

WELLNESS

The 12 Days of

# WELLNESS

CHRISTMAS 2023



WELLNESS

brought to you by



HEALTHIER MIND

HEALTHIER FOOD

HEALTHIER BODY

HEALTHIER WORLD

# WELCOME TO 12 DAYS OF WELLNESS

Why wait until January to start thinking about our health and wellbeing?

There are so many small changes we can make right now to look after ourselves, as well as helping others and the world around us.

This month we bring you our **12 Days of Wellness**, covering 12 seasonal topics to inspire you to feel your best this festive season. These include tips for enhancing your physical and mental wellbeing, ideas for making savings, sustainable gift giving and a plant-based Christmas feature.

We also have delicious recipes from ESS Regional Executive Chefs, **Matt Moseley** and **Jay Averill** and Culinary Director, **Scott Freeman**.

If you want to spread out the festive cheer, why not set aside some self-care time and read the articles throughout December?

Wishing you all a wonderful festive season and a happy (and healthy!) new year.

# CONTENTS

## DAY 1

Embrace a Green and Joyful Christmas ..... 4

## DAY 2

Make the Festive Season More Inclusive ..... 6

## DAY 3

Boost Your Christmas Plate With a Rainbow of Veg ..... 8

## DAY 4

Drop In or Give Someone a Call ..... 8

## DAY 5

Get a Good Night's Sleep Amidst the Christmas Cheer ..... 9

## DAY 6

Forge and Make Your Own Sustainable Wreath ..... 10

## DAY 7

Be Mindful of the Hidden Calories in Your Warming Festive Drinks ... 12

## DAY 8

Don't Let Alcohol Put a Dampener on Your December ..... 13

## DAY 9

Stay Active Over the Christmas Break ..... 15

## DAY 10

Revamp, Revive and Reuse from Christmases Past ..... 16

## DAY 11

Experience the Joy of Giving Back to Your Community ..... 17  
This Christmas

## DAY 12

Be Mindful This Christmas ..... 18

**DAY 1:**

# EMBRACE A GREEN AND JOYFUL CHRISTMAS

**INCLUDE MORE PLANT-BASED FOODS**



There has been increasing interest in plant-based diets in recent years, with more and more of us reducing our meat intake to do our bit to help the planet.

According to the British Dietetic Association (BDA), following a more environmentally sustainable diet, such as that recommended by the **EatWell Guide**, means reducing meat (especially red and processed meat) consumption, moderating dairy intake and eating more plant-based sources of protein!

Sustainability is a key consideration for many people these days. With more of us making lifestyle changes to support the planet and plant-based meals becoming increasingly popular, it's clear that sustainable eating is here to stay.

## Top tips for a plant-based Christmas dinner

Whether you want to reduce the amount of meat at your Christmas table this year or you need to cater for a loved one, we are here to help with our top tips for a plant-based Christmas dinner:

- Plan a menu focused on seasonal vegetables, fruits and grains. Roasted Brussels sprouts, stuffed mushrooms and sweet potato casserole are excellent choices.
- Explore plant-based protein options like tofu, tempeh, seitan or lentils for your main course.
- Consider a nut roast or a hearty vegetable Wellington as a centrepiece.
- Cook roasties using a vegetable oil with a high smoke point, such as sunflower oil, rather than using animal fats.
- Leave out the bacon when cooking your Brussels sprouts and instead go for chestnuts.

- If you're catering for others with a plant-based diet, it's best to avoid the honey on the parsnips as, technically, it isn't vegan. Fear not, golden syrup is a great alternative!
- And don't forget about the plant-based gravy!
- Experiment with creative side dishes like quinoa salad, roasted root vegetables or vegan stuffing.
- Opt for plant-based alternatives in traditional dishes, like using vegetable broth in place of chicken broth.
- Bake delicious vegan desserts, such as dairy-free pumpkin pie, vegan chocolate cake or fruit-based tarts.
- Don't forget about dairy-free ice cream or custard with dessert.
- Offer festive plant-based drinks like mulled wine made with vegan-friendly red wine, hot cocoa with almond milk or seasonal fruit punches.





