stars are up, it feels like Christmas!'

Gisela is the creative director and founder of Gisela Graham

Navy velvet magnolia with glitter edge, £2.99, Whittingtons



Lucy Gough Statement flowers

'I've been using these gorgeous, oversized flower picks from Balsam Hill for years, and they remain one of my favourite Christmas decorations. Essentially, they're faux flower heads attached to long stems, which makes them incredibly easy to work with. Each year, I unpack them with joy and layer them through the branches of my tree - no hooks or pins needed. They instantly elevate the look. I own around 20 and, while they were an investment, they'll last decades.'

Lucy is an interior stylist and art director, follow her on Instagram @style_by_lucy

Magnolia Christmas tree picks, £129 for 12, Balsam Hill

Sophie Robinson Colourful paper balls

'Every Christmas, I find such joy in unpacking my box of decorations - it feels like greeting old friends. I've always loved paper decorations, especially the large colourful fold-out stars and balls. They're lightweight, easy to pack away, and create such fabulous visual impact. Over the years I've gathered an eclectic mix of pieces, each with its own story, and I adore how they all come together in a scheme that's completely personal. For me, Christmas decorating is about tradition, nostalgia, and adding joyful bursts of colour.'

Sophie is an interior designer, colour expert and TV presenter. Follow her on Instagram @sophierobinsoninteriors

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Prism stripe paper trees, £16 for 3; paper balls, £22 for 5, both Sophie Robinson at Dunelm

Emily Henson Story-telling ornaments

'My favourite Christmas trees are the ones that are a little bit chaotic, dripping with too many ornaments, a mix of tasteful and tacky, telling a story of a life, rather than a perfectly coordinated colour scheme. Mine is always a multi-coloured mix of old and new decorations, some made years ago by my (now grown) children, vintage bought for photoshoots and added to my own stash, and a few handmade from workshops I've hosted. My tree has been small in recent years due to a renovation, but the decorations with memories attached always come out of the box.'

Emily is an interior stylist, designer and author at emilyhensonstudio.com

Vintage long indented baubles, £13 for 3, Sass & Belle



Emily's memory-filled tree



FESTIVE STYLING IDEAS

Suzy's
handmade
Christmas
trees



Suzy Sankey Home-sewn decorations

'In our house, Christmas decorations mean colour, chaos and fun! I have lots of decorations passed down from my mum and her parents, including vintage glass baubles, with a ballerina being my favourite. I love having no specific theme as it means we can add any decoration we like. I sew these Christmas trees every year and hang them on presents as gift tags so that people can use them on the tree. I have a full garland of them that hangs over our mantelpiece.'

Suzy was a semi-finalist on The Great British Sewing Bee. You can follow her on Instagram @suzyssankeystudio

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Christmas
decoration
sewing kit, £17,
Clara Create

Emma Bridgewater Special dinnerware

'To make the table look beautiful at Christmas, I do as my mum and my grandmothers did, which is to bring out the special china, such as a well-loved platter for the turkey, and a dedicated dish for the pudding. It doesn't need to be the whole table, just a few key pieces. This year, we've launched a striking collection featuring amaryllis, which symbolises beauty and love - perfect for Christmas decorating. I'm looking forward to mixing the new platter in with my vintage dishes.'

Emma is a ceramic designer and founder of Emma Bridgewater



Amaryllis
platter, £70,
medium jar
vase, £85,
both Emma
Bridgewater

Photo Heathcliff O'Malley

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Hazel's
tree full of
childhood
treasures

Dark
amaryllis
striped velvet
ribbon, from
£3.95 per m,
VV Rouleaux

Luxury marbled
Christmas
bauble, £29,
Webb & Gray



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Hazel Gardiner Natural style

'Stored by colour, in tones that match my home, my collection of decorations is ever evolving. Gathered over decades, they include childhood heirlooms, vintage treasures and handmade bows, using VV Rouleaux velvet and marbled baubles, each with a story. As a sustainable floral designer, I gravitate towards natural materials, such as paper, wood, dried fruit and pine cones, all celebrating nature's quiet beauty, and echoing my love of seasonal craft.'

Hazel is a botanical artist, broadcaster and founder of floristry studio Hazel Gardiner Design

Eleanor Bowmer Santa's treat

'Christmas for us is all about those little traditions that make the season so magical. Every year, the kids and I decorate the tree with personalised baubles - this year, we'll be hanging our new alphabet ornaments, which feels so special. But my favourite moment has to be Christmas Eve, when we set out the Santa treat plate together. A mince pie, a glass of milk and, of course, a carrot for the reindeer - it's the kind of ritual that makes the magic feel real for the little ones and brings us all so much joy.'

Eleanor is an artist and designer, and founder of interior brand Eleanor Bowmer



Big Nick Christmas
Eve plate, £25,
Eleanor Bowmer

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Photo Elle Calvey

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Richard O'Gorman *Sparkling fringe*

'My favourite decoration is a pink and red fringe garland I bought from Meri Meri about five years ago – it's so special and the colour combo is just right! I initially bought it to use instead of tinsel on my tree, and it looked incredible. In subsequent years it has functioned as a shelf garland, mantelpiece decoration, and a dramatic scarf for festive lip-syncs! Pink and red is such a sexy colour combo, but it lends itself so perfectly to Christmas – particularly balanced against the green of a real Christmas tree! It makes every set up feel instantly cool (& sparkly!).'

Richard is a mural artist and content creator. Peek inside his multicoloured home on Instagram @househomo

Richard's colour clashing garland is perfect for his maximalist home

FESTIVE STYLING IDEAS



Winter sports mice duo
mini **needle felt kit**,
£9.50, Just Fabrics



Kirstie's
needle-felted
mouse

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Kirstie Duhig *Felted mouse*

'I love our little Christmas mouse! My daughter made him from a needle felting kit she was given about five years ago and, since then, it's become a tradition to make him a new outfit each Christmas. He's had a little felt waistcoat and various knitted and crocheted scarves and hats over the years. He gets the best branch on our Christmas tree and guests always comment on how cute he is. I think his slight wonkiness only adds to his charm!'

Kirstie is the editor of our sister title, HomeStyle magazine

▲ Pink tinsel
fringe garland,
£19.50, Meri Meri

Leoma Harper *Timeless touches*



'My go-to Christmas decorations are a mix of timeless and natural touches that bring warmth and character into our home. I love layering greenery, whether fresh foliage or faux garlands, with plenty of twinkling fairy lights to create a cosy, magical glow. Brass accents, vintage baubles and handmade details add depth and personality, while candles bring that soft, inviting atmosphere. I love creating a festive look that feels effortless, welcoming and full of charm.'

Leoma is an interior stylist. Check out her work on Instagram @interiorsbyleomaharper and @styletheclutter

Miniature stars **string lights**,
£12.50, Cox & Cox



Leoma's festive
table setting

FESTIVE STYLING IDEAS

Greg Penn *Gorgeous garland*

'I make a garland every year! I'm sure it's not the prettiest thing in the world but, much like yours truly, it's very wild and woolly! It starts with me in the garden cutting down lots of foliage, then I add them to a chicken wire base (a great alternative to floristry foam) over the fireplace until the marble is seemingly groaning with the weight. I love the way the scent fills the room, and how it brings the outdoors inside. It eventually goes a bit crispy, and things usually start falling from it, but I'm always surprised by how well it holds up - despite the wood burner being lit every night. The festive period usually starts early for me, though I do try and leave this special task as late as possible - it doesn't really feel like Christmas until it's done!'

Greg is currently restoring his 30-room Georgian home. Follow his progress on Instagram @manwithahammer



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Baby hand or footprint clay moulding kit,
£9.99, The Lovely Keepsake Company

Greg's botanical display changes every year



Michelle Ogundehin *Tiny treasures*

'Every year it has to be a 7ft real tree - I love the scent and even sweeping the needles! I decorate it with a growing collection of baubles with history, everything from my son's first handprint to an ancient angel. It's become a tradition to add a new pair of baubles to it every year, so we now have quite an impressive collection. They're roughly themed in clear glass, white or gold. It's become more of a symbolic memory tree than festive for us, full of stories.'

Michelle is a writer, TV presenter and founder of happyinsidersclub.circle.so



Cosy Christmas stocking, £23,
Sophie Allport

Sophie Allport *Fireplace stockings*

'For me, Christmas is all about those little traditions we come back to every year. I love hanging stockings by the fireplace and bringing out the same decorations that hold so many memories. Our tree is always dressed in a mix of ornaments, bows and pieces my children picked out when they were little, which makes it feel personal. I'll usually add some greenery from the garden, too, which brings the outdoors in and ties everything together.'

Sophie is a homeware designer and founder of Sophie Allport



Chevron Christmas stocking, £5,
B&M



Christmas stocking, £7.55,
Søstrene Grene



Sophie's handmade wreaths always have a distinct character

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Sophie Warren-Smith *Welcoming wreath*

'As a floral artist for weddings, I absolutely have to make myself a wreath every Christmas! The problem I have is deciding what to do – bold and bright? Pared back and foliage only? I tend to end up creating one that feels right for me as I'm making it, with the plants that look best that year. I always start the traditional way, with a base made from moss that's tied onto a frame with string. Then I add foliage, like pine, fir and eucalyptus, in bunches. Sometimes this can be enough, other years I might decide to add pine cones, wax flower, dried fern, ivy and maybe some berries for a joyful burst of colour.'

Sophie is an editorial stylist and creative director of floral design studio @flowers.inside.my.head

Tissue paper garland hanging decoration, £4.99, Ginger Ray



Whinnie Williams *Retro paper decorations*

'For a nostalgic hit of festive fun, I always turn to paper decorations. They're easy to hang, can be recyclable, and have a real vintage vibe. I'll reuse store-bought ones, but also make new ones each year with my family during a 'crafternoon', as I love how paper chains add a sentimental touch. Since paper garlands concertina down, I store a range to suit any theme. This year, I'm embracing 'retromaxxing', with 1950s ice cream parlour shades of tutti frutti blue and bubblegum pink.'

Whinnie is an interior designer and co-founder of Poodle & Blonde

Laurie Davidson *Vintage baubles*

'I have some beautiful bronze glass baubles that I bought years ago from a vintage shop. I use them most years, but tend to change the colours around them. Last year I went with copper and browns, the year before I paired them with rich red. They're super heavy and I love the patina on them. I always take care to wrap them properly at the end of the season.'

Laurie is a writer, editorial stylist and workshop tutor. Keep up to date on her work with fellow stylist, Aurélien Farjon, on Instagram @stylemakerspresent



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Mel's very own light-up wall tree



Mischievous pup, Lyra

Mel Sherwood *Magical wall tree*

'In December 2023, we'd just welcomed a mischievous puppy, so a traditional Christmas tree was out of the question – our vet bills didn't need the boost! Instead, I hung a sparkling light-up tree on the wall and, to my surprise, it was pure magic. The glow filled the room with warmth, and I didn't miss a 'real' tree at all, except for the aroma, so I added a pine-scented diffuser. Now that we're back to our big tree, this twinkling number still shines each year – last Christmas it looked especially gorgeous brightening up our landing.'

Mel is the editor of Your Home magazine



1.8m dual colour LED 2D Christmas tree and star wall light, £29.99, Lights4fun

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Konara Gold crackle baubles, £28 for 4, Nkuku

FESTIVE STYLING IDEAS



Origami **star garland** kit, £14.50, Cambridge Imprint

Hannah Tribe **Origami stars**

'Each year, the cardboard box that contains my origami stars is the first one I look for, but the last one I unpack. I've been building my collection for around five years, making a few more every Christmas. I sometimes get my family involved too; it's a lovely mindful craft to do in the dark evenings. The stars are quite fiddly to fold, so each one ends up with its own personality. I've strung each one with gold embroidery thread to turn them into multi-purpose decorations. They've been hung on doorknobs and used as gift tags, but they always add the perfect finishing touch to my tree.'

Hannah is the style editor of Your Home magazine



Paper stars add colour to Hannah's traditional tree

Sarah Twigg Doyle **Christmas village**



'Unwrapping my little collection of Christmas houses never fails to get me in the festive spirit. Their twinkly windows add the perfect glow, and I usually display them together, creating a little Christmas village. Last year, I invested in some really good-quality remote control-operated battery LED tea lights, to avoid the risk of naked flames around foliage garlands. For the past few years, after the festive period is over, I've removed the greenery but kept the houses displayed for the rest of winter. After all, we need a little extra magic in our lives in the darker months.'

Sarah is an interior and brand stylist, designer, and colour consultant at retwiggd.ie



Sarah's decorative mantel

Matt White ceramic house **tea light holders** with cut-out windows and door, from £20, Click Style



Large handmade **log snowman decorations**, £39.99 each, Oscars Cave on Etsy



Pippa Jameson **DIY snowmen**

'My favourite Christmas decoration is a homemade one that any DIY enthusiast can recreate - snowmen made from logs! It's simply three cuts of horizontal logs screwed together with drill holes for twig arms and a carrot nose, finished with a short log to complete the bobble hat. We leave them outside, dusted with fake snow, even now that my girls are grown. They're meaningful to us because they're handmade, plus they're incredibly cute - and I'm a sucker for Christmas!'

Pippa is an interior stylist, author and founder of the sensoryhome.com



2LG's tree is packed with porcelain treasures



Jordan Cluroe and Russell Whitehead **Porcelain doves**

'We have a collection of white porcelain decorations for our tree, but our favourites are two white turtle doves that we got in New York - they're exactly the same ones from the Home Alone movie! We always look forward to getting them out again each year.'

Jordan and Russell are the creative duo behind 2lgstudio.com

Authentic replica Home Alone **doves**, £13.06 for 2, John Perry Studio Store on Etsy



Cheryl chose to match Frome Porcelain with Hockley Dark Oak

Time to *redesign*?

A kitchen upgrade doesn't need to be complicated when you have expert help

The kitchen is the hardest-working room. It's where you cook and eat, work, entertain, and it's where homework gets done. With so much going on, a redesign can feel daunting. Enter Howdens, the UK's number one trade kitchen supplier.

Your kitchen, sorted!

Once you decide to upgrade, questions arise. How do you make the most of the space? Which style? What colour? How will it all fit? Don't hit the panic button! Inspiration is close at hand.

First, find a trusted local tradesperson to understand what's possible. Then head to your local Howdens Depot or Expo showroom, or try the Kitchen Style Finder online. With kitchens ranging from best-on-budget to luxury, you'll find plenty of choice. Next, Howdens' free design service takes over. After a home visit, your expert designer will create a 3D plan tailored to your lifestyle, space and budget. That's exactly what content creator Cheryl did when she

decided to replace her family's 20-year-old kitchen. 'Designing a kitchen that works is really hard!' she says. 'I wanted a breakfast cupboard, a full-size fridge-freezer, and a clean, uncluttered look. The larders were also a must-have!'

Cheryl chose Frome, Howdens' newest and most contemporary Shaker kitchen. Its narrow frame, shallow panel and smooth finish gave her the pared-back style she wanted. Frome can be easily customised and Cheryl loves the bespoke bifold breakfast cupboard that helps her cope with busy school mornings.

Service that matters

As a trade-only business, you'll need a tradesperson to buy from Howdens. However, your local depot team can help you find one if needed. The result? A perfect fit, backed by a 25-year cabinet guarantee. And because everything is available from local stock, your fitter can always get what they need even when plans change, so the work can carry on without delay.



Cheryl's fitters had the expertise to fit the kitchen to a high standard

'There's no way we could have achieved this level of detail without our fitters,' says Cheryl – who's delighted with her finished Frome kitchen.



To discover more about Howdens and Cheryl's kitchen, and to book a free home survey and design consultation visit [Howdens.com](https://www.howdens.com)

'It's sociable and perfect for festive celebrations'

By choosing a cohesive colour palette and elegant panelling, **Vicky Thomas** has created a traditional look with a modern twist



BEFORE

Step inside...

WHO LIVES HERE I'm Vicky Thomas, 36. I work part-time at Aldi and also run a part-time floristry business. I live with my partner, Luke Morgan, 37, a qualified carpenter and plasterer, and our children, Cole, 13, and Amber, 11. Our home is a four-bedroom 1920s terrace in Blackwood, Caerphilly, and we moved here in November 2019. I share more on Instagram @ourwoodfield3storey.

WHAT WAS UPDATED? We fitted shelving and cupboards, installed a log burner, and added a statement mural.

WHY THE CHANGE? Half of it felt like a walkway, rather than an integral part of the living room.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE? It's taken four years to get to this.

TOTAL COST £2,586

Vicky and Luke had been happily renting for 11 years but, with only two bedrooms and a growing family, the couple needed more space. 'I loved the high ceilings and generous room sizes of this house, and the decor was quite bland, which was a bonus because it meant I could add my own personality,' says Vicky. But what almost put her off buying the property was that the porch opens directly into the living room. 'I really disliked the thought of walking straight into the open-plan space with no hall to create a buffer zone,' she says. However, the pros of the house outweighed the cons, so the couple decided to make it work.

THE PROJECT

'The living room was completely lacking in character, so our first job was to attach picture rails, coving and a ceiling



The ornate peacock adds a touch of quirky fun to Vicky's festive styling

'I've always been happy to take risks with colour as, in the end, it's only paint, and most of my ideas have paid off. And I like to do the same with my Christmas decorations. Using the oversized blue flowers gives the tree a statement look, and takes it from traditional to contemporary,' says Vicky



LIVING ROOM MAKEOVER

rose, which immediately transformed the space,' explains Vicky. 'An ugly under-stair cupboard only used up half of the space and was flush to the staircase, so felt quite intrusive while not giving much useful storage. We quickly ripped that out.' Vicky initially went dark with the colour scheme, painting the walls in Sapphire Salute by Dulux, a rich navy shade, complemented by fresh white woodwork. 'The large bay lets the light flood in during the day, so I felt the room could take the bold

'Because the room doesn't have a lot of pattern, I wanted to add some interest to the hearth,' says Vicky. 'I looked at lots of samples, but I knew this colourway and elegant design would complement the rest of the room, without overpowering it'

Fireplace focus

Tiling the back of the fireplace as well as the hearth creates a stylish focal point, but make sure that tiles are fireproof, or they may be prone to cracking or discolouring



'The shelves were always intended for display because we've got plenty of hidden storage below. I like to change the look seasonally, and sometimes more often than that, as I'm always hunting for unique pieces in car boot sales and charity shops,' says Vicky

Feature and additional styling Lisa Moses Styling Vicky Thomas Photos Caroline Mardon



Bow boost

Tie an oversized velvet bow around a simple seasonal wreath in a colour that complements your scheme for an easy update

Although the under-stair cupboards act as hallway storage and are full of shoes, by filling the shelves with stylish accessories, and positioning the drinks trolley here, Vicky has zoned the open-plan space to create a sociable bar area that feels totally integral

'The mural was cut to size with a bit extra for wastage and was easy to fit as it's a paste-the-wall design, so no messy wallpaper pasting tables needed,' says Vicky. 'I love the way the colours pop against the neutral background'

My style tips

KEEP IT SIMPLE Use battery-operated wall lights as a hassle-free solution to achieving ambient lighting, without the need for hardwiring. They're also easy to install, and remove.

MIX AND MATCH Add fresh foliage to a faux garland to bring in that festive scent.

BE BRAVE WITH COLOUR Have confidence and give your ideas a go. It's only paint and you can always change it!

look, while creating a cosy space in the evening,' she says.

WHAT WE DID

'The alcoves were the perfect space for built-in storage, so I showed Luke some inspiration images, and he made them out of MDF, adding delicate panelling and fitting shelves above,' says Vicky. 'I wanted to mirror the design under the stairs to bring the two spaces together, while also creating a fun bar area, so we pushed the cupboards back into the recess to give a bit more space. It makes the bespoke unit feel intentional and a part of the room, rather than an afterthought.'

After a few years, Vicky decided to update the look, so she painted the





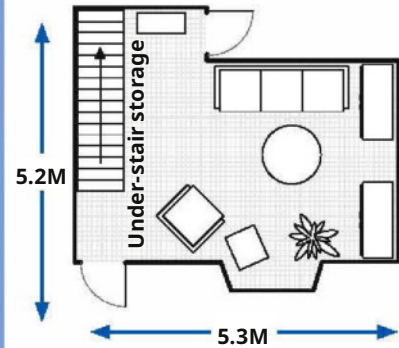
'I wanted there to be a sense of flow between all the different zones, so used the same panelling throughout,' says Vicky. Statement gold lighting draws attention to the elegant symmetrical lines of the panels

As the stairs face the front door, Vicky wanted them to impress. 'We replaced the modern square spindles with a traditional style,' Vicky says, and particularly loves dressing this space at Christmas. 'I like using garland swags to create a relaxed look, and I'm always sure to mirror the decorations on the tree'



Make this!
See p32

ROOM PLAN



THE DETAILS

Materials for fitted units	£550
Paint	£152
Sofa and coffee tables	£769
Mural	£86
Log burner	£949
Tiles	£80
TOTAL	£2,586

Shopping list

Habitat Chesterfield velvet 3-seater **sofa** in Blue, £675, Argos. For similar, try machine-washable traditional boho area **rug**, £99, H&M Home. For similar, try Adam Abbey **fireplace** in Stone Effect, £284, Fireplace World. For similar, try Kerala hexagonal Aqua **tiles**, £64.99 per sq m, Tiles & Stone Direct. For similar, try Buddy 5 wide **log burner**, £949, Stove Buddy. For similar, try wireless **wall sconces**, £59.99 for 2, Pridola Design. Beige frill **cushion cover**, £8 for 2, Online Home Shop. Dulux walls and ceilings matt **emulsion** in Nutmeg White, £36 for 5L; Valspar premium walls and ceilings interior matt **emulsion** in Frosted Sage, £52 for 5L, both B&Q. Blue Heron by J.J. Audubon wallpaper **mural**, £42.72 per sq m, Hovia. For similar, try artificial olive leaf **wreath**, £25, Dunelm. For similar, try Emerald artificial poinsettia **flowers** with clip, £3.89 for 3, WeRChristmas. For similar, try Veneta Gold kitchen **trolley**, £89.99, Beliani. For similar, try Art Deco **table lamp** with fringes, £199, Sophie MacBain. For similar, try White Homcom marble round **nest of tables**, £89.99 for 2, Tesco.

woodwork a deep green, complemented with soft white walls with a hint of pink. 'I also wanted to add interest to the large wall above the sofa, and panelling was a quick, easy win,' she says.

HIGHS & LOWS

'Replacing the old electric fire with the log burner was a nightmare, because the property is on three storeys, so it was a task getting the flue through the chimney to the top of the house,' remembers Vicky. 'Ripping everything out to make the aperture created a huge amount of dust, too, and it also revealed a nest that needed removing.' Luke then attached the fire surround, found on Facebook Marketplace, and tiled the hearth. 'As he can turn his hand to any

DIY task, we've saved a fortune in labour costs,' says Vicky.