This recipe has been created by **Matt Moseley**  
Regional Executive  
Chef – ESS Defence,  
Marine & Aerospace

# MUSHROOM, SPINACH AND LENTIL WELLINGTON

SERVES 4

## Ingredients:

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 120g mushrooms
- 200g fresh spinach
- 240g tinned lentils (1 tin)
- 240g chickpeas (1 tin)
- 1 large onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp cranberry sauce
- 1 tsp golden syrup
- 3 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 1 vegan puff pastry sheet

## Method:

- 1 Cook the lentils until soft, according to packet instructions.
- 2 Peel and dice the onion, clean and dice the mushrooms.
- 3 Put the chickpeas into a bowl, keeping the chickpea water separate for use later.
- 4 Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the onion, garlic and mushrooms. Cook for around 5 minutes.
- 5 Crush the chickpeas with a fork, leaving a chunky texture.
- 6 Add the spinach, lentil, vegetable bouillon and mushroom mixture in with the chickpeas and mix together.
- 7 Add the flour and mix again, leave to thicken for 5 minutes. Once thickened, leave to cool.
- 8 Whisk 3 tbsp of the chickpea water along with the golden syrup to create a pastry glaze.

- 9 Lay out the pastry sheet onto a baking tray (you might not need the whole sheet). Brush the edges of the pastry with the pastry glaze to help the pastry to stick. Spread a thin layer of cranberry sauce on the pastry.
- 10 Place the filling onto the pastry and form into a long sausage shape. Tightly roll the pastry around the filling to form a Wellington. Crimp the edges of the pastry between your thumb and forefingers to form a seal.
- 11 Lightly score the top of the Wellington pastry with a knife and brush the top of the pastry with the pastry glaze.
- 12 Place into a pre-heated oven at 180°C (fan) / 200°C / gas mark 6 and cook for around 25 minutes until golden brown.

Each 368g portion contains

<b>Energy</b> 557kcal 2332kj	<b>Fat</b> 23g	<b>Saturates</b> 10g	<b>Sugars</b> 10g	<b>Salt</b> 2.2g
<b>28%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>37%</b>

of an adult's reference intake  
Typical values (as sold) per 100g:151kcal/634kj

## DAY 2:

# MAKE THE FESTIVE SEASON MORE INCLUSIVE

Celebrate all cultures this Christmas.

From the start of December in the UK, and often much earlier, signs of Christmas start to appear everywhere you look! But there are many other religious and cultural festivals which also take place during December, such as Hanukkah.

**Hanukkah** is a Jewish festival, also known as the **Festival of Lights**, beginning on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar. This year, Hanukkah will begin in the evening of Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December and end in the evening of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December.



**Scott Freeman**, Culinary Director - ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, told us what Hanukkah represents to him and his family:

*"Hanukkah is a time where families come together in December for eight nights, light the Menorah and, amongst other things, enjoy each other's company and food. In our household, we eat a lot of chicken soup, and here is my recipe for it. I've also served this before with chopped fresh dill and matzo balls for a more filling supper."*



## HANUKKAH CHICKEN SOUP RECIPE

SERVES 10

### Ingredients:

- 1 whole chicken (buy this from your butcher and ask for the giblets to be kept)
- 2 onions, chopped roughly
- 3 carrots, peeled and cut into rounds
- 1 parsnip, peeled and cut into equal sized pieces
- 3 litres of cold water
- Noodles (I use rice noodles, but vermicelli noodles also work well)
- Salt and pepper

### Method:

- 1 Place the chicken and the giblets in a big pan of cold water and bring to the boil. Skim off the impurities and then remove the chicken and giblets and set to one side.
- 2 Add the 3 litres of cold water to a clean stock pot and place all the ingredients back into the water.
- 3 You must continue to skim off any fat throughout the cooking process.
- 4 Turn the heat down and simmer the soup for 2 hours. Season the soup and remove the chicken and giblets.
- 5 Let the chicken cool down and then shred the meat and add this back to the soup.
- 6 Discard the giblets.
- 7 If you are using rice noodles, soak these in warm water for a few hours to soften them, then place a portion into a soup bowl. Pour on the hot soup, include the vegetables and shredded poultry, and enjoy.

Each 551g portion contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
451kcal 1899kj	13g	3.5g	5.4g	0.29g
23%	19%	18%	6%	5%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 82kcal/345kj

# OTHER WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON

As we get into the festive spirit, it's a good time to remember that we all have different traditions and beliefs and not everyone celebrates the same holidays.

Here are some of the things we can all do to include others in our celebrations during December and all year round.

## Think about your theme

Why not go for a winter wonderland event instead of focusing things around a Christmas tree and the Nativity?

## Do some research

Google to find out about other cultural celebrations and ask others whether they celebrate Christmas or any other holidays this December.

## Give yourself reminders

Add some important dates into your calendar, such as Ramadan or the Lunar New Year, as a reminder to wish your friends and colleagues all the best.

## Connect through food

Why not arrange a potluck and ask everyone to bring in a different cultural dish they would like to share?

## Change up your social events

Try not to focus all social events around alcohol to make sure that as many people as possible feel comfortable attending.

## Food for everyone

When organising a get together, make sure to ask about dietary preferences or restrictions people may have so that everyone can join in.

## Accessibility

When booking a venue, make sure it is accessible. Not all disabilities are visible, so if you're not sure, the best thing to do is ask. To learn more and help create awareness, get involved with the **International Day of People with Disabilities** on 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

## DAY 3:

# BOOST YOUR CHRISTMAS PLATE WITH A RAINBOW OF VEG

HEALTHIER FOOD

Can you pack in your veg and make sure you get your 5 A Day over the festive period?

Adding more vegetables to your Christmas spread is a fantastic idea. They add vibrant colours to your feast and bring a healthy touch ensuring you get a good mix of vitamins and minerals. Roasted Brussels sprouts, honey-glazed carrots or even a colourful vegetable medley can be delightful additions.

Why not give these ideas a try over the festive period?

- Add a small handful of **dried cranberries** to your porridge in the morning or stew up some apples with lots of cinnamon and winter spices for your breakfast.
- **Beetroot brownies** are a delicious way to use up seasonal beets! They can make a delicious dessert or treat with your morning coffee.
- **Roasted root vegetable soup** is a warming lunch and can be a great way to sneak in more veg! You could find a recipe and make it your own

depending on what you have left in the fridge.

- A definite crowd divider, but **Brussels sprouts** are actually much more versatile than the soggy, overcooked ones you might have on Christmas Day! Roasted, raw or in a slaw – get creative... they might just become your favourite festive veg.

Don't forget that fresh, frozen and canned all count towards your 5 A Day. Generally, a portion of fruit or veg is:

- **About 80g** – this is one medium piece of fruit (e.g. apple, banana, pear), three tablespoons of peas, sweetcorn, carrots or two or more small fruits (e.g. plums, kiwis, apricots).
- **Dried fruit** such as raisins or apricots can also count but these should be limited to a 30g portion size – this is about one heaped tablespoon or a small handful.

- A small glass of **unsweetened fruit juice or smoothie** (150ml) can also count but should only be consumed and counted once due to the free sugars which can cause damage to our teeth.
- **80g of beans or pulses.** We can eat as many portions of these as we like but they only count once, as although they're a good source of fibre, they contain fewer nutrients than other fruit and vegetables.

## The Benefits of 5 A Day

- 1 Boosts your overall nutrient intake
- 2 Supports your digestive health
- 3 Contributes to hydration
- 4 Supports your immune system
- 5 Supports weight maintenance due to produce being lower in calories and higher in fibre

## DAY 4:

# DROP IN OR GIVE SOMEONE A CALL

HEALTHIER MIND

At Christmas time, we are often surrounded by cheery songs on the radio, festive parties, gifts and good wishes.