THE FINAL DETAILS

'I initially considered putting a large picture in a frame above the sofa but, while looking online for inspiration, I came across the beautiful bird mural. It pulls together all the colours in the room,' says Vicky. 'It was easy to put up because it was made to fit the panel perfectly.' Vicky is now very happy that she didn't discount buying this house. 'The way we've redesigned the space means it doesn't feel like we're stepping into a corridor,' she reflects. 'Instead, we've got a zoned open-plan room that gives us different areas to relax as a family or socialise with friends!' 



BEADED decoration

Trim your tree, or a garland, with a bejewelled ornament inspired by **Vicky's** velvet heart

Shopping list

- plain paper ● pencil ● burgundy velvet fabric
- dressmaker's scissors ● needle ● thread
- selection of clear and pale gold jewellery beads
- pins or fabric clips ● sewing machine ● toy stuffing ● hot glue gun and glue sticks ● gold braid
- gold metallic embroidery floss

How to...

1 Draw a heart shape onto a piece of paper, or search online for a simple heart shape vector and print it out. It should measure approximately 12cm at its widest point and 12cm from top to bottom. Cut out the shape to create a template for your decoration. Use the paper template to cut two heart shapes from burgundy velvet fabric.

2 Use a needle and thread to stitch a selection of small glass beads to the top section of both heart pieces on the right side (RS) of the fabric, making sure you stitch beads at least 1cm away from the edges.

3 Once you've added the beads, pin or clip the hearts together with RS facing. Using a sewing machine, stitch a 1cm seam all the way around the perimeter of the hearts to join them, leaving a 4cm gap unstitched along one straight side. Carefully snip into the curved edges to help ease them, but don't cut into your stitches. Turn the heart RS out. Fill with toy stuffing, then slipstitch the gap closed.

4 Use a glue gun to attach a length of braid all the way around the circumference of the heart, starting at the bottom of the heart, to cover the seam.

5 Cut 20 16cm lengths of gold embroidery floss and gather them together into a skein on your work surface, so the ends all match up neatly. Tie a 20cm length of embroidery floss around the middle of your skein, then pick it up with the loose ends of the knot so that the skein folds in half.

6 Make the 'head' of the tassel by wrapping another piece of gold floss around the folded skein, near the top. Wrap it around a few times to form a thick band, then secure with a discreet knot. Trim the ends of the tassel so that they are level.

7 Stitch the lengths of floss you used to tie the tassel to the bottom of the fabric heart and trim away the loose ends once secure. Finally, thread a needle with a 20cm length of gold floss and thread it through the top of the heart, tying the ends to form a hanging loop.



'I love to make a statement at Christmas, and really enjoy making this stair swag look opulent'



Add a contrasting coloured velvet on the back if you wish

A gift for nature from **Finches Friend**

The science is now clear! Feed dry food, from a perch, to reverse wild bird disease.

Traditional feeders can spread deadly diseases, which has wiped out over 60% of UK Greenfinches. The science is now clear, new products are needed to save birds from the danger.

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Explore our high welfare products only from finchesfriend.com

Scan for more info on the problem and how our products help!



Hanging Feeders



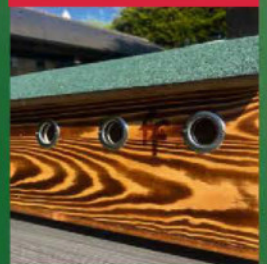
Peanut Feeders



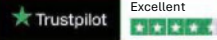
Window Feeders



Nest Boxes



Stop squirrels & parakeets!



finchesfriend.com

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- Video guides



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Photo: Matt Antrabus



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150+ Christmas gifts

to spread joy this season

Thoughtful presents to inspire, delight and surprise your nearest and dearest!



Feature Lara Watson Photo Getty Images NB All prices correct at time of print.

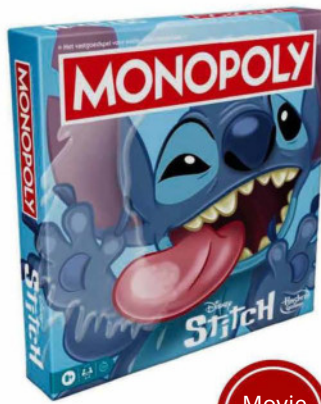


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▶ Wild animals finger puppets, £5 for 5, flyingtiger.com

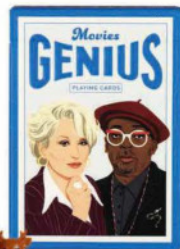
▶ Stitch Monopoly, currently £23.99, amazon.co.uk



▼ Our Family Saves Christmas personalised book, from £24.99, wonderbly.com/uk



▶ Gift Republic Oh Deer stacking game, £8.99, giftskidswant.com



▶ Movie Genius playing cards, £9.99, laurenceking.com

Movie night



▶ Ariete Partytime retro popcorn maker with serving bowl, currently £33.99, wayfair.co.uk



▼ Crafty 1,000 piece puzzle, £16.99, thenorthernline.co.uk



Family fun

Get the generations together for games, great food and laughs throughout the festive season and beyond



▶ Mini tabletop snooker game set, £12.95, rexlondon.com



▶ Blue Orange Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza card game, £10, argos.co.uk



▶ Personalised wooden family pizza cutter, £12.99, giftspersonalised.co.uk



▼ Rosewood Brown Bear cat bed, £24, dunelm.com



▶ Dog Christmas bandana, £12, talkingtables.co.uk



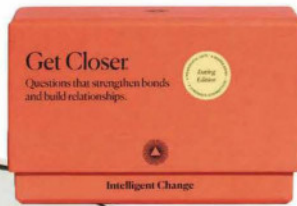
▶ Kodak Ektar H35 film camera, £49.99, jessops.com



▶ Noughts and crosses, £9.99, souzu.co.uk



◀ **Nights in coupon book**, £12.99, cupidly.co.uk



◀ **Intelligent Change Get Closer dating edition**, currently £27.52, amazon.co.uk



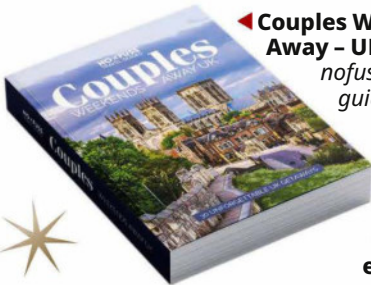
▲ **Pixi On the Glow blush**, £18, marksandspencer.com



◀ **Black bow slogan plate**, £2.50, bmstores.co.uk



▲ **Shrimps x Oliver Bonas striped glass coupes**, £34.50 for 2, oliverbonas.com



◀ **Couples Weekends Away - UK**, £19.99, nofustravelguides.com



◀ **Fresh Cream eau de toilette**, from £23, philosophybeauty.co.uk



▶ **Retro Gold cutlery set**, £60, my-secret-boutique.co.uk

▼ **Men's Leather single plaited wrap bracelet**, £25, estellabartlett.com

▼ **Island Dusk eau de parfum**, £58, arran.com



▼ **Margarita: classic + spicy**, £26 for 8 cans, mothdrinks.com



◀ **Portobello scalloped serving bowls**, £28 for 2, thewhitecompany.com



First spark

◀ **Our First Date map print**, £19.95, minimalwall.co.uk



◀ **Gold stripy bow table candles**, £18 for 2, merimeri.co.uk



◀ **Double bow stud earrings**, £12, vam.ac.uk/shop



▶ **Rose and lily bouquet**, £24.99, prestige-flowers.co.uk

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▲ Dog park **door mat**, £16.95, rexlondon.com



▲ Real wood **bird box** house with Copper roof, £20.99, homescapesonline.com

► Burnt Copper knitted **gloves**, £15, shop.nationaltrust.org.uk



▲ Coral Reef **Pom hat**, £28, weareoi.com



▲ Caroline Gardner check borg **hot water bottle** in Lilac, £28, johnlewis.com

► Pink & Red blanket stitch **fingerless mitten gloves**, £25, oliverbonas.com



▲ Rufus & Rosie Ombre padded **dog lead**, £6, jollyes.co.uk



▲ Revival **flask** in Green, £30, thermos.co.uk



▲ OCOOPA **hand warmers**, currently £21.24, amazon.co.uk

Winter adventures

For those who love to cosy up – and go out to come back in again! Not forgetting the four-legged sidekick, either...

◀ Walton & Co cosy check **throw** in Slate Blue, £24, notrunofthemill.com



► Men's Dandy Argyle **socks**, £25 for 5 pairs, joebrowns.co.uk



► Pink **scarf**, £29.99, laredoute.co.uk



► Green & Wild's Delilah the Duckess eco **dog toy**, £8.99, charleychau.com



▼ Winter Romance **Fruit Tea** No.518, from £3.90, trueateacompany.co.uk



◀ The Legendary **food jar with spork** in Hammertone Clay, £44, uk.stanley1913.com



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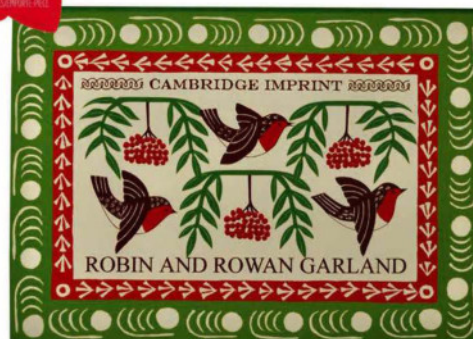
▲ Celestial Hare **mini embroidery kit**, currently £13.95, amazon.co.uk

▼ Folk Christmas **paper chains**, £7, talkingtables.co.uk

▼ Wilton mini wreath **cookie cutter set**, £3.49, thecakedecoratingcompany.co.uk

▼ Make Your Own Fairy Tale: **Snow White**, £12.99, laurenceking.com

▲ Trimits **needle felting mice kit**, currently £9.79, amazon.co.uk



▲ Robin and rowan **garland**, £24, cambridgeimprint.co.uk



▲ Mushroom **DIY kit**, £4.54, sostrenegrene.com



▲ DIY stackable **nutcracker mugs** with paint, £12, flyingtiger.com

▶ Traditional **gingerbread house kit**, £15.99, lakeland.co.uk



Fun for all ages

▼ Macramé **rainbow kit**, £19.95, pigletandchestnut.com



▼ Mulling **spice kit**, £4 for 2 sachets, spicekitchen.co.uk



▼ Nativity **paper craft Advent calendar**, £27, merimeri.co.uk



▲ Leafy wreath **table runner kit**, £63.50, theindianblockprintco.com



▲ Sclupd **mosaic kids' craft kit**, £39, johnlewis.com

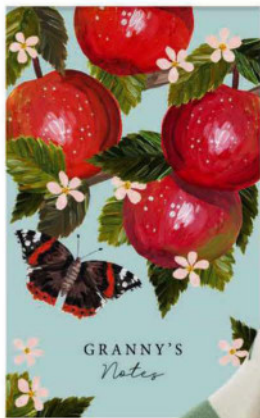
◀ Sew Your Own **Sausage Dog**, £9.95, rexlondon.com



Craft club

Creative kits and inspiration for crafting pals and kids alike – the perfect way to brighten Twixtmas

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▶ Personalised Butterfly & Apple **notebook**, £8.50, makingmeadows.co.uk



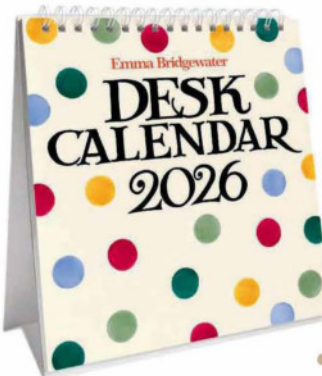
▶ Heathers floral bamboo **socks**, £8, socktopus.com



▶ Luna star **hair lights**, £10, oliverbonas.com



▶ **Coffee scoop** with coffee bag clip, £6.95, rexlondon.com



▶ Polka Dot **desk calendar** 2026, £7.99, emmabridgewater.co.uk

▶ James Barker Illustration Japanese vase wooden **pin badge**, £8, notjustashop.arts.ac.uk



▶ e.l.f. Squeeze Me **lip balm**, £5, superdrug.com

▶ Personalised name leather **keyring**, £8, rheamore.co.uk

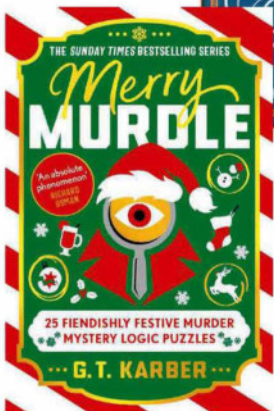
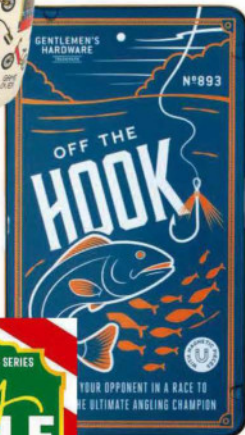


Personal touch



▶ Retro 80s print **mug**, £6.99, tenovuscancer.care.org.uk

▶ Gentlemen's Hardware Off the Hook **game**, £10, johnlewis.com



▶ **Merry Murdle** by GT Karber, £8.99, waterstones.com



▶ **Gingerbread men**, £9.95, hotelchocolat.com



▶ Perfect Potting **garden gift set**, £9.95, annabeljames.co.uk

▶ **Positive Potato** official emotional support gift, £8.99, amazon.co.uk



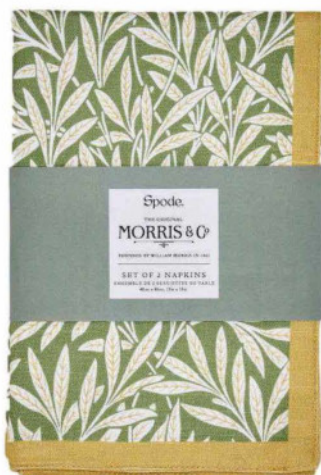
▶ Bright plush Christmas present **ornament**, from £10, next.co.uk



▶ A Little Something **bath fizzer collection**, £5, boots.com



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▲ Morris & Co Willow **napkins**, £21 for 2, spode.co.uk

▼ **Mulled wine**, £7.59, lymebaywinery.co.uk



▲ Gold metal **glass charms**, £4.99 for 6, shop.giselagraham.co.uk

► Luscombe **Mulled Winter Warmer**, £5.05, abelandcole.co.uk



▲ Fratepietro Bella di Cerignola DPO **green olives**, £8.65, finecheese.co.uk



◀ Blue Swirl **gin glasses**, £29.50 for 2, oliverbonas.com



▲ Festive **cocktail stirrers**, £20 for 4, thewhitecompany.com

► 12 Days of Christmas **biscuits tin**, £15, cartwrightandbutler.co.uk



► Denmoza **artificial cactus with flowers** in patterned pot, £12.99, homescapenonline.com



◀ Mrs Bridges Trio **condiment gift set**, £10, matalan.co.uk



◀ Red Leopard Love print **apron**, £34, rockettstgeorge.co.uk



▼ Manhattan limited-edition **shaker set**, £35, rustybarrel.co.uk



▼ Winter Fairisle **platter**, £12, dunelm.com



◀ Ripple glass **vase with flowers**, £14, bmstores.co.uk



► London Dry **Gin** - Pine, £35, gininatin.co.uk



It's party time!

Thank your hosts, or surprise anyone who loves to party, with these celebration-ready presents

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▼ Shindigg family matching Christmas pyjamas in Red & Navy check, from £27.50, notonthehighstreet.com



▲ Christmas slogan plaque, £2.50, bmstores.co.uk



▲ Starry Sky ticket, £4.50, aprilandwhite.co.uk



▼ Faux shearling mule slippers, £30, accessorize.co.uk

▼ Gold leaf whisky tumblers, £14 for 2, dibor.co.uk



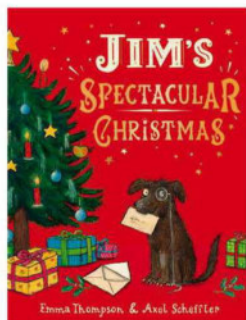
▼ Original large jar Christmas Eve candle, £29.99, yankeecandle.co.uk



▼ Scapa 10 Year Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky, £55, waitrosecellar.com

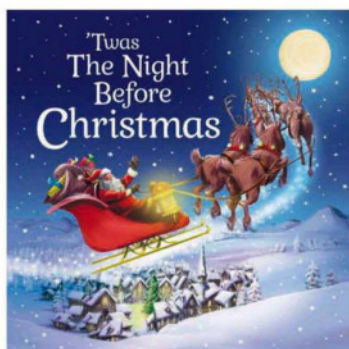


► Salla votive Black & Gold candle holder, from £6.95, thewisteriatree.co.uk



▼ Jim's Spectacular Christmas by Emma Thompson & Axel Scheffler, £8.99, vam.ac.uk/shop

▼ 'Twas the Night Before Christmas book, £4.99, bents.co.uk



Christmas Eve

Build the excitement even more with these fun finds – spread joy for the young and the young at heart



▲ St Clements mince pies, £14.50 for a box of 6, dukehill.co.uk

► Wooden Christmas Eve serving board, £8.99, tenovuscancercare.org.uk



▼ Gold key tree decoration, £1, poundland.co.uk

► Christmas hot water bottle with festive penguin cover, £20, onlinehomeessentials.co.uk



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◀ Glass football decoration, £5, marksandspencer.com

▶ Red sequin antlers headband, £4.99, shop.gisela-graham.co.uk

Save 20% see p50!

▼ Twist stand mirror, £4.50, primark.com

▼ Green glitter ball, £1.99, shop.houseofmarbles.com

▶ House of Marbles wooden cup and ball toy, £4.95, rockawaytoys.co.uk

◀ Christmas Santa drink cup, £3, bmstores.co.uk

▼ Shine Bright aventurine crystal star bracelet, £4.99, tenovuscancercare.org.uk

▼ Meadow Rabbit & Fox mini hand cream, £4, wrendaledesigns.co.uk

Stocking fillers

Tempting treasures for little ones and big kids, all costing a fiver or under!

▲ Origami sticky notes, £2.95, theredsquirrel.co.uk

◀ Starburst hair clip, £4, vam.ac.uk/shop

▲ Plush doll with antlers, £3, poundland.co.uk

Little luxury



▲ Cadbury Dairy Milk Christmas winter wonderland bar, £2, sainsburys.co.uk



◀ Green Christmas tea lights, £3.50, matalan.co.uk

▶ Mini colourful racing car construction kit, £3.95, rexlondon.com



▲ Hot chocolate bomb with marshmallows, £2.80, sostrenegrene.com



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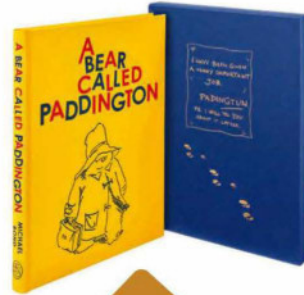
► **Gentlemen's fragrance collection**, £50, penhaligons.com



► **Father Christmas surprise gift reveal scratch card**, £4.25, makingmeadows.co.uk



► **A Bear Called Paddington**, £49.95, folio.society.com



► **Laura Ashley Champagne Gold Uffington Roses long line robe**, £55, next.co.uk



Foodie fave

► **Santa's sack hamper**, £49.99, prestige.hampers.co.uk

► **Vinyl record player turntable** with built-in Bluetooth receiver, currently £37.99, amazon.co.uk



► **Long sleeve cord shirt** in Emerald Green, £55, fatface.com



► **Red check baby dress & tights set**, £14, matalan.co.uk



Something special

Blow their socks off on Christmas morning with these extra-special presents

► **JBL Tune T720 Blue bluetooth headphones**, £39.99, hmv.com



► **Jellycat Amuseables Nordic spruce Christmas tree**, £32.95, temptationgifts.com



► **Jouet kids ribbed plush rocking horse** with sound in Grey, £38.99, robertdyas.co.uk



► **Present sleigh**, £5, bmstores.co.uk



► **The Chocolate wreath box**, £49.95, hotelchocolat.com



► **Hornby Santa Express train set**, £39.99, johnlewis.com



► Lindt Lindor shortbread truffles, £7.50 for 200g, [tesco.com](https://www.tesco.com)



► Pheasant olive picks, £29.95, [annabeljames.co.uk](https://www.annabeljames.co.uk)



► HKLiving cheese knives gift set, £33, [idyllhome.co.uk](https://www.idyllhome.co.uk)



A cut above

► Stainless steel cocktail tool set & marble stand in Gold/White, £40, [johnlewis.com](https://www.johnlewis.com)



► Large glass sweetie plate, £30, [coxandcox.co.uk](https://www.coxandcox.co.uk)



► The Wine Game, £19.99, [laurenceking.com](https://www.laurenceking.com)



► Pear, date & cognac chutney, £3.25, [snowdoniacheese.co.uk](https://www.snowdoniacheese.co.uk)



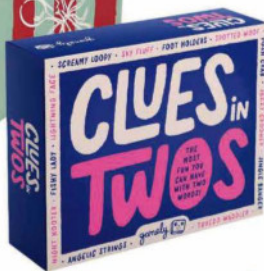
► Vintage Bruton Beauty Cheddar in a gift box, £15, [godminster.com](https://www.godminster.com)



► Christmas trivia, £5, [talkingtables.co.uk](https://www.talkingtables.co.uk)



► Clues in Twos, currently £14.99, [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)



After dinner

Keep the merriment going with cheese, chocolates, liqueur and entertainment!

► Mixed trio box, £28.50, [christopherscordials.com](https://www.christopherscordials.com)



► Confetti glass tumblers, £10.50 for 2, [habitat.co.uk](https://www.habitat.co.uk)



► Glass cake stand & dome, £45, [dibor.co.uk](https://www.dibor.co.uk)



► Luxury cheese biscuit sharing box, £18, [thedifferentkind.com](https://www.thedifferentkind.com)



► Mulled Wine candle, £25, [homecountyco.com](https://www.homecountyco.com)



► Anthon Berg chocolate liqueurs, £12.99, [dobbies.com](https://www.dobbies.com)



SecuENTRY
Smart Door Lock,
£169.99, BURG-
WÄCHTER



Be snug, stay safe

With Christmas coming and winter rolling in now is a good time to consider updating home security

Celebrating Christmas with friends and family is one of the greatest festive joys. It can also mean spending long periods of time away from home, potentially leaving expensive gifts under the tree. Unfortunately, thieves can take advantage of darker evenings and empty houses over the Christmas and New Year period, so now is a good time to update and strengthen your home security. One size does not fit all when it comes to protection, however, so let's get wise about keeping your home and valuables as safe as possible this Christmas, throughout the rest of winter, and all year long with security experts, Burg-Wächter.

Getting smart about security

German brand Burg-Wächter is a leading safe and security specialist with a wide range of products, from locks to kits to smart solutions designed to protect your home, inside and out. When it comes to home security, Burg-Wächter recommends a layered approach.

Layering your security means using a combination of different products to provide the strongest possible protection. For example, the solution for securing your front door won't be the same as the protection needed for your garage.

To meet different needs, Burg-Wächter has developed a range of 12 different security kits, the innovative

secuENTRY electronic door lock system and the Expert safe.

A solution for every problem

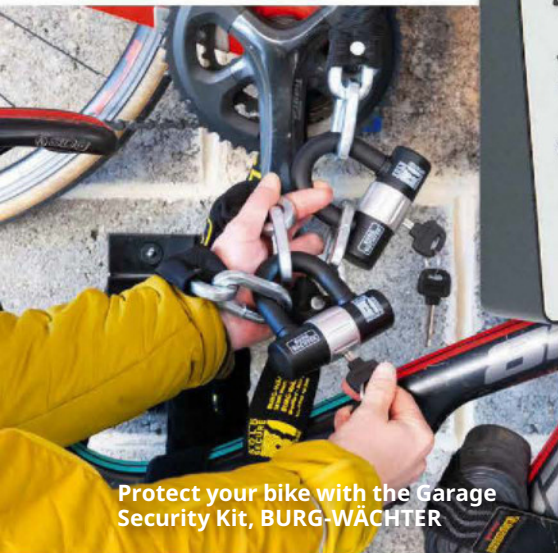
Each of Burg-Wächter's 12 security kits provides a solution for everyday protection. Start your layers of security outside – safeguard your outdoor furniture, protect a motorbike or bicycle, or keep your valuables safe while travelling. Every kit is specifically designed to suit each purpose – you'll find everything you need in one box. You'll also find Burg-Wächter kits for the BBQ, shed and garage.

Your front door is the main threshold to your home, so securing it is a top





**Expert Safe
Range from £279,
BURG-WÄCHTER**



**Protect your bike with the Garage
Security Kit, BURG-WÄCHTER**



**SecuENTRY Active 7700
smart key turner £169.99 and
optional keypad from £74.99,
BURG-WÄCHTER**

priority. Burg-Wächter has developed the innovative electronic door lock secuENTRY. The newly launched system allows you to open the door via the free BURGsmart app, or with a six-digit code, or a fingerprint with the optional keypad. While it offers convenience and peace of mind, it also retains the benefits of a traditional lock.

Matt Parkes, marketing manager at Burg-Wächter, explains: 'SecuENTRY is installed over the interior side of an existing cylinder within the door. Using the original bolts, secuENTRY's powerful, energy-efficient motor rotates the key when activated, easily unlocking and relocking the door as

required. Internal 'open' and 'close' buttons allow for convenient keyless operation, while a manual metal rotary knob provides mechanical emergency opening if needed.'

When it comes to protecting valuables, Burg-Wächter provides specialised safe expertise. Its Expert Safe offers reassuring protection with a solid bolt system and integrated anti-drill design; it's constructed from fire-resistant material too.

Approach home security with a variety of bespoke solutions and you'll enjoy the best protection possible, so you can get snug and cosy for Christmas, knowing your home is as safe as houses.

**For more information,
visit burg.biz**

STOP, THIEF!

For most, Christmas is a time of giving. Sadly for thieves it's the season for taking. Official MET reports reveal that there was a 17% rise in burglaries in December in 2023, compared to the summer months. Time to take precautions...

1. Invest in light timers to create the illusion that you're at home when out.
2. Arrange with neighbours to bring in deliveries left outside (and return the favour) to stop opportunistic theft.
3. Layer security using a combination of different kinds of protection: smart locks, motion sensors and a safe.
4. Lock up sheds and garages with Burg-Wächter's bespoke kits.
5. Think twice about showing expensive gifts or announcing trips away on social media.



★ SAVE 20% at ★ Gisela Graham

Transform your home this Christmas with a bit of magic from Gisela Graham – and take 20% off with this special discount

To redeem

Simply use the code **YHSXGGL20** to save 20% online at shop.giselagraham.co.uk. Don't delay! Offer ends 12th December 2025

As a special gift for the season of joy, we've teamed up with our friends at Gisela Graham to offer you 20% off the entire range at shop.giselagraham.co.uk!

Famous for truly enchanting Christmas decor, Gisela Graham has hundreds of sumptuous goodies on the website, from baubles to wreaths, and everything in between. And for the trendsetters among you, be sure to linger in the Nostalgia collection – the vintage-feel theme, with plenty of

red, gold and green, is set to be 2025's hottest festive look.

This year, we're also excited about Gisela Graham's first-ever collectable tableware range. Every Christmas, from now on, there will be a new design in the collection, all made to be mixed and matched beautifully with previous years' pieces. This first set is the whimsically illustrated 'Santa & the Tree', and you can select from a host of items including plates, glassware, jugs and table linen. Happy shopping!



TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1 This offer is open to adults aged 18 and over and exclusively to readers of *Your Home* and *HomeStyle* magazines. 2 This offer is valid from 00:01 on 11th November 2025 – 23:59 on 12th December 2025. Orders outside this period will not be eligible for a discount. 3 To qualify for the 20% discount, readers must order via shop.giselagraham.co.uk using the discount code YHSXGGL20. 4 The discount code is only valid at shop.giselagraham.co.uk. Offer valid only on full price items. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer codes. 5 Offer is available in the UK Mainland only. 6 Shipping fees apply on all orders, or as specified on shop.giselagraham.co.uk at the time of purchase, and the discount is not applicable to the cost of delivery.

Reader HOMES

Take a peek inside reader homes, filled with festive finds and clever decorating ideas



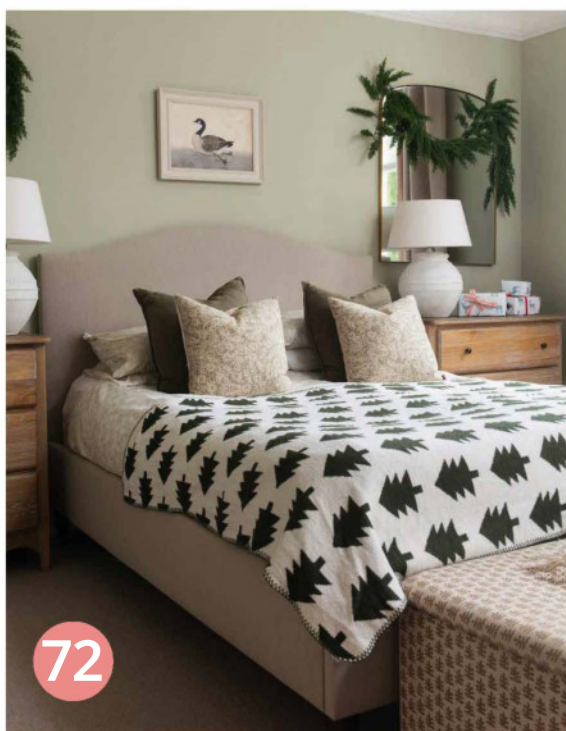
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▲ Jackie downsized to her country cottage-style home, but she still goes big on festive decor

▼ Globetrotting Claire's Carlisle pad is full of far-flung treasures – and perfect for entertaining



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▲ Unfazed by the renovation work, Rachael's Edwardian property is now fit for family life

PLUS IDEAS TO STEAL

71



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Terrace transformation

‘It takes a week to decorate, but it’s worth it!’

Styling her home around classic pieces of furniture and unique accessories sourced from all over the world gives **Claire Boyle** a foundation to go all out with Christmas decor

Before settling in Carlisle, Claire Boyle and her husband, Kieran, travelled the world for work, but when Kieran’s contract in Houston, Texas, ended, the couple decided to move back home. ‘I’m originally from Newcastle, and Kieran is from Ireland, so we didn’t know this area,’ says Claire. ‘However, Kieran’s work brought us here and, because of the different education systems in the US and England, Callum was overdue starting school, so we had to find a place quickly.’ This house, which had been standing empty for a year, was the only one for sale in the catchment area, and Claire admits to disliking it when she first walked in. ‘I didn’t get ‘the feeling’ that people talk about as it felt so cold and lacking in love,’ she remembers. ‘The house was also full of dirty red carpets and ugly floral wallpaper, but we had no other options, so we put in an offer 10 minutes after the viewing.’



▲ It was a case of head over heart when Claire and Kieran bought this house, but they’ve since transformed it into a family home they love



DINING AREA

Claire has gone for a 'more is more' approach for her festive decor, but choosing to stick to a simple palette of mixed metallics with traditional greenery has given her style a cohesive, curated look.

OUR MUST HAVES Modern emulsion in Railings, £63 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. For similar, try Athena reversible Persian rug, from £349, West Elm. For similar, try Edessa bone inlay cabinet, £519, Lush Home Interiors. For similar, try Mandala wall panel, £395, Cox & Cox



▲ 'It usually takes a week to dress the house, but I absolutely love it, and it makes everything look so joyful. I normally start on 1st December because it's such a mission, but it's nice to have a month to enjoy it,' says Claire

Double aspect

Placing the Christmas tree in the alcove allows it to be enjoyed from both the dining and living areas

◀ The family's oversized Christmas tree takes pride of place in the middle of the open-plan living room-diner, though Claire admits that she has to move a lot of furniture around to get it into this spot



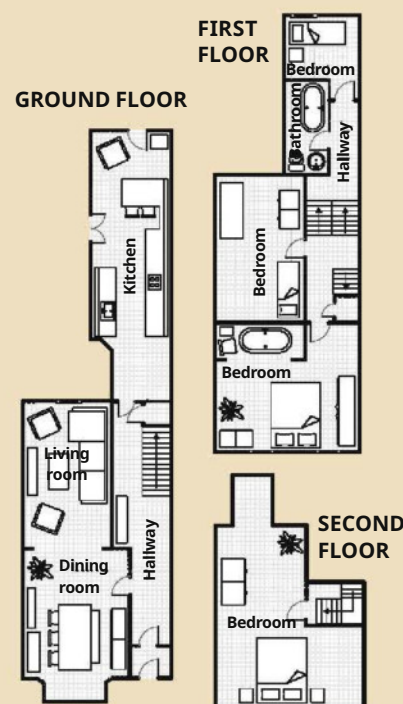
Come on in...

WE ARE Claire Boyle, 42, @camden_house1886, a teacher, and I live with my husband, Kieran Fegam, 46, a manufacturing director, and our two boys, Callum, 10, and Evan, six.

OUR HOME IS a four-bedroom Victorian mid-terrace townhouse in Carlisle, Cumbria, which we bought in February 2019.

MY FAVOURITE ROOM IS the open-plan living and dining room. It feels so welcoming and it's a great space for entertaining.

MY STYLE IS timeless, classic and free from trends, with a curation of old and new. I'm a firm believer in buy once, buy well, and I like to sit antique and vintage finds next to handcrafted, contemporary pieces.



REAL HOME

LIVING ROOM

'A lot of our American furniture is oversized, but the Victorian proportions of this house allowed us to fit everything in, with a bit of rejigging,' says Claire.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Hopkins tall **bookcase** in Oak, £650, Habitat. For similar, try Claude tonal chenille corner chaise **sofa**, £999, Dunelm. For similar, try Kaliyah oriental area **rug**, from £38.99, Wayfair

▼ **'I love dark colours as they feel so cosy, but I've warmed up the look by choosing plenty of pattern, complemented with soft cream furniture and wooden accessories,' says Claire**

UPDATING AND REPLACING

The kitchen had to be replaced sooner rather than later because the cupboard doors were hanging off and the cabinets were mouldy. There were also lots of 'invisible jobs' that needed tackling, like installing a new boiler and rewiring. 'We also discovered damp when we got the keys, so the renovation began by dealing with projects that ate into our budget, without showing any visible signs of progress,' says Claire. As Evan was still a very young baby, the couple decided to move in with Claire's parents

in Newcastle while the work was being carried out.

The footprint of the house worked well for the family but the kitchen and diner were separated by a wall, and a massive stone fireplace took up most of the kitchen. However, Claire could see that by removing both, the space had potential to become a relaxed kitchen-diner, and she began designing the new room while the building work took place. 'We were left with a galley-style space, so there was only so much we could do, and although I did want an island, once

'The living area was all about the sofa we'd bought in America. It's so cosy'



we'd insulated and replastered the walls there wasn't enough room,' says Claire. 'I compromised with the peninsular, but there's plenty of storage, and the design still gives me the sociable seating that was on my wishlist,' she says.

PREPPING AND PLANNING

While the couple waited for their furniture to be shipped over from the States and the new kitchen to be installed, they got the grubby carpets ripped up, the wallpaper stripped, and all the rooms painted in deep blues and soft



◀ 'The gallery wall started with a simple selection of artworks and trinkets collected over the years, but it just keeps growing,' says Claire. 'I keep saying I'm going to stop, but then I find another treasure to add to the look!'

▼ Claire has given her display shelves, originally bought in a local shop in Abu Dhabi, a curated look. 'They're full of treasures from our travels, so every piece is special to us'



REAL HOME

► The Jackson Pollock print – Number 14: Gray, from £45, King & McGaw – adds a touch of abstract pattern to this simple, monochrome spot

▼ 'I chose lighter cabinets for the top units because the space is quite narrow, so the effect makes it feel bigger and brighter,' says Claire



greys. 'We love these colours because they feel so cosy and, in a house this size, with such high ceilings, we can get away with the dark shades,' Claire says.

Once they finally moved in, Claire began the task of turning the house into a welcoming family home. 'The living area was all about the sofa we'd bought in America,' she says. 'They really do make things bigger in Texas and it's such a large, cosy piece of furniture that we couldn't bear to part with it.' Its size meant that it wouldn't fit into the front part of the house though, so the layout of the room took a bit of planning,

which ultimately worked out perfectly. 'It suited us to turn the back into a cosy snug as, being away from the road, it's more private,' explains Claire. 'I also love walking into the dining part of the room as the statement furniture feels like such a grand feature of the house.'

CHARACTER TRAITS

Although the house didn't make a great first impression on Claire, the thing she did love about it when she viewed it was the original features. 'They were the redeeming element!' she laughs. 'I wanted to celebrate and add to them, and



Fresh FLOWER MARKET Open Daily

KITCHEN

'The kitchen renovation was our biggest project as we uncovered lots of old house problems and had to replace rotten floor timbers, rewire the electrics, and replace the boiler, but it was worth it, as we've breathed new life into the old place,' says Claire.

OUR MUST HAVES Grey Shaker-style cabinets, POA, Kiso Kitchens. Java diner **bar stool** in Black, £79.99, Atlantic Shopping. Black metal window square **wall mirror**, £125, Next

See the light

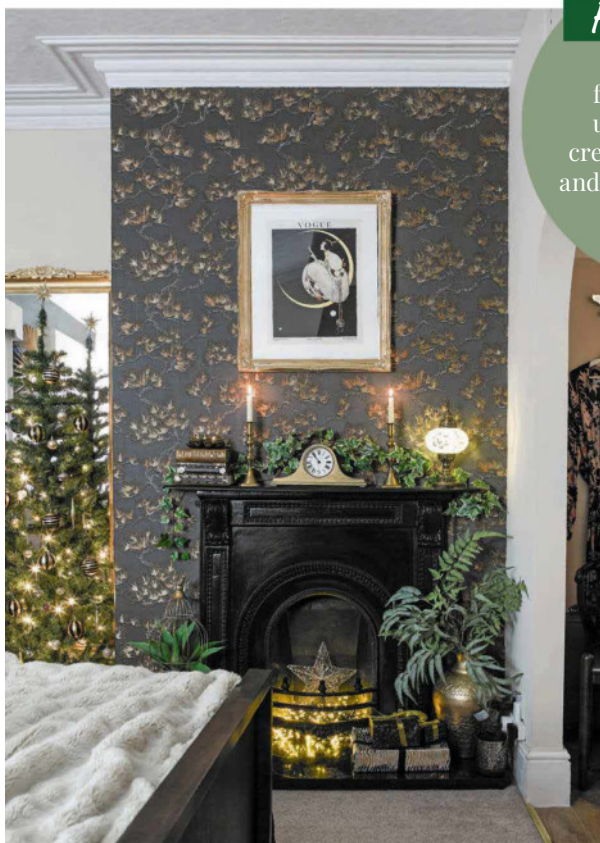
A low-hanging pendant lamp will add a cosy atmosphere, while providing task lighting

Fairy magic

A string of fairy lights in an unused fireplace creates a festive glow and ambience, without the need for a real fire

◀ 'The inspiration for this room was 'boutique hotel' and I always had a vision of the open bath area connecting to the bedroom, giving off luxurious vibes,' says Claire

▶ 'I love creating a curated look in our home and I like to watch how things evolve over time'



MAIN BEDROOM

'We shipped the bedroom furniture back from the States as it's solid wood, made to last, and as it's a simple design that won't date, it didn't make sense to leave it behind,' says Claire.

OUR MUST HAVES Oriental Pine Tree wallpaper in Black Bronze, £24.95 per roll, Wallpaper Shop. For similar, try Chantilly kingsize bed in Dusky Black, £649, The Cotswold Company. Vogue Early December 1917 print, from £35, King & McGaw. Black/Gold peacock table lamp, £85, Next

EVAN'S ROOM

'It was so much fun decorating Evan's room and allowing my creativity to flow, and he loves animals so a jungle room was the obvious theme in here,' says Claire.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Kaycie mid sleeper single **bed** frame in Pine, £160, Argos. Melissa & Doug **giraffe** baby plush soft toy, £59.99, John Lewis & Partners. For similar, try artificial **monstera** tropical leaf, £2.49, Homescapes



EN-SUITE

'I scoured Facebook Marketplace for an original Victorian bath, in keeping with the period of the house, then painted it black,' says Claire, who added gold taps to achieve the luxurious look she wanted to inject into the en-suite.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Duke Black 1695 double-ended roll-top **bath** with Antique Brass leg set, £499.95, Victorian Plumbing. For similar, try Nene traditional Brushed Brass bath shower **mixer tap**, £139.99, Bathroom Mountain. For similar, try gold-effect cheese leaf candle wall **sconce**, £32, Rockett St George

the main bedroom was a great place to start.' There was already an en-suite in the room but it didn't function well and, even though it was tiny, the previous owners had installed a large corner-style bath that took up most of it. 'We could barely get into the space, so we decided to open it up and replace everything with a luxurious, freestanding bath,' explains Claire, who also reinstalled a Victorian fireplace sourced from Facebook Marketplace. 'We wallpapered the chimney breast in a chinoiserie-style design to finish off the look,' she adds.

FALLING IN LOVE

'Christmas is one of my favourite times of year and this house particularly lends itself to festive decor,' says Claire. 'Its grandeur allows me to add extra sparkles and trees in every room, and I love filling it with the ornaments and accessories I've collected over the years.' Although it took a while to make the house feel like a home, it's been worth the hard work and wait. 'We've created such a cosy family home and one that I can finally say I truly love,' smiles Claire. 🏠



This house really lends itself to festive decor. I love adding extra sparkles and trees'

Make this! See p60

► Claire attached faux foliage to the walls to add to the nature theme in animal-loving Evan's room

◀ Claire sourced the Chinese wall art from an antiques shop in Scotland. 'I met Kieran in Shanghai and spent eight years living in China, which definitely influenced my decorative style,' she says



Embellished STOCKING

Add a personal touch to Christmas stockings with appliqué initials, like **Claire** has done



Scan here
to download
the templates!

Shopping list

- A4 printer paper ● sticky tape ● scissors ● 1.5m plain fabric
- tape measure ● dressmaker's scissors ● pins or fabric clips
- sewing machine ● thread ● iron ● scrap of snowflake-patterned fabric for the initial ● fusible webbing ● gold piping

How to...

1 Download the Gingerbread Wonderland stocking and embellishment template from *Your Home's* website yourhomestyle.uk and print onto sheets of A4 paper. Join them where indicated using tape, then cut out the whole stocking template. For the cuff, draw a paper template measuring 42(L) x 30cm(W). For the loop draw a template measuring 24(L) x 6cm(W).

2 Use the paper templates to cut two stocking pieces, one loop and one cuff piece from plain fabric.

3 Fold the cuff piece in half with right sides (RS) together and stitch a 1cm seam along the short edge to create a tube. Fold this tube in half, with RS out, and press.

4 Iron a piece of fusible webbing onto the wrong side (WS) of your snowflake-patterned fabric. Cut out your chosen initial from this piece of fabric. Peel away the paper backing from the fusible webbing and iron the initial onto the front of one stocking piece.

5 Place one stocking piece RS up on your worktop. Pin a length of piping all the way around the perimeter (but not across the top of the stocking), with the piping facing towards the centre of the stocking and the raw edge of the piping facing outwards, marrying up with the edges of the stocking.

6 Place the second stocking piece on top, RS facing down, and stitch around the edge using a 1cm seam allowance – work as closely to the piping as you can and leave the top of the stocking unstitched. Snip around the curved edges, making sure you don't cut the stitching, then turn the stocking RS out and press.

7 Make a hanging loop by folding the loop piece in half with RS together, then stitching along the long edge with a 1cm seam. Turn this fabric tube RS out and press.

8 Slide the cuff piece inside the stocking and match up the raw edges of both the stocking top and cuff, ensuring they align at the back seams. Fold the loop piece in half and slip it between the cuff and stocking with the loop facing downwards, marrying up the raw edges with those of the cuff and stocking. Sew a 1.5cm seam around the top of the stocking, to join the cuff and loop to it. Turn the cuff and loop over to the right side.

9 If you wish to add snowflake motifs to the cuff of the stocking, iron a piece of fusible webbing onto the wrong side of your snowflake-patterned fabric. Cut out the snowflake motifs from this piece of fabric. Peel away the paper backing from the fusible webbing and iron the snowflakes onto the stocking cuff.

'I love going all out at Christmas and make the most of any excuse for some extra sparkle!'

Steal my style

FESTIVE sparkle

Add bright metallics to a dark backdrop for a seasonal scheme that shines, just like **Claire's**

Iridescent battery-operated star string lights, £8; harlequin faux fur throw, £50; Shine Bright star cushion, £16; Black light-up spotty paper star, £8; Hotel marble-effect bowl, £20; 7ft Blue snowy spruce Christmas tree, £129; beaded star hanging decorations, £3.50 each; Gold disco ball hanging decorations, £2.50 each; Gold beaded moon hanging decorations, £3.50 each; hammered metal Christmas tree skirt, £30, all Dunelm

Glam glow

For a chic Christmas scheme that blends seamlessly with monochrome decor, keep the look glamorous with sparing pops of shimmer

1

2

9

8

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1. Black & Gold retro arch floor lamp, £295, Rockett St George 2. Barware 4L Gold single-walled cooler ice bucket, £13.75, Bonnypack 3. Christmas Gold snowflake cotton fabric napkin, £6.99 for 4, Homescapes 4. Moreton round wooden side table in Black, £69, Cult Furniture 5. Clear ribbed glass bauble with Gold stripes, £3.49, Gisela Graham 6. Gold reeded picture frame on stand, £10, Habitat 7. Leroy cushions, £33 for 2, B&Q 8. Large ornate Gold dome top mantel mirror, £200, Click Style 9. Christmas tree star in Gold, £6.99, H&M Home

Cottage-style makeover

‘I instantly knew where the trees would go!’

Going full on with festive decor was still the plan when **Jackie Camm** and her family downsized to their new country cottage-style home

Downsizing was the obvious solution for Jackie Camm and her family when her husband, Dave, was made redundant. ‘We wanted to make things financially easier and fell in love with this house straightaway,’ says Jackie. ‘It’s very different to our last home, which was a five-bedroom, open-plan property with large rooms, but we loved the cottage feel of this place and it gave us a chance to try something new.’

Having more small rooms also suited the family, as the children were spending more time with their friends, so the three separate living areas gave them all space to socialise independently. The fact that the house



▲ ‘We were lucky that the house still had most of the original features,’ says Jackie

◀ ‘I think it’s the small details and little touches that transform a house into a home’



‘I love decorating this house for Christmas, and I don’t hold back’



▲ 'My style veers towards a traditional country look, but I like to add a contemporary element to mix it up a bit. Art is an easy way to do this,' says Jackie

▼ 'I bought this upcycled dresser from a local secondhand shop and originally put it in here temporarily, but I like the room not being totally symmetrical, and it's a lovely piece that's given us hidden storage and a display space for the knick-knacks I've picked up along the way,' says Jackie



Tall order

Create interest and character with an asymmetric mantel display, anchored with tall objects at either end for balance



LIVING ROOM

'My family is spread around the country so we always used to meet up in cottages over Christmas, and this house reminded me of all the beautiful places we've stayed in,' says Jackie, who knew exactly where she would place her Christmas trees the moment she walked through the door.

OUR MUST HAVES Morning Light fine art print on canvas, set in a float frame, £160, Green Lili. Crummet sofa in Thatch House fabric, from £1,845, Loaf. Flinton wooden accent chair in Rust Brown soft velvet, £399, Next. Intelligent matt emulsion in Rolling Fog, £70 for 2.5L, Little Greene

didn't need any building work was an added bonus, as was the new kitchen the previous owners had recently installed. 'It's a style I would have chosen, and the beautiful blue range was left behind, which was an extra win,' explains Jackie.

MAKING A MARK

After moving in, the first thing Jackie did was strip the wallpaper from the alcoves in the living room and the walls in the hall. 'Most of the decor was to my taste, so I could live with it while deciding how to decorate to make the house feel like ours. But while I liked the



Come on in...

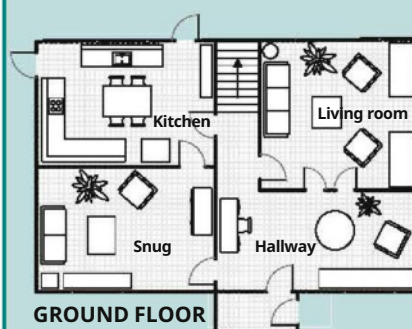
WE ARE Jackie Camm, 59, @toastyabode, a support assistant in a primary school, and I live with my husband, Dave, 59, an auditor for a water company, and our children, Harry, 25, Ted, 24 and Martha, 21.

OUR HOME IS a four-bedroom semi-detached house built in 1904, located in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, and we moved here in July 2015.

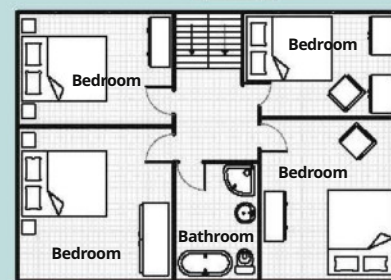
MY BEST BARGAIN IS the table in the corner of the snug, bought on Facebook Marketplace for £15.

MY STYLE IS a traditional cottage-core look and I like layering lots of textures, creating a cosy, relaxed feel, though I always add a modern twist to each room.

MY FAVOURITE ROOM IS the main bedroom. I created a sanctuary for myself in a style that I like.



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

REAL HOME

HALLWAY

'I'm drawn to botanical images that make a space feel homely, but I don't spend a lot on frames. Most of them come from charity shops or budget places like IKEA,' says Jackie.

OUR MUST HAVES Madrid round **coffee table** in Oak, £262, Olivia's. The Ponytail **poster**, £33.90, Nordic Nest. For similar, try Markslojd Riggs wall **lamp** in Black, £97, Lampmasters

▼ 'The individuality of this house is what really appealed to us. It's retained a quirky feel that we love,' says Jackie, who has given the original wall cabinet a cottage-core glow up by lining it with curtains



colourful Orla Kiely wallpaper, I didn't feel it suited the period of the property,' she says. The draughty old windows and front door that kept sticking were also swiftly replaced, and although Jackie loved the layout of her new home, she quickly realised that it lacked the storage a family of five needed. 'The previous owners had lots of freestanding furniture. But, as we planned to stay here for a while, we decided to invest in fitted wardrobes in our bedroom and a bespoke built-in unit in the living room, which could house the TV,' says Jackie, who also had a fitted bench made in the kitchen with a lift-up lid for extra storage and to act as occasional seating, embellished with tongue-and-groove panelling.

Finishing touch

Tie bows made from velvet ribbon to elevate the look of your Christmas tree and give it a traditional feel

DECORATIVE DETAILS

This is where Jackie's love of panelling began. 'I asked our joiner to add some decorative wooden strips behind our



▲ 'I like to inject an unusual touch in my gallery walls by mixing traditional paintings I've found in charity shops with modern botanicals. This stops the country look feeling too twee,' says Jackie

SNUG

'I love decorating this house for Christmas. Each living room lends itself to having a Christmas tree, and I don't hold back on the decorations,' says Jackie.

OUR MUST HAVES Intelligent matt **emulsion** in French Grey, £70 for 2.5L, Little Greene. For similar, try Bulrush large **storage trunk** in Natural, £70, John Lewis & Partners. For similar, try The Evergreen **wreath**, £44.95, Wreaths. For similar, try Habitat 10 White LED clip-on candle Christmas **tree lights**, £5, Argos



'One thing I've learnt is that you won't be comfortable in it unless you love it'

REAL HOME

▼ Jackie inherited the tallboy from her sister, and she uses it as a larder cupboard. 'It adds vintage charm to the room and is the perfect complement to the tongue-and-groove panelling on the wall and bench,' she says



Table setting

Use a crisp white tablecloth to provide an elegant base that will work with any style of tablescape



DINING AREA

'I'm always thinking about how my pieces of furniture can be multifunctional,' says Jackie. 'As well as being a beautiful addition to the room, and creating a pretty display, the plate rack is also useful for storing serving plates.'

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Tolix Style stacking side chair in Industrial Grey, £39.95, Tolix Style Chairs. For similar, try scalloped Natural Brown jute rug, £150, Oliver Bonas. For similar, try plate shelf in poplar wood and iron, £42.40, Søstrene Grene



Make this!
See p70

bed, and also to the back of the unit in the living room, and I love the easy texture and interest it's given both spaces,' she says. Inspired by the carpenter's handiwork, Jackie and Dave decided to have a go themselves, starting with their son, Harry's, bedroom. 'I wanted a tongue-and-groove design on the wall and, to be honest, if the old walls weren't so bowed, it would have been a lot easier,' says Jackie. 'But, after watching a few YouTube videos, we got the hang of it, and were also able to cut around the plug sockets and attach the dado rail at the top, which I'm really proud of. Though I also learned that a paintbrush is far better for getting into the grooves than a roller!'

◀ Layered-up crockery, finished with a crisp white napkin, gives instant style and elegance to Jackie's festive tablescape



▲ 'The useful open shelving, which is perfect for storing glasses, was here when we moved in, and didn't even need painting. So I've just spent time adding cute, cottage-core accessories,' says Jackie

▼ Jackie carefully considers the window treatment when dressing her house for Christmas - here, a faux fir swag adds some vibrant greenery to her washing-up view



KITCHEN

'Inheriting the Shaker-style kitchen and range cooker was definitely a selling point because it's the style I would have installed, and it saved us the job of having to fit it,' says Jackie.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Rangemaster Elise 110cm dual fuel **range cooker** with gas hob in China Blue, £3,099, AO. For similar, try the Ohio Grey Shaker **units**, from £103 for a 600mm base unit, Wickes. For similar, try Butler & Rose ceramic fireclay butler **kitchen sink**, £199.99, Tap Warehouse

Moving on to the colour scheme, Jackie readily admits to being influenced by trends at the start of the renovation. 'I went for grey carpets on the top floor, which I would now love to change to something more neutral. I tried to make the downstairs toilet look a bit modern and edgy, but quickly realised it's not really me,' she admits. 'I've always loved earthy, natural colours, so reverted to them, gradually finding what worked



'The individuality of this house really appealed to us. It's retained a quirky feel that we love'

► 'I've gone for a simpler, more graphic look in Harry's room, though I've still given it a slight country feel with wooden textures, terracotta tones and the panelling,' says Jackie

▼ 'I went for a Shaker design for the bespoke wardrobes to tie in with the kitchen units and create a sense of cohesion. I want all the rooms to have their own personality, but still feel part of the house'

in the house and slowly injecting soft caramels, warm browns and terracotta tones to complement its rustic vibe.'

STRIKING A BALANCE

'The bathroom is on my hit list for a makeover, but I'd like a new shower and underfloor heating, so it's going to be a big project that we need to save for,' explains Jackie. 'Luckily, the rest of the house only needed cosmetic attention, so I've been able to concentrate on painting the rooms and adding personal touches,' she says. Though Jackie admits there are times when she wishes she could hire someone to do the job. 'It's always a balance between time and budget, and there's immense satisfaction when we do

MAIN BEDROOM

'We've got a recurring theme throughout of soft shades of white, and we've gone for Ammonite by Farrow & Ball in here. It's a soft shade of grey that complements the bed and the carpet,' says Jackie, who has warmed up the look with rich greens and wooden accessories.

OUR MUST HAVES Churchill Chesterfield bed, from £799, Sueno. Modern emulsion in Ammonite, £63 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. For similar, try Champagne buttoned back round accent chair with studs, £129.99, Oak Outlet. For similar, try Arcus crown arched indoor outdoor wall mirror, £125, Dunelm





it ourselves. I just wish it didn't always take so long!' she laughs.

Adding detail is the part Jackie loves the most, from flowing a selection of eclectic prints up a gallery wall, to hanging a large work of abstract art opposite a traditional fireplace. She then grounds it all with classic pieces of black or dark wood furniture.

'I like to add my personality, but I keep it all cohesive by sticking to a gentle palette, which also works really well with the traditional Christmas colours in my festive decor,' she says. 'The best compliment someone can give me is that they feel relaxed in my home!'

BATHROOM

'The freestanding bath is lovely, but it's a bit of a dust trap behind. We may replace it with a built-in design when we redo the bathroom,' says Jackie.

OUR MUST HAVES Avocado check towel, from £12, John Lewis & Partners. For similar, try easy round stool, £95, Style Our Home. For similar, try Zuiver rack ladder, £79, Olivia's



HARRY'S ROOM

'Panelling is a quick and effective way to change a blank wall, and the pegs add a Shaker aesthetic, while also being useful,' says Jackie.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Alia accent chair in Bright Orange, £229, Dusk. Pack of 5 screw-in oak Shaker pegs, £9.75, Oakcrafts. Intelligent eggshell in Celestial Blue, £82.50 for 2.5L, Little Greene. For similar, try Julipa Seren stripe easy-fit lampshade in Blue, £15, JD Williams



Space saver

A good-looking ladder is a stylish way to store and organise your towels

KNOTTED napkin rings

Be inspired by **Jackie** to create a rustic finishing touch for your Christmas place settings

Shopping list

- A4 sheet of taupe felt ● scissors
- jute cord ● tape measure
- masking tape ● hot glue gun
- jute twine

How to...

1 For each napkin ring, begin by cutting a rectangular strip of felt measuring approximately 17(L) x 1.5cm(W).

2 Next, cut nine equal lengths of the jute cord, and group them into three sets of three strands (for the three plaits of your braid). If you cut the cords to measure approximately 46cm long, you can get two napkin rings out of a single braid, but all you really need to do is ensure that it's about 5cm longer than your piece of felt.

3 With the strands of cord laid neatly next to each other, use masking tape to attach one end of the strands to your work surface. This will help make the braiding process much easier.

4 Divide the cords into three groups of three strands each. Working with groups of three strands at a time, start plaiting the cords together, keeping the plait nice and flat. You should soon end up with a wide, flat rope braid.

5 Use a hot glue gun to glue the strip of felt to one side of the rope braid. Once the felt has been glued to the rope braid and has dried completely, peel away the masking-taped ends and trim the braid to the same length as the felt.

6 Use the hot glue gun to glue the rope braid into a circle, overlapping the ends by about 1cm. To disguise the join, wrap a length of jute twine around the napkin ring, gluing with the hot glue gun as you wind it around. Repeat this process to make as many napkin rings as you wish.



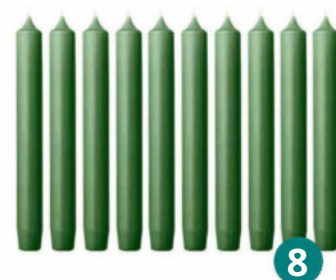
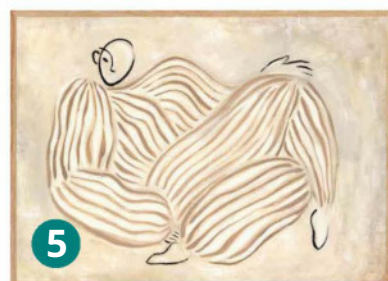
'Making these thoughtful, decorative touches is a mindful activity at such a busy time of year'



Steal my style

COTTAGE cheer

Mix timeless pieces and festive colours with contemporary touches to get **Jackie's** traditional look with a twist



Cosy & classic

For a home that exudes period charm, avoid anything too glitzy, and instead add nods to the season by layering up soft accessories in a mix of traditional motifs and colours



Elkstone Mellow
Oak monks
**bench with
storage**, £675,
The Cotswold
Company



1. Elliot Antique Brass **table lamp** with shade, £45, dār lighting 2. Large Red velvet **bow** decoration, £4, B&Q 3. Floral **quilt**, £49, Idyll Home 4. Sausalito mini **bedside table**, £399, Pottery Barn 5. Figure in Beige **print**, from £18.95, Desenio 6. Apple and berry **garland**, £29.99, Dobbies 7. Countryside Charm ruffle **cushion**, £36, The French Bedroom Company 8. Taper **candles**, 19cm, £4 for 10, Søstrene Grene 9. Matt Forest Green glass **bauble** with White berry branches, £5.99, Gisela Graham

Edwardian family house

'Our home feels so magical at Christmas'

After a whirlwind move and a lot of hard work, **Rachael and Paul Page** have filled their beautiful Edwardian property with warmth, colour and sparkle

Picture this

Bring festive cheer to your TV by switching the screen saver to a seasonal scene – a snowy village or twinkling lights make an instant talking point



Despite their best efforts, Rachael and Paul Page's first Christmas in their new home didn't go as they'd hoped. 'We planned to spend Christmas with family but, because of last-minute Covid restrictions, we ended up on our own instead,' Rachael explains. 'Our house was very bare as we had no furniture, but we did manage to put a little tree up in the living room for some seasonal cheer.'

Before moving in, the couple lived in a flat, and were looking for a home that was more family friendly. 'We used to stroll down this street every day, but the houses were way out of our price range,' she says. That was, until they spotted this property for sale. It was more affordable as it had a small garden and it needed renovation work, but that didn't bother Rachael and Paul. 'We had our offer accepted when we were at Gatwick



'We walked along this street every day and we used to dream of living here,' says Rachael, who wasn't fazed by the amount of work the house needed, and jumped at the chance to buy it

'My perfect Christmas is being in our home with family, and it's magical now we have children'

◀ A large Chesterfield sofa from John Lewis adds texture and comfort to this neutral space, which is perfect for family gatherings

▼ Fill a bowl with your best baubles for a simple, effective way to bring cheer to your coffee table

Come on in...

WE ARE Rachael Page, 37, a teacher, @pages_on_crescent, my husband, Paul, 49, a sales director, and our two children, Clara, four, and Alex, two.

OUR HOME IS an Edwardian detached house in Wokingham, built in 1905. We've lived here since November 2020.

MY FAVOURITE ROOM is Alex's bedroom – it's the perfect little boy's nursery.

MY BEST VINTAGE FIND is the chest of drawers in our bedroom, which cost just £20.

WHAT I LEARNED Don't rush in. I started on too many projects at once, and made some choices that I didn't think through enough.



▼ Rachael's ceramic houses, collected over years from John Lewis and Homesense, add whimsical charm to her mantelpiece and feature throughout her home



LIVING ROOM

In her living room, Rachael's traditional palette of reds and greens feels cosy and festive, while a working fireplace keeps the space warm and welcoming.

OUR MUST HAVES Baubles, from £24.99 for 20, Homesense. Bluebell **armchair**, £900; Valentin **footstool**, from £310, both Sofa.com. Halo Earle Chesterfield large 3-seater **sofa**, £2,349, John Lewis & Partners. Montreal Natural Jade **rug**, from £119, Ruggable. Camden Gold framed **mirror**, £349, William Wood. **Cushions**, from £32.99, Meggy & Me. Faux fur **throw**, £55, Dunelm



airport, so our holiday was a whirlwind of phone calls to our mortgage company and solicitors,' remembers Rachel. They moved in a month before Christmas. 'We had 48 hours to pack up our lives and move. It was crazy!' she laughs.

TIME TO TRANSFORM

This beautiful Edwardian house had been a much-loved family home, but the interior needed a lot of attention and

TLC. 'Inside, there were wall-to-wall green and orange carpets and heavily patterned 1970s wallpaper. Also, all the wooden windows were rotting, so the house was freezing,' says Rachael. 'The bathroom had an avocado suite, and the electric shower sounded like it would explode at any moment.'

Thankfully, there were no structural issues, so they set to work straightaway, ripping up carpets, removing the two old

KITCHEN

The kitchen will eventually be opened into the dining room to create a family-sized space, but the original stained-glass back door will remain as a treasured feature.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Galley easy-fit **pendant shade**, £10, Dunelm. For similar, try Burnt Orange premium glass kitchen **splashback**, £99.95, B&Q. For similar, try Bialetti Moka Express hob espresso **coffee maker**, from £29.95, John Lewis & Partners

Festive glow

For an intimate Christmas table, cluster candles down the centre. Use mismatched holders for a relaxed look and mix heights to create a soft, flattering glow

▼ Rachael keeps her Christmas table neutral, with rattan placemats, glass candlesticks and vintage cutlery for a timeless setting

▼ Fold napkins into Christmas tree shapes to add a playful detail to your dining table



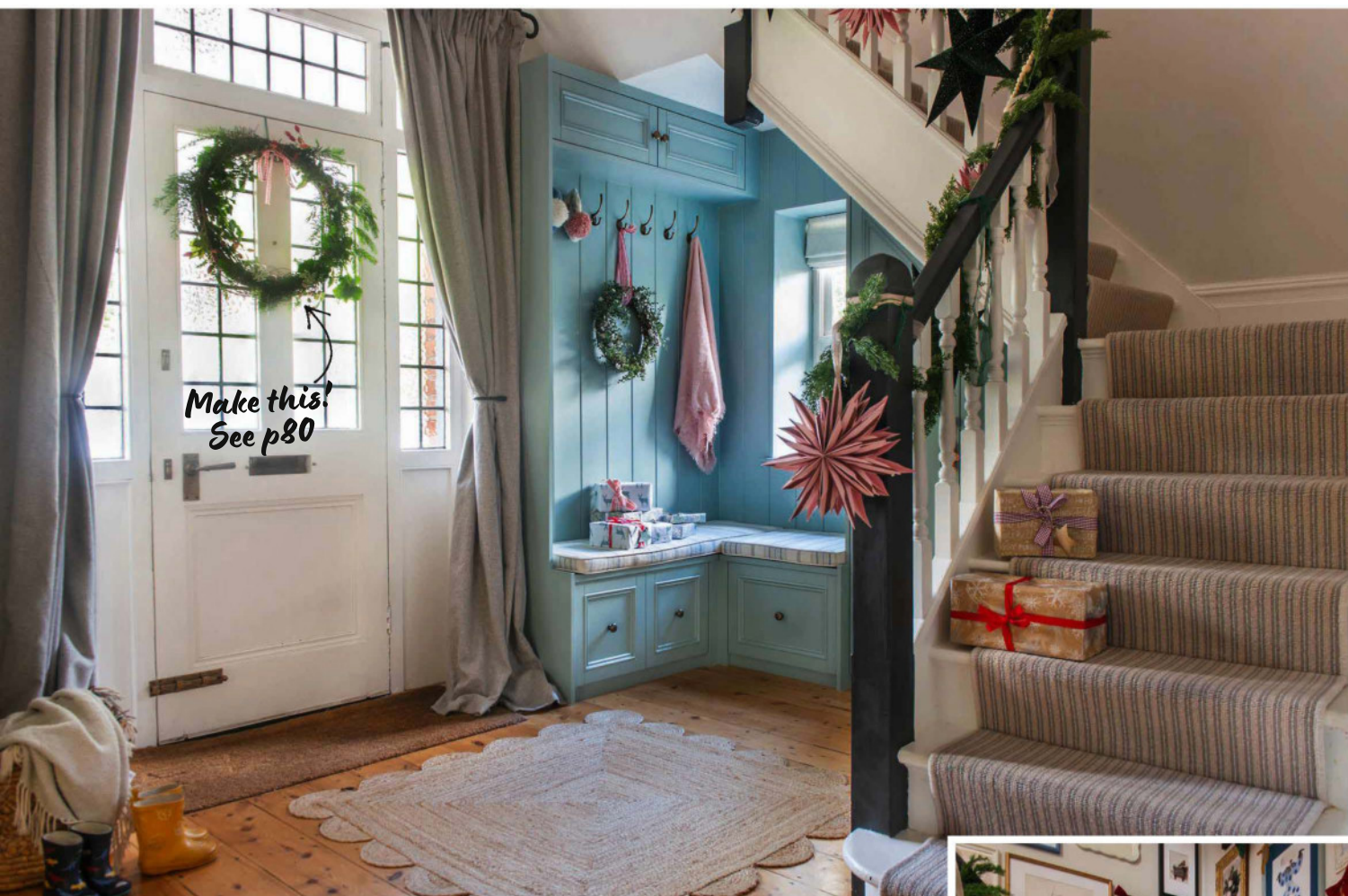
DINING ROOM

The dining room is saved for special occasions. Amazon chair covers disguise tired leather, lifting the whole space on a budget.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try scroll-back **dining chairs**, £199 for 2; extending **dining table**, £679; **sideboard**, £599, all DFS. **Placemats**, £4 each, IKEA. **Napkins**, £24.99 for 4, La Redoute. Indoor LED star **decorations**, from £39.99 each, Lights4fun. Dead flat **emulsion** in Ammonite, £79 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball



'The dining chairs were very old and the leather was peeling, so I bought covers and they look much smarter now'



Make this!
See p80

boilers, fitting a new one and changing all the windows.

Budget restrictions shaped their early updates. 'Replacing the windows and fitting a new boiler were essentials, but these repairs left us with little money to do much else,' she says. 'We couldn't afford to replaster, but I couldn't live with orange, so I painted over the wallpaper in calming neutrals as a temporary fix.' They ripped up the carpets and sanded the original floorboards in the hall and living room. 'It was hard work, but it made everything look fresher.'

BALANCING THE BUDGET

After two years of hard saving, the couple turned their attention to the bathroom. 'I decided to go for a modern country look, so I opted for wall panelling and picked traditional-style fittings. I'm so pleased with the end result,' reflects Rachael.

To save money elsewhere, Rachael shopped for secondhand finds. 'I pop into a brilliant local furniture charity

HALLWAY

Built-in storage and hooks turn Rachael's hallway into a practical boot room for winter. A striped stair runner with whipped edges adds warmth and character.

OUR MUST HAVES Interior wood paint in Gresham Blue, £18.99 per 750ml, Rust-Oleum. Tartan bows, £2 for 6, Hobbycraft. Silver lantern, £25, Dunelm. For similar, try Savannah rug, from £119, Dunelm. Paper stars, £8.38 each, Søstrene Grene. For similar, try wooden beaded garland, £11.25, Quince & Cook

► Rachael enjoys decorating her original staircase with inexpensive garlands, personalising them with paper stars and wooden beads for a handmade feel

shop at least twice a week, and I'm on Facebook Marketplace all the time. I've been known to rescue pieces from the tip, breathing life into them with a lick of paint,' she explains. 'If I won the lottery, I'd buy from Soho Home, but I do find that good secondhand furniture lasts and has lots of character.'



MAIN BEDROOM

The main bedroom makeover includes a new carpet, built-in wardrobes and green walls to complement the original fireplace.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Mika mango wood frame, £25, Oliver Bonas. For similar, try porcelain Christmas trees, from £9 each, Garden Trading. Alice upholstered double bed, £499, John Lewis & Partners. Christmas tree throw, £7, Online Home Shop. Camille Limewash oak 3-drawer chest, £799, The Cotswold Company. For similar, try Haske ceramic table lamp, £190, Layered Lounge. Dead flat emulsion in Mizzle, £79 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

▼ A collection of ceramic houses brings festive cheer to Rachael's bedroom mantelpiece – part of her much-loved Christmas decor

'The fireplace in our bedroom has the original green tiles and hearth – so I chose soothing colours to work around them'

Despite five years of hard work, Rachael admits that not every DIY decision has struck the right chord. 'At the start I rushed a few rooms, and we've still got a couple that are half finished. If I could start again, I'd take on one room at a time,' she says. The sanded floorboards have also been a learning curve. 'They look lovely, but they are draughty in winter and they're still orange. They also need a lot more upkeep than I ever expected,' she admits.

There have been bigger setbacks, too. 'We had a leak in the loft from a pipe, and water poured down through three floors. It was really awful at the time, but

Snuggle up

Add cosy Christmas touches to your bedroom with a festive throw. A rich tartan or deep red velvet instantly makes the space feel warm and seasonal

► To furnish her bedroom affordably, Rachael sourced this £20 antique chest of drawers from Facebook Marketplace



REAL HOME

it's amazing how quickly you forget!' she laughs.

LOOKING FORWARD

The to-do list is very long, but in the best way. 'We're planning a kitchen and dining extension, more bedroom makeovers, new radiators, some replastering and restoring of period details,' explains Rachael. 'An old house is always a work in progress, but as this is our forever home, we're not in a rush.'

Christmas is very different from when they first moved in. The family choose a real tree from a local farm, and they start decorating on the first weekend in December. 'I love to fill our home with garlands, velvet bows and decorations I've collected over time,' says Rachael. 'My mum buys me a new bauble every year, which I treasure.' This year, they're particularly looking forward to celebrating with family. 'We leave out rum and a carrot for Father Christmas and hang up stockings at the fireplace. At this time of year, the house feels so magical and full of love.' 

► 'I chose soft greens and blues for a soothing scheme in the nursery, and I love the vintage chest of drawers in here,' says Rachael

ALEX'S NURSERY

Alex's nursery features a sea-themed wallpaper that Rachael tracked down after a long search, creating a calm, playful space.

OUR MUST HAVES For similar, try Della Ocean Blue wallpaper, £76.44 per roll, Sandberg. Clean Oceans poster, from £23, Studio Loco. Peg shelf, £125, Autumn's Corner. Ruler height chart, £155, Real Ruler Co. Save The Planet II poster, from £6.95, Junique. Dulux Heritage velvet matt wall paint in Rosemary Leaf, £46 for 2.5L, B&Q. Modern emulsion in Cromarty, £63 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball



Wonder walls

A large-scale repeat pattern on a statement wallpaper can make a generous room feel cosier, while more detailed, intricate designs are better suited to smaller spaces



CLARA'S BEDROOM

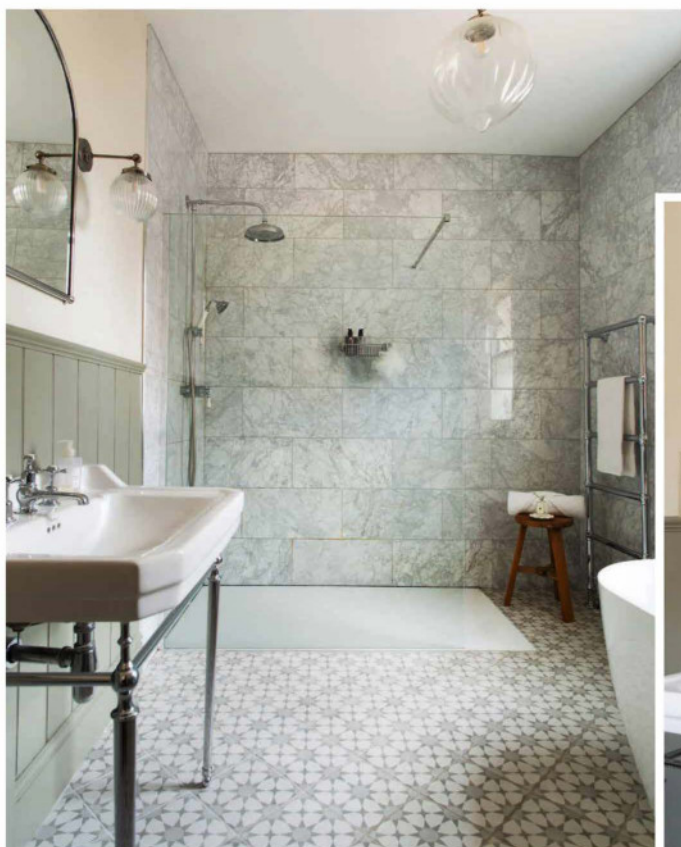
Clara's room is cosy and colourful with bold wallpaper, fresh carpet and pretty bedding.

OUR MUST HAVES

Roomblush nursery safari jungle **wallpaper**, £89 per roll, B&Q. For similar, try Hannah Retro Ditsy **duvet cover and pillowcase set**, £24 for a double, Dunelm. Anyday Wave double **bed frame**, £349, John Lewis & Partners. Dream in Pink children's **print**, from £18, Wonder & Rah. Modern **emulsion** in Calamine, £63 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball



► The fireplace adds period character to Clara's bedroom, which Rachael has decorated so that it won't look too young as she grows



BATHROOM

The bathroom's modern makeover features traditional fittings, wall panelling and patterned tiles for period charm.

OUR MUST HAVES Wiven **wall tiles**, £49.99 per sq m, Topps Tiles. For similar, try Mijas **floor tiles**, £19.80 per sq m, Tile Warehouse. Burlington **basin**, £449.95; for similar, try Chatsworth **mirror**, £129.95, both Victorian Plumbing. For similar, try Broden ribbed wall **lights**, £45 each, Dunelm. Modern **emulsion** in Treron and Slipper Satin, £63 each for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

◀ Timeless lighting, classic panelling and a traditional mirror complete Rachael's elegant bathroom

Foliage WREATH

Use gentle greenery to make a pared-back door decoration that looks natural and stylish, just like **Rachael's**

Shopping list

- woven willow wreath base
- sprigs of foliage – real or faux
- florist's stub wire ● scissors
- wire cutters ● rose hips, or other decorative botanicals, for example berries ● ribbon

How to...

1 Begin by adding a light base layer of foliage to your wreath.

Individual sprigs of fir, holly, eucalyptus and ivy are ideal for this. Wind a length of florist's stub wire around the base of the stems, leaving about 8cm of wire free to attach the foliage to the wreath.

2 Use sharp scissors to trim the ends of the stems so that the foliage is roughly the same length as your hand.

3 Place the first sprig of foliage in the centre of the wreath with the stem against the base and the foliage facing outwards. Push the ends of the stub wire through the gaps in the wreath base and twist them together at the back of the wreath to hold the foliage securely in place. Use wire cutters to trim away any excess wire.

4 Once you have lightly covered the wreath base in foliage, start to add bunches of rose hips, or other decorative elements, such as clusters of ivy berries or sprigs of holly berries, securing in the same way as you did the foliage. Add these decorative elements in odd numbers, as this tends to work much better visually than even amounts.

5 Cut a length of ribbon, thread the ends through the willow at the top of the wreath and tie it in a bow.

6 Finally, thread a loop of stub wire through the back of the wreath – use this to hang on your door.

Thread some longer trailing stems of foliage for a romantic look



For a more relaxed feel I weave in a few handmade decorations – they're affordable and fun to do!



Steal my style

Comfort & JOY

Go big with bows and cosy up with warm tones and plush textures, like **Rachael** has



1

Take a bow

For a pretty take on Christmas, choose bow details and frills in a simple palette of coordinating colours. Use them on your tree, your mantelpiece and furniture



Green 7ft pre-lit dew drop **Christmas tree**, £270; Green 40cm pre-lit **wreath** with bells, £40; White and Red ceramic Christmas present **ornaments**, £30; ceramic Christmas **ornament** tree in Cream, £18; Natural wood deer **candle holder**, £33; Mulled Spice votive **candles**, £12 for 3; Clear Christmas gingerbread house lit cloche **decoration**, £38; Green pre-lit Christmas **garland** with 250cm bells, £65, all Laura Ashley



8



7



6



3



4



5

1. Velvet bow and ribbon striped **stocking**, £25, Oliver Bonas 2. Decorative **bows** in Red, Pink or Green, £10 for 8, Talking Tables 3. Cath Kidston Rodeo accent **chair** in Canvas Cream Chenille, £399, Next 4. Sourdough & Latte faux fur **throw**, £125, The French Bedroom Company 5. Bow Peach & Rosemary handmade **candle**, £29, Bloom & Brew 6. Catherine Lansfield so soft velvet touch double frill square **cushion** in Blush, £16, Dunelm 7. Cosy Christmas **napkins**, £21 for 4, Sophie Allport 8. Ceramic Warm White LED **presents**, £14 for 2, B&Q

FINISHING TOUCHES



▲ Make coming and going easy by leaving a spare key or door code for guests. It's a simple touch that gives them freedom, and makes them feel right at home. Remi **letter rack and key hooks**, £8, Dunelm



▲ Share the joy of high-speed internet with your loved ones using this cheerful, printable sign! Ready-to-print Christmas wi-fi **sign**, £3.08, TheHomelyAvenue at Etsy



▲ Bring in some generous swags of faux foliage and plenty of soft textures to up the luxe factor. Red berry & pine cone **garland**, £9.99; check **cushion**, £9.99; cable knit **cushion**, £6.99; hessian **sack**, £2.99; cable knit **stockings**, £6.99 each, all Home Bargains

▼ Don't forget your home's exterior – cast a warm, golden glow with twinkling LED lights and lanterns that instantly elevate your entranceway.

ConnectGo outdoor **garland** in Warm White, from £49.99; 37cm eucalyptus outdoor Christmas **wreath**, currently priced at £10.50; 11.5cm battery LED pillar **outdoor candles**, £5.49 each, all Festive Lights



CHRISTMAS GUESTS ARE ALMOST HERE!

Take a look at these genius quick fixes for those often forgotten details, and make your home guest-ready in no time...

The festive season is upon us, and with it comes the joy of welcoming friends and family into your home. But sometimes, in the rush to prepare, a few little things get overlooked. If this is you, there's still time to add those finishing touches that make all the difference. From tidying up guest spaces to adding special decor and stocking up on essentials, a few easy steps can turn your home into a cosy, inviting retreat. Here are nine ways to help you host in style.

Spruce up your entrance

Set the tone for your guests as soon as they arrive by transforming your front entrance into a warm and inviting space. Start with a seasonal wreath, garland, or twinkling lights around the front door, and add a door mat with a cheerful message or festive design. Inside, engage the senses using a fragrance diffuser or scented candles with notes of cinnamon, pine or vanilla.

Playing soft, Christmas music just inside the doorway also adds an uplifting atmosphere, so place a small Bluetooth speaker near the entrance and have tunes on standby. Keep the area well-lit, clutter-free and cosy, with space set aside for extra coats and shoes. Altogether, these thoughtful touches create an inviting impression.

FINISHING TOUCHES

★ 'A hosting hack that always makes our family dinner go a little more smoothly is that, each year, the adults take it in turns to buy little table gifts for everyone. We bring these out when there's a lull in conversation, and it jollies things right back up again. The theme is usually something fun to play with, wear or puzzle over, and there are always plenty of laughs and giggles!'

Kirstie Duhig, editor
HomeStyle

Our expert says...



★ Unexpected overnight guest? With a sofa bed or futon, you can quickly and easily transform your living space into an extra bedroom.

Quad 2-seater birch double sofa bed, £839, Futon Company

▼ Dress the bed in jolly linens to make guests feel at home, and add a basket by the bedside for their bits and bobs.

Christmas Magic velvet slogan cushion, £8; crushed printed Christmas Fun duvet set, from £15; cable knit Cream duvet set, from £25, all B&M



▲ Pep up a classic evergreen wreath with a jolly, oversized red velvet bow.

Red berry, cone & foliage wreath, £59.99; clip-on Red bow, £7.99, both Gisela Graham



▲ Shared spaces can still feel more private if you add a curtain for a quick, cosy divide.

Room dividing wire, 5m, £16, Dunelm

2 Create a quick home tour
For guests staying a while, a thoughtful welcome package on the bedside table makes all the difference. Prepare a printed rundown that includes your home's wi-fi details (network name and password), and laundry basics such as where to find the washing detergent if needed, how to use the washer and dryer, and where the best place is to hang or fold clothes.

In the kitchen, simple instructions for using the coffee machine and microwave are always handy, in case people are up before you in the morning. And don't forget to provide a spare house key, especially if your visitors will be coming and going independently. This will help them feel comfortable and more at home.

3 Transform a guest bedroom
For a quick and easy upgrade, focus on simple touches that create a cosy atmosphere. Start by swapping out the bedding for something seasonal, such as brushed-cotton sheets, a festive duvet cover, and blankets and cushions in warm tones. If space allows, add a small, decorated tabletop tree for a touch of Christmas charm, or simply string up some fairy lights around the headboard or mirror to create a glow. Place a few decorations on the bedside table, such as a mini wreath, candle, pine cones, or a small ornament. A Christmas-scented room spray or diffuser adds sensory comfort and, for an extra-thoughtful touch, leave out a basket with snacks, toiletries and a handwritten card.

4 Adapt a double-duty room
If space is tight, turning multi-use rooms into cosy sleepover spots is key. Whether it's a sofa bed in the living room or a futon in the office, a few considerations can help create a space that feels like its own retreat. Start by popping a soft rug down if the floor is hard, and use quality bedding – layered sheets, a snuggly duvet and extra pillows – for comfort. Ensure there is a bedside surface, such as a tray or small table, and set it out with a reading light and a phone charger. Provide a set of towels, plus a spot for personal items – a small ottoman or underbed storage bag works well. Finally, as a temporary solution for privacy in shared spaces, add a screen or hang lightweight blackout curtains using a tension pole.

Feature Poppy Benner

FINISHING TOUCHES



▼ Neatly arranged baskets keep bathroom essentials organised, inviting, and easy to find.

Seagrass **basket**, £3.94, Søstrene Grene



▼ Add festive cheer to your bathroom with Christmas-themed towels and seasonal candles – small touches that make guests feel extra-special.

Christmas Stripe **guest towels**, £6.99 for 2; stripe terry **guest towels**, £6.99 for 2; soft terry **face towels**, £6.99 for 3, all H&M Home



▼ Set up a festive drinks station with teas, coffee, hot chocolate – even mulled wine – so guests can help themselves at any time.

Classic **kettle** in Polished, £159.99; latte **cups**, £9.99 each, all Dualit

▼ Clear a little space in your chest of drawers, so guests have plenty of room to store their clothes and essentials.

Chester Dove Grey **5-drawer chest**, £525, The Cotswold Company



5 Make room for storage

Whether guests have their own room or are staying in a shared space, making room for their luggage helps them feel comfortable. Start by clearing a designated area, such as an empty section of the wardrobe, a few free hangers, or a couple of drawers. If space is really tight, use underbed storage boxes or decorative baskets to stow away your own items, freeing up visible space for visitors. A foldable luggage rack or bench at the end of the bed provides a convenient spot to open their suitcase without taking up too much room. Add a sprig of greenery, a mini ornament or a scented sachet in the drawer or on the luggage rack. These small details add functionality and a splash of Christmas cheer.

6 Deck out the bathroom

Turn your family bathroom – or the guest bathroom, if you have one – into a space where guests can experience relaxation and privacy. Start by giving the room a deep clean, and making sure it's fully stocked with essentials like toilet paper, hand soap and fluffy towels. Keep cleaning supplies easily accessible so guests can tidy up if needed.

For added comfort, provide a basket with sanitary products, extra toiletries and other necessities, so no one has to feel awkward asking. If storage is tight, hang an over-the-shower caddy to create extra space without cluttering the room, and add a seasonal hand towel, a winter-scented candle or some small decorations.

7 Get the kitchen guest-ready

When you have people to stay, making the kitchen guest-friendly goes a long way in helping everyone feel at ease. Set up a self-serve breakfast station with cereals, bread, spreads and fruit, so early risers can help themselves without waking anyone. A hot drinks station is also a lovely touch – arrange tea, coffee, hot chocolate, mugs and a kettle or coffee machine all in one spot, with everything clearly labelled. Not only is this practical, but it adds a warm, festive feel to your kitchen.

To keep things running smoothly, clear a shelf in the fridge and designate it for guest use. Label the drawers and any shelves for plates, cutlery and glasses, so that everything is really easy to locate.



▲ Make sure guests' dietary needs are catered for.

Finest Free From Black Forest **brownie slices**, £3.50, Belgian dark chocolate & pistachio **cookies**, £2.70, both Tesco

'Focus on one communal area to really wow, whether it's a beautifully styled drinks station or a cosy candlelit corner. That way, you can create a magical atmosphere, without the overwhelm of having to style every space. Always prep ahead where you can: lay the table the night before to free up time and enjoy the day.'

Leoma Harper,
@interiorsbyleomaharper;
@styletheclutter

Our expert says...



▲ What could be better than a Christmas Eve singalong? If you aren't blessed with a piano in the living room and a talented musician in the family, a Bluetooth speaker is an excellent compromise.

Let It Glow **rug**, from £89, Ruggable



▲ Baking is a wonderful, creative activity for little ones – gingerbread biscuits, mince pies and festive rocky road are all easy and delicious!

Vinterfint **pastry cutters**, £3 for 5, IKEA

QUICK FIXES FOR FORGOTTEN DIY JOBS

People are coming, the house is buzzing – and suddenly all those 'I'll get to it later' jobs are calling your name. But don't worry! This list will help you power through those niggling tasks. Each of these takes just a few minutes, but makes a big difference when your home's about to be on show. Tackle them now, and you'll be ready to welcome guests without a last-minute scramble!

- **Touch up scuffed paintwork** with a tester pot and a sponge brush for quick, precise coverage.
- **Fix loose handles, knobs or cupboard doors** using a screwdriver and some thread-lock glue if screws keep slipping.
- **Replace flickering lightbulbs**, especially in guest rooms and hallways – LED bulbs last longer and save you hassle later.
- **Stop a dripping tap** by replacing the washer or tightening the valve.
- **Unclog slow drains** using a natural mix of bicarbonate of soda and vinegar, followed by boiling water – simple, chemical-free and effective.
- **Fix a threshold bar** that's come loose – a little wood glue or fresh screws can keep it in place.
- **Straighten crooked pictures or mirrors**, using a spirit level or your phone app.



▲ Marché D'Hiver No1 **print**, from £6.95, Desenio

8 Fill the shelves with treats

A little preparation ensures your kitchen is an inclusive space where guests feel relaxed, catered for, and ready to enjoy all the seasonal feasting and fun. Before they arrive, ask ahead about their favourite snacks, drinks and meals – it's a small gesture that makes a big impact. Find out about any allergies or dietary requirements so you can plan meals everyone can enjoy. Whether it's dairy-free milk, gluten-free crackers, or a favourite brand of tea, having these on hand shows you've gone the extra mile. Stock up on easy, crowd-pleasing staples like pasta, eggs, bread and fresh fruit, and don't forget some festive treats such as mince pies, chocolates or a cheeseboard.

9 Prepare some festive fun

Christmas hosting isn't just about food and decorations – it's also about creating space for joy and relaxation. Providing a variety of entertainment options helps guests unwind and enjoy their downtime, whether they're staying for a day or a week.

Set out a stack of books and magazines for quiet moments, and place a few classic board games or card decks in the living room for group fun. Puzzles are great for all ages and can be a lovely ongoing activity over the holidays. Don't forget festive films – create a mini Christmas movie corner with blankets, popcorn and a list of favourites. If you have kids visiting, include family-friendly options!



Debbie Keenan is a multi-award-winning BACP Senior Accredited psychotherapist, who is passionate about connecting authentically and building compassionate, trusting spaces for meaningful mental health support.

Ask an expert

Avoid overwhelm this Christmas

It may be the most wonderful time of the year but, for some, Christmas can be a tricky period to navigate. We asked award-winning psychotherapist, **Debbie Keenan**, for her advice on how to enjoy the festive season without the stress...

What's your number one tip for keeping calm in the Christmas chaos?

A As a psychotherapist, I want to remind you that feeling a bit 'all over the place' at Christmas is completely normal – don't be so hard on yourself. The season brings joy and fun, yes, but also chaos, expectations, family

dynamics, and endless to-do lists. No wonder our nervous systems can feel overwhelmed and dysregulated.

One concept I often share with my clients is the Window of Tolerance, which you can find more information about by searching online. It's the zone where we feel calm, grounded, and able to respond rather than react. When we are outside of it, we may notice ourselves becoming anxious, irritable, shut down, or even numb. None of this means there's something wrong with you, it simply means your system is doing its best to cope.

My number one tip for keeping calm in the Christmas chaos is to create pockets of time for yourself. Ask yourself what your body needs most – if that is a short nap, do it, there should be no shame associated with this. We are all guilty of not listening to what our body needs in the moment. Step outside for a moment of fresh air, take a few slow breaths, or focus on something soothing around you, and start noticing and engaging with your five senses. We are so busy in 'doing mode', we neglect our just 'being' mode. Look for the richness in this busy season, whether it is the joy on children's faces or a crisp winter morning.

Is it ok to say no to parties or family events – and how can I do it without guilt?

A Yes, it's absolutely ok to say no to parties or family events at Christmas. In fact, sometimes it's exactly what your mind and body need. The holiday season is full of expectations, busy schedules, and social demands, and constantly saying 'yes' can easily lead to burnout. Protecting your energy is not selfish, it's self-care.

A key part of this is practising self-compassion. Remind yourself that your needs matter, too. Saying no doesn't mean you don't care about others; it means you're choosing to show up in a way that's sustainable, so when you do connect, you can be fully present and engaged. How to do it without guilt? Keep it simple and kind. You might say, 'I really appreciate the invite, but I won't make it this time. I'm thinking of you though and sending lots of love.' Gentle honesty like this sets clear boundaries, values your wellbeing, and reduces guilt, helping you navigate this busy time with more awareness of your own needs, which can get overlooked.

A fresh walk on a winter's morning may be just what you need





Reconnect with yourself over a tea break – it can help you to better handle whatever Christmas throws at you

PRO TIPS & TRICKS

How do you suggest people handle tricky relatives or tense family moments?

A It's important to remember that you cannot control other people's behaviour, only your own. You always have a choice in how you respond, and the choices you make can either protect or deplete your wellbeing. Choosing responses that align with your boundaries, values, and emotional safety isn't selfish; it's self-care.

Your nervous system plays a crucial role in these interactions. When you remain grounded and regulated, you create the potential to positively influence the dynamics around you. Your nervous system can calm another person's nervous system. In psychotherapy this is called Polyvagal theory, which teaches us that when someone sees or senses calm, safety, and connection in your presence, their own nervous system may begin to settle. This doesn't mean you are responsible for 'fixing' others, it simply highlights the power of staying present, breathing, and responding rather than reacting impulsively. Practical strategies include pausing before responding, taking slow breaths, stepping away when needed, or using brief grounding exercises. Choosing self-compassionate responses allows you to navigate family interactions more calmly.

What's a quick, stress-busting activity that someone can do if they're feeling frazzled?

A When stress hits, especially during busy or overwhelming times, it can feel like your mind is spinning and your body is on high alert. One of the most effective ways to regain balance is to bring your attention fully into the present moment. A simple grounding technique is the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique. This involves focusing on each of your senses and thinking of things that you notice. For example, come up with five things you can see, such as birds, a spot on the ceiling, or a picture hanging on the wall. Follow with four things you can feel or touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Another stress-busting practice is to do a quick body scan. Are your shoulders tight? Is your jaw clenched? How is your posture? Do you need to stretch, breathe more deeply, or perhaps take a short walk? Simply noticing these sensations and responding to them can calm the nervous system.

Integrating small self-care routines throughout your day can also prevent stress from building up. This might include brief mindfulness exercises, sipping water, or listening to a calming song or music. Even micro-moments of care, such as a few slow breaths, gentle stretches, or a short pause, can be powerful ways to reset, restore, and reconnect with yourself, leaving you better able to handle whatever comes next.

What's your best advice for starting the New Year refreshed, not exhausted?

A Starting a new year often comes with high expectations, social media comparisons, and pressure to 'do better' or 'be more'. It's natural to notice others' accomplishments, but you don't have to get overwhelmed. Social media often shows a 'perfect' version of life, not the full picture, and comparing yourself can quickly lead to stress and self-criticism. Christmas can feel bittersweet when we compare it to others' 'perfect' holidays or to our own cherished past celebrations. Songs, films and memories often stir nostalgia or loss.

A healthier approach is to focus on what truly matters to you. Pause and ask yourself: what feels important right now? There's no need to pressure yourself into sweeping resolutions or ambitious goals. Integrating small self-care routines can support this process. This might include simply giving yourself permission to rest, or mindfully savour a cup of coffee and a cake.

Beginning the year refreshed isn't about perfection, it's about grounding yourself, recognising your needs, and stepping into it with presence, patience, and self-compassion.

Next month in...

YourHome

FRESH HOMES

5 real homes full of ideas for the New Year and beyond

*All features subject to change



PLUS Quick and easy updates for every room • The UK's 40 best interiors shops
• How to extend your kitchen • Cut the cost of going to the gym, & more...



Last-minute festive tips:
banish clutter + NYE hosting



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Stylish looks you'll love



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Your budget Christmas menu

Create a festive feast for £5 a head! Follow one of our three purse-friendly menus to keep costs low without skimping on flavour, or mix and match for a bespoke banquet



Menu 1

£5.34
per head

Festive faves

- ★ Starter – Smoked trout paté, p90
- ★ Main – Festive turkey roll, p91
- ★ Side – Fondant potatoes, p93
- ★ Dessert – Chocolate orange pud, p94

£4.75
per head

Menu 2

Luxe for less

- ★ Starter – Smoked trout paté, p90
- ★ Main – Festive ham with orange juniper glaze, p91
- ★ Side – Ginger and cardamom carrots, p93
- ★ Dessert – Chocolate orange pud, p94

Menu 3

Veggie delight

£5.86
per head

- ★ Starter – Roasted parsnip & carrot soup with kale crisps, p90
- ★ Main – Shallot and mushroom galette, p92
- ★ Side – Spiced roasted cabbage steaks, p92
- ★ Dessert – Black Forest parfait, p94



FOOD & DRINK

£1.39
per
serving

COOK'S TIP

You can also use smoked salmon for this recipe, if preferred. Look out for supermarket deals during the festive season, then make the pâté and freeze in advance

TO PREP
5 mins
SERVES
8-10



Smoked trout pâté

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 200g smoked trout ✓ 250g cream cheese ✓ 1 lemon, juice ✓ 10g fresh dill ✓ 4 tbsp double cream ✓ salt and pepper **To serve (optional)** ✓ lemon wedges ✓ dill ✓ crackers or biscuits

DIRECTIONS

- Add everything to a blender and blend until smooth. Serve topped with a little dill, along with lemon wedges and biscuits or crackers, if liked.
- If making ahead, add to a labelled freezer bag and freeze flat. Allow to fully defrost before serving.



Recipe and image extracted from *The Batch Lady Saves Christmas* by Suzanne Mulholland (£25, Ebury Press). Photography: Andrew Hayes-Watkins

Roasted parsnip & carrot soup with kale crisps

£1.06
per
serving

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 500g parsnips ✓ 300g carrots ✓ 1 tbsp maple syrup ✓ 3 tbsp olive oil ✓ salt and pepper ✓ 150g kale, stalks and leaves separated ✓ 2 onions, roughly chopped ✓ 2 garlic cloves, crushed ✓ 2 tsp ground cumin ✓ 500ml vegetable stock ✓ 1 tbsp lemon juice ✓ 4 tbsp non-dairy yoghurt

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6. Trim, peel and cut the parsnips and carrots into 3cm chunks. Toss with maple syrup and 1 tbsp oil, then spread out on a parchment-lined baking tray. Season and roast for 20 minutes.
- Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Chop the kale stalks, then add to the pan with the onions, garlic and a pinch of salt. Cover with a lid and cook for 12 minutes. Remove the lid, add the cumin and cook for 3 minutes. Add the roasted parsnips and carrots, stock and 750ml water; bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 minutes.
- Reduce oven to 160°C/140°C fan/gas mark 3. Tear the kale leaves into 5cm pieces. Toss with the remaining oil and a few drops of lemon juice. Season and spread over a baking tray. Roast for 12-15 minutes, turning halfway.
- Blend the soup with 1 tbsp lemon juice. Add a splash of water to loosen, then reheat. To serve, swirl in a dollop of non-dairy yoghurt; top with the kale crisps and black pepper.

TO PREP
15 mins
TO COOK
40 mins
SERVES 4



Recipe and image courtesy of Waitrose, waitrose.com

£2.21
per
serving

Festive turkey roll

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 600g turkey breast steaks ✓ salt and pepper ✓ 250g sage and onion stuffing ✓ 150g cranberry sauce, plus extra to serve ✓ 100g black pudding, crumbled ✓ fresh sage leaves ✓ 10 thin streaky bacon rashers ✓ gravy, to serve (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- Use a meat tenderiser, or the end of a rolling pin covered with cling film, to bash and flatten the turkey until about 1cm thick. Arrange the turkey overlapping on a large sheet of cling film to make a rectangle approx. 30 x 23cm. Season.
- Spread the stuffing evenly over turkey then spread with cranberry sauce and sprinkle with black pudding. Using the cling film to help, roll up from a shorter side. Wrap tightly in cling film and chill for 30 minutes, or until ready to cook.
- Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C fan/gas mark 5. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Unwrap the turkey and place on the tray. Put a few sage leaves on top, then lay bacon rashers, overlapping, along the roll, tucking ends under. Insert sage leaves between the bacon if liked. Tie with string.
- Bake for about 1 hour 30 minutes until cooked through and juices run clear. Lightly cover with foil and leave to stand for 15 minutes.
- To serve, lift onto a warmed serving dish and discard the string. Cut into chunky slices. Serve with extra cranberry sauce.

Recipe and image from the 2026 Dairy Diary, available from your milk deliverer and at dairydiary.co.uk

TO PREP
30 mins
+ chilling and
resting
TO COOK
1 hour 30 mins
SERVES 6

Festive ham with an orange juniper glaze

£1.42
per
serving

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 2kg gammon joint, boneless or half boneless
- ✓ 1 onion, peeled and quartered ✓ 1 orange, peel
- ✓ handful of fresh woody herbs such as bay, rosemary and thyme ✓ 1 tsp black peppercorns **For the glaze** ✓ 300g golden granulated sugar ✓ 1 tbsp runny honey ✓ 100ml water ✓ 2 oranges – peel and juice of 1 and 1 tbsp zest from another ✓ 1 cinnamon stick ✓ 1 tbsp juniper berries ✓ a few sprigs of rosemary, thyme and 3 or 4 bay leaves

DIRECTIONS

- Place ham in a large, deep pan. Add the onion, orange peel, herbs and peppercorns, then top with water to cover. Bring to the boil then simmer. Cover and simmer for about 2 hours, or as per the packet. Top with water if needed.
- For the glaze: add all the ingredients, except for the zest, into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes until the glaze has thickened and is sticky. Add more sugar if it's too runny, or water if too thick.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6. When the ham has cooked, remove it from the pan and place in a baking dish. Score the fat into a diamond pattern.
- Brush some of the glaze onto the fat and bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes. Brush glaze onto the fat 3-4 times during cooking. Sprinkle over the zest with the last layer of glaze. Remove from oven when the ham has a golden crust.

Recipe and image courtesy of Robert Welch, robertwelch.com.
Recipe developed by Sarah Hemsley

TO PREP
10 mins
TO COOK
3 hours
SERVES 14



The ham can be sliced and eaten hot or cold. If storing leftovers, wait until the meat has fully cooled before wrapping in tin foil and placing in the fridge. It will keep well for a few days

TO PREP
10 mins
TO COOK
1 hour
SERVES 6

£2.39
per
serving

Shallot and mushroom galette

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil ✓ 1 tbsp unsalted butter ✓ 400g round shallots, peeled and halved ✓ 750g mixed mushrooms (including closed cup, oyster, shiitake and portobello), roughly sliced ✓ 4 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped ✓ 4-5 sprigs thyme ✓ 125ml dry sherry ✓ salt and pepper ✓ 320g ready-rolled shortcrust pastry ✓ 100g blue cheese (ensure vegetarian) ✓ 1 egg, beaten

DIRECTIONS

- Heat a large frying pan on a medium-high heat, add the oil and butter. Once melted, add the shallots in a single layer. Fry for around 5 minutes until golden and caramelised on one side.
- Add the mushrooms, and stir every minute or so, until they've released their moisture and are beginning to caramelise. This should take about 15 minutes. Add the garlic and thyme and cook for a further couple of minutes until fragrant. Add the sherry and continue to fry until all of the liquid has cooked off. Remove from the heat and season to taste with salt and pepper.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Unroll the pastry onto a lined baking sheet and shape into an oval. Spoon the mushroom mixture into the middle, in a thick even layer, leaving a 4cm border around the edge. Dot the mushroom mixture with the blue cheese.
- Fold and pleat the edges of the dough border over the mushrooms, leaving the centre exposed. Lightly brush the edges with the beaten egg. Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown in colour. Place on a cooling rack and allow to cool for 5 minutes before slicing and serving.



Spiced roasted cabbage steaks

73p
per
serving

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 1 red cabbage (about 900g) ✓ 2 tbsp olive oil
✓ 1 tsp cumin seeds ✓ 100g cooked whole chestnuts, chopped ✓ 1 lime, zested, ½ juiced

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6 and put a baking tray inside to heat up. Slice 2cm off the round top of the cabbage, then cut the rest widthways into 4 x 2-3cm thick slices, discarding the woody core.
- Use 1 tbsp oil to brush both sides of the cabbage slices. Season with salt. Arrange on the hot tray, then roast on the middle shelf for 20 minutes.
- Carefully flip the 'steaks' over – don't worry if some of the outer leaves become loose. Drizzle with the remaining oil and sprinkle over the cumin seeds. Scatter the chopped chestnuts around the cabbage, then roast for 15-20 minutes until the cabbage is very crispy and tender in the centre, and the chestnuts are lightly browned.
- Transfer the cabbage 'steaks' to a serving plate, then scatter over the lime zest and squeeze over the juice. Top with the roasted chestnuts to serve.

Recipe and image courtesy of Tesco Real Food,
realfood.tesco.com

MAKE IT VEGAN!

Use plant-based butter and blue cheese. Swap the egg glaze for dairy-free milk and ensure the sherry and pastry are vegan.

Recipe and image courtesy of UK Shallots, ukshallot.com



TO PREP
10 mins
TO COOK
40 mins
SERVES 4





TO PREP
25 mins
TO COOK
25 mins
SERVES 6

Use
plant-
based butter
to make this
vegan

COOK'S TIP

55p
per
serving

Fondant potatoes

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 6 medium Maris Piper potatoes (about 800g in total) ✓ 1 tbsp olive oil ✓ 100g salted butter ✓ 3 garlic cloves, thickly sliced ✓ 1 rosemary sprig ✓ 400ml hot vegetable stock, made using 1 vegetable stock cube

DIRECTIONS

■ Cut 2cm off the long ends of all the potatoes so they have two ends that they can stand up on, then peel the skin from the sides. Cut each potato in half again so you have 12 short cylinders.
■ Heat the oil in a lidded deep frying pan over a medium-high heat and fry the potatoes for 5-6 minutes on each cut end, until they have a golden crust. Add the butter and allow to melt, then stir in the garlic and rosemary and allow to cook for 1 minute before carefully pouring in the stock. Add the lid and turn the heat down to gently simmer for 20 minutes, until the potatoes are tender.

Recipe and image courtesy of Tesco Real Food, realfood.tesco.com

Ginger and cardamom carrots

75p
per
serving

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 1.5kg carrots ✓ 1 orange ✓ thumb of ginger, peeled and grated ✓ 8 cardamom pods, lightly crushed ✓ salt and pepper ✓ 50g butter, cubed ✓ handful flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

DIRECTIONS

■ Trim the carrots, peel and then slice in half lengthways (quarter if thick). The carrots should all be roughly the same thickness.
■ Place them in a deep, wide frying pan. Squeeze in the juice from the orange. Add the ginger and cardamom pods. Season with salt and pepper, and gently stir to mix. Add 100ml water and the butter.
■ Set the pan on a high heat, cover with a lid and bring to the boil, then remove the lid and reduce heat to medium. Simmer for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has evaporated and the carrots are tender.
■ Transfer the carrots and their liquid to a serving dish, discarding the cardamom pods. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Recipe and image courtesy of Abel & Cole, abelandcole.co.uk



TO PREP
15 mins
TO COOK
15 mins
SERVES 8

Leftover
carrots will
keep in the
fridge for up
to 3 days



TO PREP
20 mins
+ cooling and
standing
TO COOK
2 hours 30 mins
SERVES 8

Chocolate orange pud

£1.19
per
serving

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 150g soft pitted dates, finely chopped ✓ 2 oranges, finely grated zest and juice ✓ 160g unsalted butter, softened ✓ 100g dark brown sugar ✓ 2 medium eggs, beaten ✓ 150g mixed dried fruit ✓ 100g self-raising flour ✓ 25g cocoa powder ✓ 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda **For the sauce** ✓ 150g dark chocolate ✓ 100ml double cream ✓ orange slices, to serve

DIRECTIONS

- Grease and line the base of a 1 litre pudding basin. Put dates in a saucepan with half the orange zest. Pour in half the orange juice with 100ml water. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 5 minutes until soft, pulpy, and the liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat, beat until smooth and leave to cool completely.
- Whisk 110g butter with the sugar, cooled date mixture and eggs until creamy. Stir in the dried fruit then sift in flour, cocoa and bicarbonate of soda and fold together.
- Spoon into the basin and smooth the top. Lay a round of baking parchment directly on top of the mixture, then cover with foil with a pleat in the centre. Secure with string.
- Stand the basin on a trivet in a large saucepan. Pour water into the pan to come one-quarter of the way up the sides of the basin. Bring to the boil, cover and steam for about 2 hours 30 minutes until firm, and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to stand for 10 minutes.
- For the sauce, break chocolate into a saucepan and add the remaining butter, orange zest and juice. Heat very gently until melted. Remove from heat and stir in cream. Serve with the pudding and fresh orange segments.

Recipe and image courtesy of Dairy Diary, dairydiary.co.uk

Black Forest parfait

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 350g frozen pitted sweet cherries
✓ 2 tbsp granulated sugar ✓ 2 tbsp De Kuyper cherry brandy liqueur ✓ 60g vegan dark cooking chocolate ✓ 220ml pot The Coconut Collaborative vegan double cream

£1.68
per
serving

DIRECTIONS

- Heat the frozen cherries, sugar and cherry brandy liqueur in a medium saucepan over a medium heat for 15 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, until thickened and syrupy. Set aside to cool completely, then chill for at least 2 hours.
- Use a vegetable peeler to shave small curls of chocolate to decorate (about 10g) and set aside. Cut the rest into fine shards.
- Drain 3 tbsp of the cherry syrup. Divide the vegan double cream equally between 2 bowls. Whisk 1 tbsp cherry syrup into the cream in one of the bowls until it forms soft peaks. Whisk the plain vegan double cream in the other bowl to soft peaks (about 1 minute).
- Divide half the cherry compote among 4 glasses, then layer over the cherry whipped cream and chocolate shards. Repeat with the remaining compote, then the plain whipped cream and drizzle over the remaining reserved cherry syrup. Garnish with the reserved chocolate curls.

Recipe and image courtesy of Tesco Real Food, realfood.tesco.com



TO PREP
10 mins
+ cooling and
chilling
TO COOK
15 mins
SERVES 4



The desserts can be made up to 2 hours ahead and stored in the fridge. Any longer and the liquids in the cherries may leak into the cream. If making ahead, garnish with cherry syrup just before serving



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A FREE-FROM FEAST

Make sure no one misses out on the festivities with these recipes geared to special dietary requirements

Restaurant-worthy

COOK'S TIP

Leave out the tuna or use a vegan substitute to make this dish plant-based

TO PREP
10 mins
SERVES 2

Starter

Mango and relish tuna rice stacks

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 50g finely shredded raw Brussels sprouts ✓ salt and pepper ✓ 1 orange
✓ 400g ready-cooked basmati rice
✓ 1 x tin tuna in olive oil ✓ vegan mayonnaise ✓ 1 avocado, smashed
✓ 1 mango, diced ✓ 30g Vadasz Hot & Sweet Jalapeno Relish ✓ handful fresh coriander, roughly chopped ✓ splash chilli oil (ensure nut-free)

DIRECTIONS

■ Season the shredded sprouts with salt and pepper, squeeze over the juice of about half an orange and grate over some zest.
■ Press the rice into two oiled ramekins, or use your hands to shape. Put onto serving plates.
■ Mix the tuna with some vegan mayonnaise and the smashed avocado.

Spread a layer onto each rice stack and top with the seasoned sprouts. Mix some diced mango into the Vadasz Hot & Sweet Jalapeno Relish and add to the rice stacks.

■ Garnish with coriander and a drizzle of chilli oil.

Recipe and image courtesy of Vadasz Pickles & Ferments, @vadaszdeli



Mains

Butternut squash and pickled walnut wellington

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 1 small butternut squash, skin on and diced ✓ olive oil
 ✓ salt and pepper ✓ 1 onion, carrot and celery stick, all finely chopped
 ✓ 250g chestnut mushrooms, finely chopped
 ✓ 2 cloves garlic, crushed ✓ handful each of rosemary and thyme, finely chopped
 ✓ pinch each of cinnamon, all spice, paprika and ground nutmeg ✓ 60g chickpea flour ✓ 1 tbsp miso paste
 ✓ 100g dried cranberries, finely diced ✓ 150g pre-cooked chestnuts
 ✓ 150g Opies pickled walnuts, drained ✓ 500g puff pastry ✓ 100g cranberry sauce
 ✓ 60ml plant-based milk ✓ 25ml maple syrup

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan/gas mark 5. Place squash in roasting tray, drizzle with oil, season. Roast for 40 minutes.
- Heat 2 tbsp oil in a pan and sweat onion, carrot and celery. Add mushrooms, fry for 4-5 minutes, then add garlic, herbs, spices and 1 tsp each of salt and pepper. Fry until fragrant.
- Remove squash from oven and mash. Stir through the mushroom mixture, flour, miso and dried cranberries until combined. Shape into a log on greaseproof paper.
- Pulse the chestnuts and pickled walnuts together in a food processor until finely chopped. Set aside.
- Roll out the pastry into a rectangle, about 60 x 40cm and 3mm thick. On the right third, brush the pastry with a layer of cranberry sauce, leaving about 1cm of pastry free around it. Top with a third of the chestnut and walnut mixture, then place the squash log on top. Brush all over with cranberry sauce, and then a layer of the remaining nut mixture.
- Fold the pastry over the log to encase it all and push down the edges so nothing leaks out when cooking. Cut off excess.
- Combine the milk and maple syrup and brush all over. Place on a baking tray lined with parchment paper and bake for 40 minutes, or until golden.

Recipe and image courtesy of Opies, bennetttopie.com, @opiesfoods



Feature Lucy Whyld



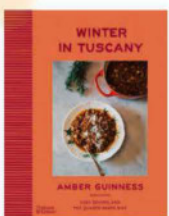
Herby roast pork loin with potatoes

YOU WILL NEED

✓ 600-800g organic pork loin, boneless and rindless ✓ sea salt and freshly ground black pepper ✓ 2 garlic cloves, lightly crushed with the side of a knife ✓ sage leaves ✓ 4 tbsp olive oil ✓ 1kg waxy potatoes, peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
For the stuffing ✓ 4 garlic cloves, finely crushed or chopped ✓ a few rosemary sprigs, leaves picked and finely chopped ✓ large handful of sage leaves, finely chopped

DIRECTIONS

- Remove pork from fridge 1 hour before cooking to let it come up to room temperature. Season with salt. Preheat the oven to 270°C/250°C fan/gas mark 9, or as high as it will go.
- In a bowl, combine the stuffing ingredients and season with salt and black pepper. Use a long thin knife to make a hole through the centre of the pork. Use the end of a wooden spoon to make the hole wider and then fill the cavity with the stuffing. Pat the top of the pork dry with paper towel and rub with a couple of generous pinches of salt.
- Place the pork in a roasting tin, on top of the garlic cloves and sage leaves. Pour olive oil over the pork. Roast for 20 minutes, then remove from oven. Turn oven down to 180°C. Add the potatoes to the pan, toss in hot oil and season well with salt. Roast for another 45 minutes, or until the fat on top of the pork is dark brown and the potatoes are browned.
- Remove the pan from the oven. Transfer the pork to a plate and leave to rest under foil. Return the potatoes to the oven for 10 minutes to crisp up. After 10 minutes, slice the meat, drizzle over cooking juices and serve with the potatoes.



Recipe and image courtesy of Winter in Tuscany by Amber Guinness (£29.99, Thames & Hudson)



TO PREP
10 mins
TO COOK
20 mins
SERVES 4



Sides

Caramelised Brussels sprouts with butter beans

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ✓ 500g Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- ✓ salt and black pepper
- ✓ 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ✓ 1 tsp smoked paprika powder
- ✓ 1 tbsp agave syrup
- ✓ 1 splash balsamic vinegar
- ✓ 1 x 400g tin butter beans, drained and rinsed
- ✓ 1 x 400g tin plum tomatoes
- ✓ 100g roasted chestnuts, chopped
- ✓ ½ lemon, juice
- ✓ 50g fresh parsley, chopped

DIRECTIONS

- Heat the olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the Brussels sprouts, salt and pepper. Cook until the sprouts are slightly tender and their edges lightly caramelised.
- Add the garlic and smoked paprika and, once fragrant, stir in the agave syrup and balsamic vinegar.
- Pour in the drained butter beans and plum tomatoes and gently stir to combine. Let the mixture simmer for 5-8 minutes to allow all the flavours to infuse. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- In the meantime, pan-fry the chestnuts in a little oil until the edges are lightly crispy. Set aside. Before serving, stir through the lemon juice, garnish with fresh parsley and crispy chestnuts.

Recipe and image courtesy of Romina Callwitz, romylondonuk.com

Cauliflower 'cheese'

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 1 medium cauliflower, broken into large florets, leaves reserved
- ✓ 4 tbsp olive oil
- ✓ salt and pepper
- ✓ 1 large leek, roughly chopped
- ✓ 1 x 400g tin butter beans, drained and rinsed
- ✓ 350ml Alpro Oat No Sugars Long Life drink
- ✓ 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- ✓ 4 tbsp nutritional yeast
- ✓ 100g sourdough bread, crusts removed
- ✓ 50g dairy-free cheese alternative, coarsely grated
- ✓ 1 tbsp flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 7. In a large roasting tin, toss the cauliflower florets and leaves with 2 tbsp oil. Season and roast for 20 minutes, stirring halfway.
- Meanwhile, heat 1 tbsp oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Fry the leek with a pinch of salt for 6-7 minutes until tender. Stir in the butter beans, oat drink, mustard and nutritional yeast. Simmer for 2-3 minutes, then transfer to a blender and whizz until smooth, then season.
- Grate the sourdough on the coarse side of a box grater, or tear into small pieces. Toss with the remaining 1 tbsp oil, grated dairy-free cheese alternative and parsley, then season. Lower the oven to 200°C/180°C/gas mark 6. Put the cauliflower in an ovenproof dish, about 1-1.5 litres, pour over the sauce, then sprinkle the breadcrumbs evenly on top. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden and bubbling.

Recipe and image courtesy of Waitrose, waitrose.com



COOK'S TIP

Nutritional dried yeast is popular in vegan cooking for its savoury, almost cheesy flavour (it's deactivated, so doesn't cause rising). Use up leftovers by sprinkling over your favourite pasta or risotto instead of cheese, or blend into soups and salad dressings

TO PREP
15 mins
TO COOK
40 mins
SERVES 4

Pudding

Sticky date pudding with miso butterscotch



YOU WILL NEED

For the apples ✓ 3 Pink Lady apples
✓ 35g soft light brown sugar ✓ 45ml apple cider vinegar ✓ fine sea salt
✓ 20g vegan butter

For the pudding ✓ 100g vegan butter, at room temperature, plus extra for greasing ✓ 200g pitted dates, roughly chopped ✓ 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
✓ 130g soft light brown sugar ✓ 200g plain flour ✓ 1¾ tsp baking powder

For the miso butterscotch ✓ 500ml plant-based whippable cream ✓ 85g soft light brown sugar ✓ 1½ tbsp date molasses ✓ 50g white miso ✓ vegan ice cream, to serve

DIRECTIONS

■ Peel, core and cut the apples into 1.5cm dice. Combine the brown sugar, the vinegar and pinch of salt in a medium bowl and stir until the sugar dissolves. Add the apples, toss to coat and set aside for 10 minutes. Then, heat the butter in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook the apples for about 5 minutes, until most of the liquid has evaporated and the apples are lightly caramelised. Set aside.

■ For the sponge pudding, preheat the oven to 185°C/165°C fan/gas mark 4. Grease the bottom and sides of an ovenproof dish about 28cm long. Combine the dates and 350ml water in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer, then cook for 3-4 minutes, until the dates are soft. Remove from the heat and stir in the bicarbonate of soda, then set aside to cool slightly.

■ Meanwhile, using an electric mixer, beat the butter and brown sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in the date mixture until combined, then sift in the flour and baking powder. Fold until just combined, then fold in the apples. Pour into the dish and bake for about 35 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.

■ For the miso sauce, put all the ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk occasionally until combined, then simmer until the

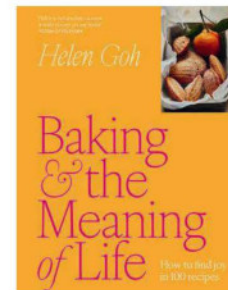
colour deepens slightly – around 10-15 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

■ Prick the sponge all over with a cake skewer, then pour half the sauce over the top. Leave to soak for 10 minutes. Serve the pudding warm with vegan ice cream and the remaining sauce.

TO PREP
25 mins
TO COOK
45 mins
SERVES 6-8

COOK'S TIP

Use a gluten-free flour to make this suitable for guests with gluten intolerances



Recipe and image from *Baking and the Meaning of Life* by Helen Goh (£26, Murdoch Books) murdochbooks.co.uk Photography: © Laura Edwards 2025



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Seasonal bakes



Scent the air with sweetly spiced aromas as you whip up a batch of these festive favourites



TO PREP
25 mins + cooling
and chilling
TO COOK 15 mins
MAKES
approx. 20

Gingerbread Christmas tree cookies

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 50g light brown soft sugar ✓ 20g golden syrup ✓ ¾ tbsp ground ginger
- ✓ 2 tsp ground cinnamon ✓ ¼ tsp ground cloves ✓ 60g salted butter
- ✓ ¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda ✓ 140g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- ✓ white icing, to decorate (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- In a medium pan, combine the sugar, syrup, spices, butter and 2 tbsp water. Cook over a low-medium heat until melted. Remove from the heat and stir in the bicarbonate of soda. Pour into a bowl and leave for about 30 minutes.
- When cool, sift and stir in the flour. Flatten the dough into a disc and wrap in parchment. Chill for at least 1 hour.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. Line 2 baking trays with baking parchment. Roll the dough between 2 sheets of baking parchment until about 4mm thick. Cut out shapes from the dough and bake for 8-10 minutes until lightly golden.
- Cool on a wire rack, then decorate with icing, if liked. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.

Recipe and image courtesy of Waitrose, waitrose.com



TO PREP
20 mins + cooling
TO COOK
45 mins
SERVES 12-16

Christmas wreath bundt cake

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 250g unsalted butter, softened
- ✓ 250g golden caster sugar ✓ 3 large eggs ✓ 275g self-raising flour ✓ 200g mincemeat ✓ 100g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting ✓ 2 tbsp water
- ✓ mixed berries and rosemary, to decorate

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/gas mark 4. In a mixing bowl, cream together the butter and caster sugar until light and fluffy. Add in the eggs, one at a time, and mix until combined. Add in the flour and mix until smooth, then fold in the mincemeat.
- Pour the batter into a 23cm silicone bundt mould (if you are using a metal tin, grease with butter). Bake for 40-45 minutes until golden and springy.
- Allow to cool completely, then remove from the mould and place on a plate.
- Mix icing sugar with water and drizzle.
- Decorate with berries, rosemary and a dusting of icing sugar.

Recipe and image courtesy of the Easy Peasy Baking campaign by UK Flour Millers, fabflour.co.uk



TO PREP
10 mins + cooling
TO COOK
20 mins
MAKES 12

Spiced Christmas muffins

YOU WILL NEED

- ✓ 250g plain flour ✓ 100g caster sugar
- ✓ 2½ tsp baking powder ✓ ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda ✓ 2 tsp ground cinnamon ✓ 2 tsp ground nutmeg
- ✓ 1 tsp mixed spice ✓ 2 oranges, zest and juice ✓ 200ml Yeo Valley Organic natural yoghurt ✓ 75ml vegetable oil
- ✓ 1 egg, beaten ✓ 175g dried cranberries ✓ icing sugar (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 170°C/150°C fan/gas mark 3 and line a muffin tin with 12 cases.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, spices and orange zest. In another bowl, combine all the wet ingredients and stir into the dry mix.
- Add the cranberries and divide into the paper cases. Bake for about 20 minutes then leave to cool. Dust with icing sugar, if liked.

Recipe and image courtesy of Yeo Valley, yeovalley.co.uk

COOK'S TIP

If you're worried about breaking the cake when removing it from the mould, place it in the freezer for a few hours, or overnight, to firm up. Then it should come out with ease!

2025 YourHome Christmas made easy



Your ultimate guide to a *magical Christmas!*

- ★ Discover all of this year's **BEST FESTIVE TRENDS** and **STYLING TIPS**
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آموزشگاه آنلاین بیست و پنج روزگی آوریون داخلی

HOUSEHOLD *hints*

This Christmas, treat yourself to the crème de la crème from your local supermarket. We've found the best bargains, as well as luxurious showstoppers

SET THE TABLE

Add that personal (and edible!) touch to your Christmas table with these brand-new chocolate place settings from Aldi. When your guests arrive, invite them to take a chocolate square, then lay a sheet of gold or bronze transfer paper on top, write their name on it, and peel back to reveal their design. If you can prize the chocolate away from them, pop it at their place setting, ready for the meal to begin. Who will eat theirs first, though?

Bring Christmas crafts to the dinner table!

Contents

- 104 We test** the stars of the Christmas food table – the centrepieces!
- 105 Fill up your plate** Our favourite accompaniments for a bumper feast
- 106 We test** different desserts – perfect for those not so keen on the figgy pud
- 107 Festive tipples** Get into the seasonal spirit with drinks that properly raise the bar
- 108 Tips & tricks** How to hack the biggest food shop of the year like a pro!

Specially Selected
chocolate **place**
settings, £4.99
for 4, Aldi

WE TEST... Alternative centrepieces

Tired of turkey? Our taste test reveals this year's top supermarket showstoppers



SERVES 4

M&S three fish roast, £38, Ocado

This salmon, cod and smoked haddock dish cooks in the tin it comes in, with a sachet of leek and white wine sauce. It's reminiscent of a fish pie, but an extra-special one. The sauce is to die for – it's rich and buttery, with the leek adding a sweet note. However, the layers of fish weren't even – there was a lot more salmon, and the cod and haddock were wider at the ends and finished halfway through. Also, the fish was so beautifully flaky that we couldn't get neat slices – a bit messy but you can redistribute the layers. Overall, it was delicious and I'd happily eat it again.



SERVES 6-8

Exceptional slow cured rack of pork with truffle butter & parmesan crumb, £15.98 per kg, Asda

This rack is French trimmed by hand, so it needs no prep. All you have to do is put it in the oven, baste halfway through with truffle butter, and sprinkle the parmesan crumb 10 minutes before the end. The joint was soft, with a subtle pork flavour. The truffle was there but not too much, and the crumb added some freshness from the herbs. It was slightly fatty, but this kept the meat moist. It looks very impressive on a dining table, too – a sensational swap for the traditional turkey.



SERVES 6

The Best brie & harissa roasted carrot galette, £9, Morrisons

This vegetarian galette looks lovely, with crimped pastry, a herby top and bright colours. You bake it in the tin for the first part of cooking, then remove for the final 5 minutes. We found this last step tricky, as it was hot. We ended up trimming around the sides of the tin so the heat could get in, but we couldn't peel it away from the bottom. This meant we had to serve it in slices, rather than as a complete centrepiece. That said, it looked great on each plate. A stunning veggie alternative to a nut roast.



SERVES 4

Irresistible sweet cured gammon with a maple & mustard glaze, £13.50 per kg, Co-op

This gammon had a delicious and well-balanced flavour – sweetness from the maple, saltiness from the meat, and spice from the cinnamon. It was easy to cook and carved well, so everyone could get an even helping. It was a bit fatty, but this is to be expected with gammon, and you could just remove it before adding the glaze. Overall, this is a lovely choice as a Christmas main course – a modern and elevated twist on a classic. If there are any leftovers, they'd be delicious in a Boxing Day sandwich!

THE WINNER

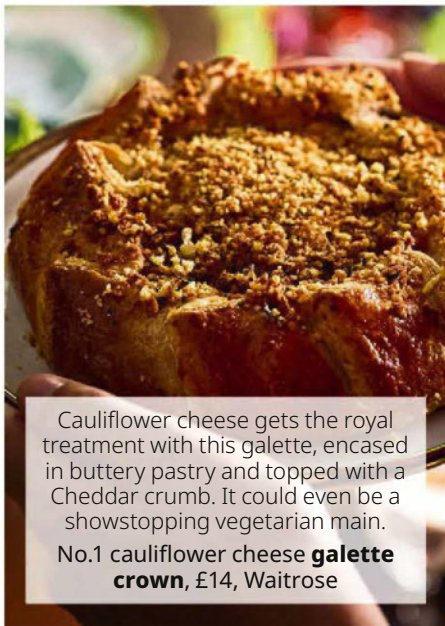


SERVES 4-6

The Ultimate British slow-cooked wagyu shin, £29.99 per kg, Aldi

Wow! This centrepiece is the real deal – it looks the part with the statement of the bone, plus its taste and texture are incredible. This wagyu shin has already been slow-cooked for 8 hours, so all you have to do is oven cook it for 45 minutes, which makes it super flavourful and tender – it just falls off the bone. If you love rich, beefy flavours, then don't miss out on this joint. Plus, it comes with a delicious beef and truffle sauce, which adds to the flavour and doesn't overwhelm as some truffle aromas can. This is a proper showstopper and what a centrepiece should be.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS



Cauliflower cheese gets the royal treatment with this galette, encased in buttery pastry and topped with a Cheddar crumb. It could even be a showstopping vegetarian main.
No.1 cauliflower cheese galette crown, £14, Waitrose

Save the hassle of making your own and buy this delicious turkey gravy. Plus, it's freezable, so you could buy now and save for the big day – job done!

Finest turkey gravy, £3.25 for 500ml, Tesco



This 'pudding' is actually a stuffing ball, topped with pastry, and has a surprise apple and cranberry middle.
The Best Signature Collection melt in the middle pork, sage & red onion stuffing, £15, Morrisons

Finish off your plate with classic ruby red cranberry sauce. This M&S version has port in it, too, to add a bit of punch. Serve warm or cold.

M&S cranberry sauce, £3.25, Ocado



FILL UP your plate

Load up on all the trimmings for an extra-special feast

Don't forget the sprouts! For those who are less keen on the seasonal staple, these come with peas, leeks, cavolo nero and savoy cabbage, plus a basil dressing for a herby lift.

Seasonal vegetables with basil dressing, £3.50, Co-op



TOP TIP

Fry up with leftover roasties on Boxing Day



End the debate on Yorkshire puddings with Christmas dinner with these tree-shaped ones! Fill with pigs in blankets for the ultimate side dish.

Christmas tree-shaped Yorkshire puddings, £1.97 for 2, Asda



Take your root veg up a notch. These parsnips, carrots and butternut squash are tossed in butter and maple syrup for pure indulgence.

Maple roasted vegetable selection, £8, Sainsbury's

Treat yourself to this special version of a classic. These pigs in blankets have extra layers of bacon for bonus flavour and texture.

Specially Selected double-wrapped pigs in blankets, £2.49, Aldi



Feature Megan Gaen

WE TEST... Different desserts

If you're not a fan of Christmas pudding, or just fancy a change from the usual, look no further than this sweet round-up. We've tried a whole host of tempting treats, and these ones made the shortlist



SERVES 7

Finest sticky toffee & panettone Christmas pudding, £11, Tesco

This is an upgrade on a classic Christmas pud, with panettone pieces within and a pourable toffee sauce. You can choose to steam it for an hour or pop in the microwave for 4½ minutes. It wasn't too sweet and even those not so keen on Christmas pudding enjoyed it. The rich caramel sauce was the star of the show, so it's a shame there wasn't more of it. Also, we couldn't really taste the panettone, despite it being prominent on the label. Speaking of the label, it took a while to realise this was a pudding not a cake as the writing is small. Overall, we liked this twist on a classic.



SERVES 2

Exceptional pistachio profiteroles, £4.98 for 6, Asda

This dessert takes the Dubai chocolate trend and elevates it. The profiteroles are soft, with a slight bite to the choux pastry, concealing a pistachio and white chocolate filling. They are topped with a milk chocolate ganache, a chocolate drizzle and crumbled pistachios.

This is a very decadent dessert, but the filling and the topping balance the richness and sweetness. We really enjoyed this stack of profiteroles – they look and taste amazing. The only thing that would make them even better is a bit more crunch somewhere to add some extra texture.



SERVES 2

Gingerbread & maple puddings, £2.50 for 2, Co-op

These sponge puddings microwave in less than a minute, then you turn them out for the syrup to coat them. They have a warming ginger flavour, which is complemented by the sweet maple. We thought the taste was more ginger than gingerbread, but not overly zingy. They felt very nostalgic and reminiscent of a syrup pudding, which was lovely after a roast. The only slight issue was a stodginess at the top of the puddings, but the bottoms were much lighter. We really enjoyed this modern, on-trend take on a more traditional, well-loved dessert.



SERVES 8

Moi mini beignets in Dulce de Leche & Cinnamon, £3.50 for 8, Ocado

If you've eaten too much main course, but still want to finish with something sweet, these dinky beignets are ideal. The small doughnuts are filled with dulce de leche caramel and topped with cinnamon sugar for a festive touch. The caramel was thick and sumptuous and didn't make the dough soggy at all. The only slight improvement we would wish for is that the dough itself had a little more flavour, or perhaps for us to be provided with a bit more of the cinnamon sugar dusting. But they were delightful (and ever so moreish!).

THE WINNER

SERVES 10

Taste the Difference Free From salted caramel chocolate bauble tiffin, £10, Sainsbury's



This tiffin was absolutely delicious! Plus, as it's milk-, egg- and gluten-free, it will please people with a variety of dietary requirements. It's a real showstopper when you bring it to the table, thanks to its striking bauble shape and bronze lustre. Inside there's Belgian, caramel-flavoured dark chocolate, which offers a balanced cocoa flavour, and shortbread pieces, which crumble and taste beautifully buttery. It's rich, so you only need a small slice, and will certainly serve 10 as suggested. We thoroughly enjoyed this tiffin, and believe it would please most people you're catering for.

It's time to pop the
prosecco-ho-ho!
This one's only £8
a bottle, so you
can stock up for
New Year's too!

Prosecco,
£8, M&S



Keep it classic
with mulled
wine. Warm
gently to bring
out the aromas
and top with
orange slices
and cinnamon
sticks.

Mulled wine,
£4.50, Co-op



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Crémant is a budget-
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Champagne. It's
made in the exact
same way, just in a
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Crémant de
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Make your drinks trolley sparkle with
these liqueurs with edible shimmer
inside. Choose from blood orange
gin, honey rum or toffee vodka.

Infusionist Globes liqueurs,
£13.99 each, all Aldi



FESTIVE tipples

However you
want to raise a
glass, we have
a drink for you,
including including
fizz under £10!

Rosé isn't just for summer! This pale
pink mulled wine has notes of red
fruit, lemon and clementine, plus
hints of baked apple and
warming spices.

Mulled rosé, £6, Waitrose



If you're not a
wine drinker, then
this festive ale
is for you. It has
a warm, fruity
flavour, ideal for
nights in, all
cosy by the fire.

**M&S winter
ale, £2.50,
Ocado**



Dubai chocolate goes boozy with
this cream liqueur. Top with chopped
pistachios for a decadent sip.
**Exceptional pistachio & milk
chocolate cream liqueur,**
£8.16, Asda

Move over Aperol,
there's a new
spritz in town!
This blackcurrant
aperitif is available
ready-mixed and
in alcoholic and
non-alcoholic
versions, so
everyone can
celebrate.

**Taste the
Difference
blackcurrant
spritz, £6.50,
non-alcoholic
blackcurrant
spritz,
£4, both
Sainsbury's**



TIPS & tricks

How to save money on your festive food bill, this month's to-dos, plus must-haves



BRA Compac Pro stacking non-stick induction hob pan set, currently £175.99 for 5 pieces, Amazon

Stacks of potential

If your pans have seen better days, don't try and struggle through Christmas dinner with them. This stackable, non-stick induction pan set will make the festive feast prep so much easier. It includes a tall and shallow casserole dish, a frying pan, a steamer, plus lid, detachable handle plus silicone handles for transferring from oven to table. The set would also make a fantastic gift for any at-home chef desiring quality *and* quantity.

Professional Contour carving set, £49 for 2 pieces; oak butcher's block, small, £99, both ProCook

Tools of the trade

Serve up your centrepiece in style with expert tools for the job. ProCook has just launched its Contour range, including this smart carving set, which features stunning black wood handles that are designed to fit safely and securely in your hand. Pair the carving knife and fork with a solid butcher's block to complete your set.



7 WAYS TO... cut the cost of the Christmas food shop

Whether it's just your family or you're hosting a big group this year, we have plenty of ways to make your money go further

- **Start by setting** a budget for food and drink. Include all meals, Christmas dinner, treats, snacks and drinks, and stick to it. Shopping online for home delivery will allow you to monitor the price as you go – book a delivery slot as early as possible. Many supermarkets have already opened their bookings.
- **Have a look** at prices online before you choose where to shop. Apps such as *trolley.co.uk* compare prices at all the major supermarkets.
- **Resist the urge** to over-buy, as you'll waste food. Shops are usually only closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, so you can top up after. Do some meal plans, only buy what you need and, if you want some back-up ideas, pop bits in the freezer.
- **Don't be tempted** by pricey convenience food, ready meals and pre-packed festive hampers, as you often end up paying more for less. You can make your own cheeseboard by buying three of your favourites, an affordable pack of crackers, an own-brand jar of chutney and a bunch of grapes, then serve on a wooden chopping board you already own.
- **If you can** bear to wait until the last minute for your fresh fruit and veg, then you may be rewarded by the yellow sticker fairy. In recent years, some supermarkets have reduced veg prices to as little as 8p per bag in the last hour before closing on Christmas Eve.
- **If you're cooking** for a crowd of friends or family, share the load – and cost – by asking others to bring starters, snacks or desserts, or their favourite tippie.
- **Save vouchers and** coupons through the year and use them on the big shop. Keep an eye out for yellow-sticker items, especially if freezable.

Your December to-dos

1. **Deep-clean** all areas your guests are likely use. Think hallway, kitchen, dining area, living room, bedrooms and bathroom.
2. **Create a plan** for hosting. Decide on menus, snacks and drinks; any activities; and places nearby your guests can visit.
3. **Get a head start on Christmas dinner** by prepping and freezing a few elements now – turn to page 90 for a trout paté starter recipe!
4. **Wrap your presents** and pop them in a hiding spot. Have some extra gifts on standby in case you receive unexpected presents!
5. **Sit back and enjoy the festivities.** Take some well-earned me-time to properly celebrate the season!

FOCUS ON

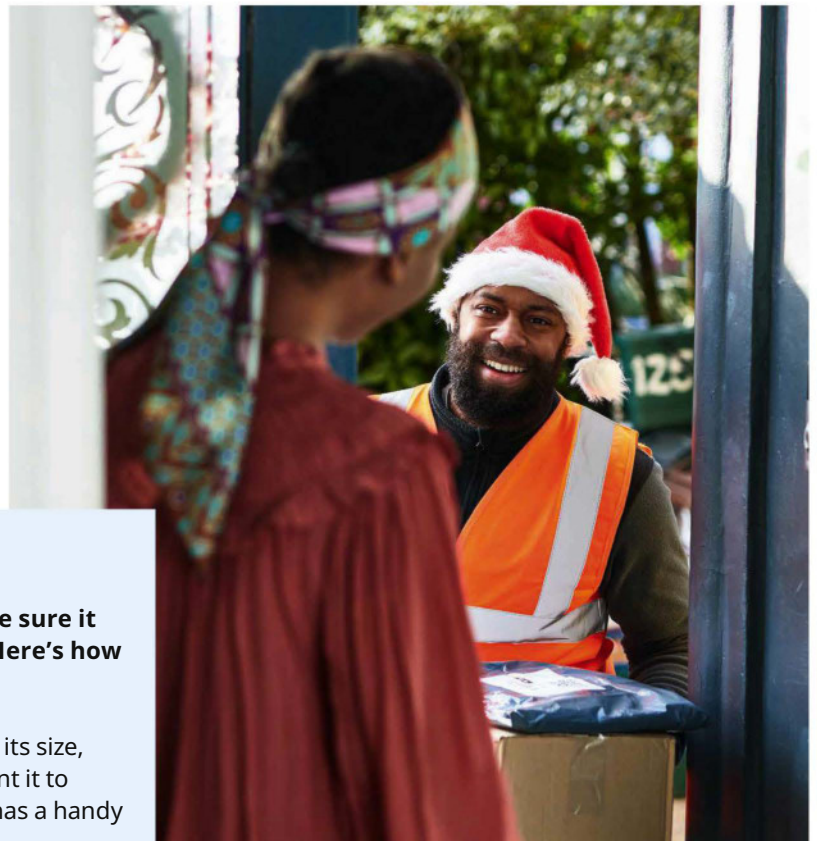
Festive post

Make sure you get your pressies in the post in time for Christmas delivery with our essential guide

HOW TO... *save money*

You've found the perfect gift and want to make sure it reaches your recipient in time for Christmas. Here's how to get the best price and service.

- The cost of sending a parcel varies depending on its size, where you're sending it to and how quickly you want it to arrive, but the main thing is its weight. Royal Mail has a handy calculator at royalmail.com/current-postage-prices.
- As well as Royal Mail and Parcelforce, there are plenty of discount couriers that could cost you less. You can consider the cost via comparison sites such as Parcel2Go, Parcel Monkey, ParcelCompare and ParcelHero.
- If you haven't time to queue at the Post Office, an online courier saves you having to leave the house. ParcelCompare, for instance, offers convenient drop-off locations, or pick up from home or office. You don't need a printer for labels, plus you get £50 parcel protection included.
- For convenience and peace of mind, use InPost to drop, lock and send. It's a really easy way to send gifts using a smart phone. Simply buy a digital QR code label in the app, scan, drop and lock your parcel at any InPost Point near you.
- If you're buying a gift directly from an online UK store, it's often cheaper to have it sent directly to the recipient rather than paying to have it sent to your address, then paying to send it on. If you spend over a certain amount, you may even get free delivery, plus you can often include a gift note.
- Consider buying and sending gifts from the international sites of trusted brands for family or friends who live abroad. Marks & Spencer and Next both offer this service. You can find it at marksandspencer.com/c/international-delivery and nextdirect.com/CountrySelect. If paying in a foreign currency, it's best to use a travel credit card to avoid a non-sterling exchange fee of around 3%, or check your debit or credit card for their terms. Credit cards cover you for any issues on items costing £100 to £30,000 under Section 75.



Top 3 direct parcel service apps

Sign up online and save time

EVRI

Evri, evri.com

A comprehensive app that lets you send parcels, track them, return and divert, as well as being able to update My Places settings, find a ParcelShop and use Evri video to make your gift more personal with a video message. You can even add a photo and delivery notes to help the courier find a tricky address.

InPost, inpost.co.uk

If you like to use the remotely operated InPost lockers found locally for 24/7 print-free posting, you need this app. Use it to send and track deliveries, look for live compartment availability, and to collect your parcels. You'll get live updates as well as collection details straight to the app, so you can keep an eye on all those Christmas gifts you send to family and friends.



Royal Mail, royalmail.com

This app allows you to buy postage in a few simple steps and arrange collection of your items (they bring the label, too). You can then get proof of posting with a digital certificate, find your nearest drop-off points if needed, track deliveries with instant push notification updates on their progress, book redeliveries and choose a Safeplace for items when you're not in.

CONSUMER NEWS

A postage app gives you peace of mind that your precious parcels will arrive safely!

Frequently asked questions...

We answer your festive delivery queries to make sure you and your loved ones don't miss out

What are the last posting dates for Royal Mail's Christmas deliveries?

Royal Mail has already announced its 2025 Christmas delivery dates for both UK and international deliveries – 17th December is the last day for 2nd class inland post. Check online at royalmail.com/christmas/last-posting-dates.

Can I get compensation for a late or missed delivery?

If you order a gift that's meant to be delivered direct from the retailer in time for Christmas, make sure you have proof that they agreed to deliver in time. You're entitled to a refund if the receiver doesn't want the item and, if they do, you may get part of the cost back, even if it's just a delivery charge and especially if you paid extra for a premium service. Contact the retailer and ask to speak with customer service.

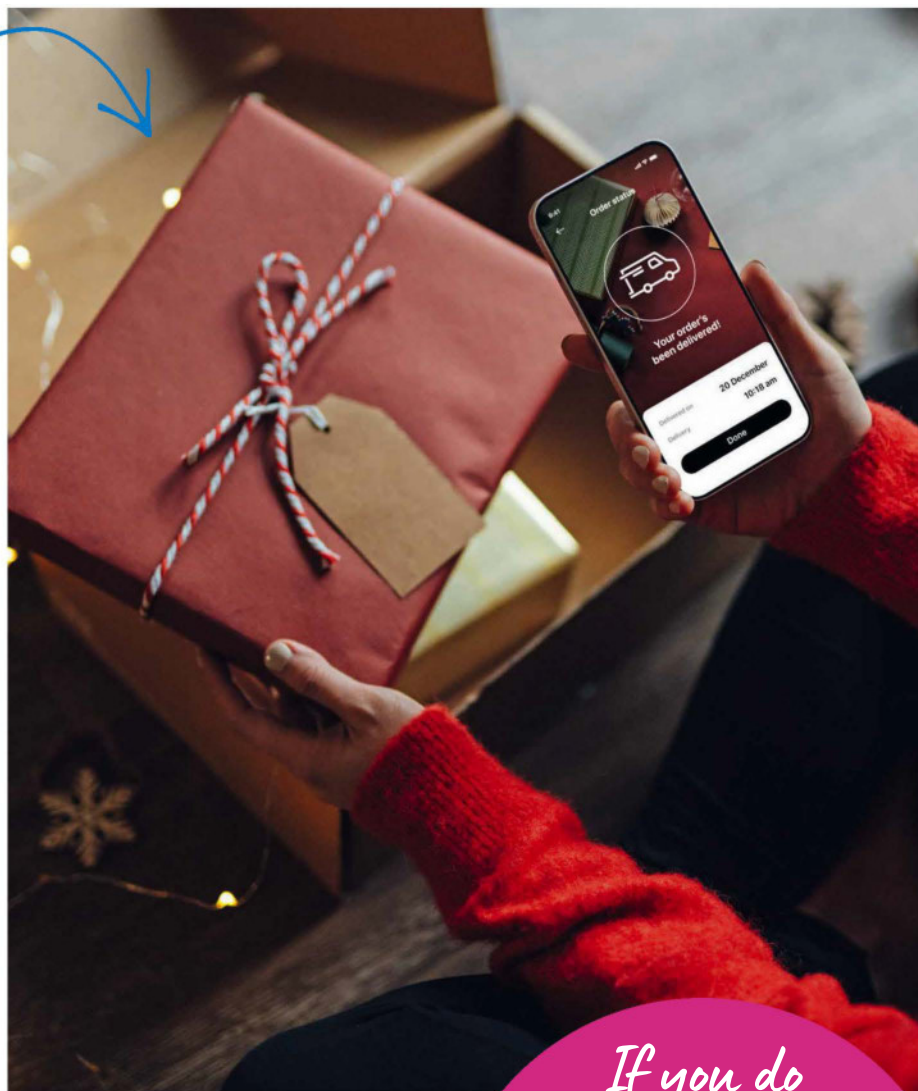
'Track parcels, buy postage, arrange a collection, find drop-off points and book redeliveries via the Royal Mail App'

Are there any prohibited items that I can't send?

If you're not sure, or you're sending something slightly out of the norm, it's always best to check, whether you're using Royal Mail or another courier service. Their websites should be able to tell you. Prohibited items could include things like perfume, aerosols, Christmas crackers or any liquids.

I want to send some Christmas presents to relatives abroad – will I need any extra paperwork?

When sending parcels outside of the



If you do one thing...

If you're ordering a present directly from the retailer to be delivered in time for Christmas, check the estimated delivery time. If you can't find this info online, call customer services to check they can guarantee it will arrive in time for the big day. Or, avoid the stress altogether, get organised and order super early!

UK, you'll need to complete a Customs Declaration (a CN22 or CN23) as well as provide electronic customs data. The electronic data is sent in advance and you'll either provide the info at the time of postage or use an online platform, with the physical CN22 or CN23 form being attached to the parcel. You can do both at the Post Office or online when using Royal Mail's Click & Drop, or another courier service.

Should I get insurance on expensive items being sent?

If you're sending something pricey then yes, it's definitely worth paying extra for insurance in case the present gets lost or is damaged during transit. Most couriers, as well as Royal Mail, offer this as an added extra beyond their basic cover. Check the specific extended compensation options and T&Cs, and make sure you wrap and package the item properly in accordance with their rules and regulations to make sure that you're properly covered.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- You can compare parcel delivery costs with different couriers at parcel2go.com, parcelmonkey.co.uk, parcelhero.com or parcelcompare.com.
- Visit inpost.co.uk for details of InPost's UK parcel delivery service.
- You'll find plenty of handy advice at help.royalmail.com. Topics covered include customs declarations and charges, buying and printing labels online, and even packaging tips.



YOUR Letters

We love hearing from you! Send us your tips, projects and photos using our details below...

Tiles of style



I was completely inspired by Dani's kitchen tiles in your July issue. I thought they were gorgeous and a subtle style statement – so much so that I bought them for my new kitchen! I chose to tile

around my hob as a splashback, just like Dani has. Thank you for the feature!
Pearl Baker, Bath

Rachel, operations editor, says: We're thrilled *Your Home* provided inspiration for your kitchen, Pearl! We can't wait to let Dani know she's such a trendsetter.

Pick up sticks

This spot in my living room really does look best with a full vase on the table, but I can't afford to buy new flowers every week, and I'd rather not have plastic blooms. I spotted these witch hazel branches in the window of a local shop and realised they were the perfect answer. They were part of a display, but the owner let me buy them for £30. Now I have a permanent display for a fraction of the cost of fresh flowers!
Chamomile Bramley, Dorset

Mel, editor, says: This is a lovely solution, Chamomile – what a brilliant place to display baubles this Christmas, too!



Every letter featured wins a prize!

Thanks to Lily O'Brien's, our star prize winner will receive a bundle of delicious chocolates (worth £52.45) including the limited-edition Christmas Desserts Collection, the Ultimate Chocolate Collection and melt-in-the-mouth truffles. The runners-up will each receive a bundle of chocolate treats (worth £24.50). Discover more of Lily O'Brien's fabulous flavours at lilyobriens.co.uk.



Crafty cupboard

I recently converted my leaky old standalone garage into a dedicated craft studio for me and my daughter – and a hangout pad for my son! We need lots of storage for our supplies, so when I found this solid wood dresser on Facebook Marketplace for £50, I was delighted. We had leftover eggshell paint (Dulux's Summer Linen) from painting the walls, so I decided to use that to brighten up the dark wood. I love how it blends in with the space now!
Bella Pilkington, Fife

Vicky, commissioning editor, says: We love the thought of having a special crafting space, Bella. We're all very jealous! Painting your furniture to match the walls is a stroke of genius.

Letters may be edited. We apologise but photos cannot be returned.



Star of the screen

This bookcase attracts clutter, and my toddler grandchildren pull items off the lower shelves. I have screened off the bottom with a curtain on a tension rod – it's enough to deter their curiosity! It's easily removed and attached across an open doorway, where my granddaughter enjoys performing puppet shows!
Lynda Wright, Chelmsford

Trish, creative design lead, says: What a creative and pretty solution to this problem, Lynda!



A bright and light budget transformation



Your Home, Our Media, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST.

Email yourhome@ourmedia.co.uk Instagram @yourhomemagazine

TikTok @yourhomestyle.uk Facebook @yourhomemag Tel 0117 927 9009

*The chance to win a prize is open to all residents of the UK, including the Channel Islands, aged 18 years or older.

Shopping GUIDE

Where to buy everything in this issue

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Aldi 0800 042 0800 aldi.co.uk
Amazon amazon.co.uk
Annabel James 0345 548 0210 annabeljames.co.uk
Annie Sloan 01865 770061 anniesloan.com
Anthropologie anthropologie.com
AO 0161 470 1100 ao.com
Argos 0345 640 2020 argos.co.uk
Asda 0330 053 0111 asda.com
Atlantic Shopping atlanticshopping.co.uk
Autumn's Corner autumncorner.com

B &M 0330 838 9000 bmstores.co.uk
B&Q 0333 014 3357 diy.com
Balsam Hill 0808 501 3434 balsamhill.co.uk
Bathroom Mountain 01782 405047 bathroommountain.co.uk
Beliani beliani.co.uk
Benjamin Moore 01753 575756 benjaminmoorepaint.co.uk
Bloom & Brew bloomandbrew.co.uk
Bonnypack 0141 420 7262 bonnypack.com
Boots boots.com

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Kiso Kitchens kisokitchens.com

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V **Very** 0800 110000 very.co.uk
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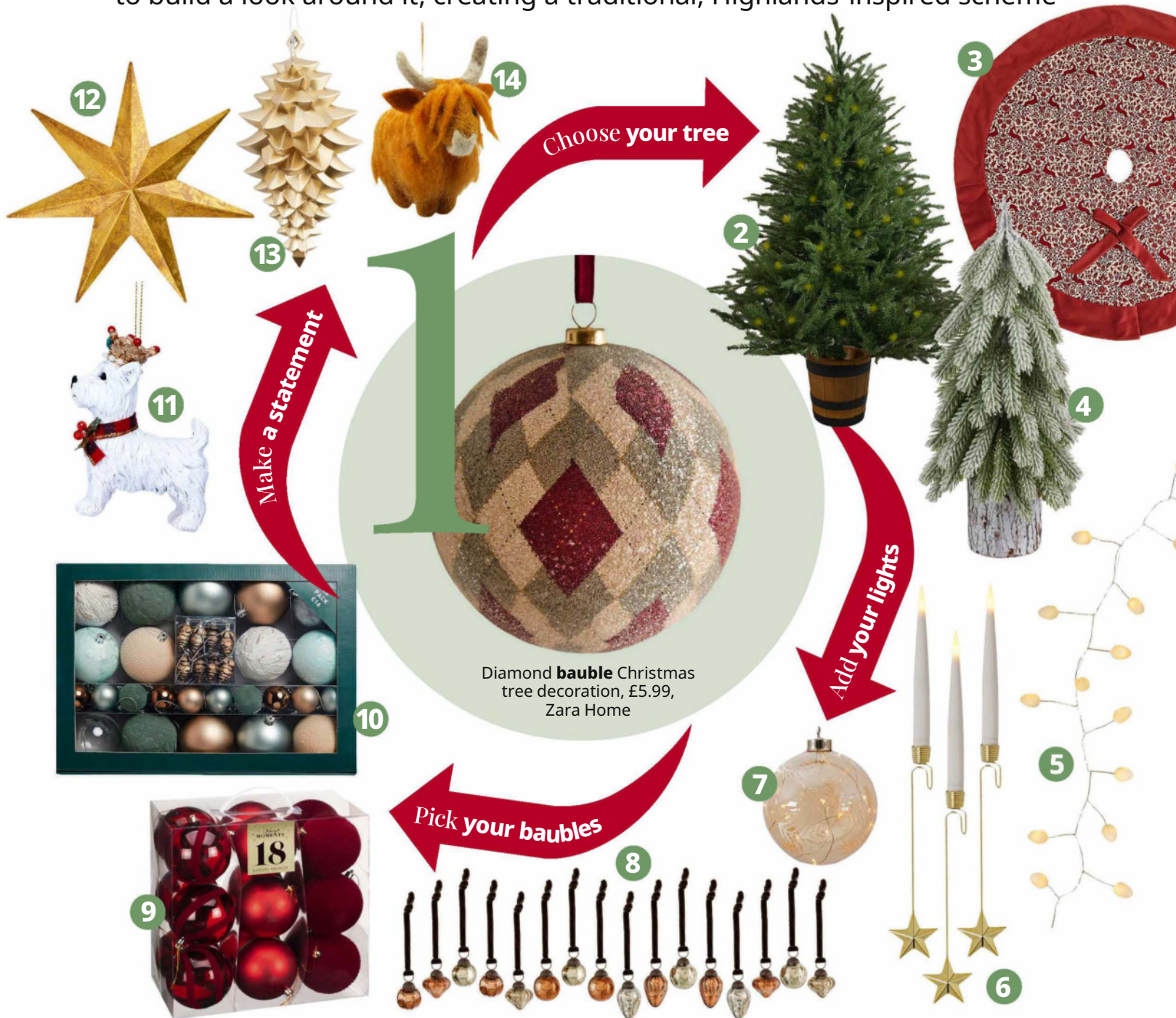
Z **Zara Home** zarahome.com



Style it!

Argyle bauble

This issue, we take one standout Christmas tree ornament and show you how to build a look around it, creating a traditional, Highlands-inspired scheme



2. Hartford pre-lit potted 7ft **Christmas tree**, £275, Dibor 3. Heritage print fabric **tree skirt**, £18, Dunelm 4. Festive Folklore snowy **tree** 34cm, £8, B&M 5. Warm White berry **LED string lights**, £12.99, Lights4fun 6. Light up LED remote control candle Christmas tree **decorations**, £25.99, Very 7. Plume etched **bauble** with LED in Amber, £12, Perch & Parrow 8. Adisa jar Gold & Rust **baubles**, £40 for 16, Nkuku 9. Festive Folklore Burgundy **baubles**, £12 for 18, B&M 10. Green Cream mix shatterproof Christmas **baubles**, £16 for 50, Next 11. West Highland terrier Christmas **bauble**, £8.95, Annabel James 12. Gold metal **tree topper**, £8, Habitat 13. Gold sparkle pine cone **decoration**, £1, Poundland 14. Handmade Highland cow **decoration**, £8.99, Sue Ryder

Feature Lara Watson

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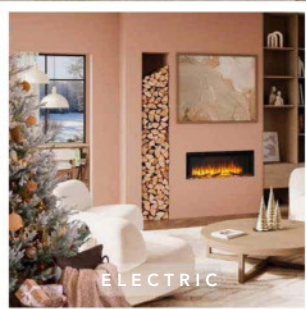
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