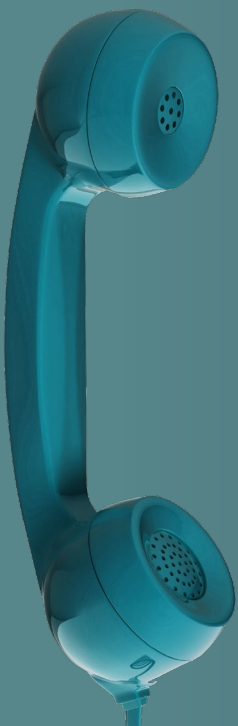
Though for many people, more than you may think, Christmas is a time of loneliness, with Age UK estimating that around 1.4 million older people across the UK are expecting to feel lonely at Christmas. And it's not just older people, anyone can end up alone at Christmas for many different reasons, such as the loss of a loved one or living far away from relatives.

So, why not reach out to someone who might be lonely this Christmas? More than ever before, we need to support one another. Get in touch with old friends that you've lost contact with, as well as acquaintances, distant relatives and your neighbours.

Make that initial contact by sending a text, posting a card or even giving them a call, then make some plans such as going to grab a coffee or inviting them over for dinner – a friendly, meaningful chat goes a long way.

## Do you have time to make one phone call a week?

If you would like to help fight loneliness this Christmas, and all year round, head to **Age UK** to find out how you can support an elderly person.





**DAY 5:**

# GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP AMIDST THE CHRISTMAS CHEER

## SILENT NIGHTS AND MERRY MORNINGS

Lack of quality sleep can have a real impact on our day-to-day life. It affects how we feel physically, mentally and emotionally.

This has a direct effect on our productivity, decision making skills and relationships. Long term lack of sleep can be very detrimental to health as sleep helps our balance hormones, plays a significant role in repairing the heart and blood vessels and helps

our brain to learn and remember. During the festive period, the number of late nights and parties may increase coupled with a higher consumption of alcohol. Add this to the normal business of life and juggling family plans and this can lead to more stress

than normal, making getting a good night's sleep even more tricky. We may not be able to control what happens when we sleep but we can control what we do during the day to enable better quality sleep.

The tips below will help ensure healthy sleep during the festive period.

**Create a cozy atmosphere:**

Make your sleep space a winter wonderland. Dim the lights, use warm and calming colours, and maybe add a touch of holiday decor.

**Stick to a routine:**

Amidst the Christmas hustle and bustle, try to stick to a consistent sleep schedule. Our bodies love routine, even during the festive period.

**Limit stimulants:**

While those Christmas cookies and hot chocolate are tempting, try not to indulge too close to bedtime. Limit caffeine and sugar intake, especially in the evening.

**Digital detox:**

Give your mind a break from the holiday buzz by turning off electronic devices at least an hour before bedtime. It's a gift to your sleep quality!

**Stay active:**

A bit of physical activity can help you sleep better. Whether it's a brisk walk or some indoor exercises, keep your body moving.

**Mindful moments:**

Take a few moments for mindfulness or relaxation techniques. It can be as simple as deep breathing or a short meditation to unwind before bed.

**Comfort is key:**

Ensure your sleep environment is comfortable. Maybe treat yourself to some cozy Christmas-themed pyjamas or indulge in soft, festive bedding.

**Manage stress:**

While it's the season of joy, Christmas can also be stressful. Take time for self care, whether that means reading a book, listening to calming music or enjoying a warm bath.

**Embrace the festive calm:**

Appreciate the quiet moments of the festive season. Whether it's sitting in front of the fire or enjoying the glow of Christmas lights, find joy in the peaceful side of the festivities. This will help you wind down before bed and encourage restful sleep.

Whether you're tired out from the excitement of the season or enjoying a post-feast rest, may your Christmas be filled with peaceful sleep and sweet dreams!

### The complex relationship between alcohol and sleep

Whilst a night cap after dinner is a tradition for some and seen as a way to wind down, did you know that it can interfere with the quality of your sleep?

**Interrupted sleep:**

Have you ever noticed that you wake up in the middle of the night after a few drinks? Alcohol can lead to fragmented sleep, causing more awakenings during the night.

**Snoring and breathing issues:**

Alcohol relaxes the muscles in your throat, which can lead to snoring and even sleep apnea.

**Dehydration:**

Alcohol is a diuretic, meaning it increases urine production. This can lead to dehydration, causing you to wake up thirsty in the middle of the night.

So, whilst that festive cocktail might be tempting, moderation is key! If you plan to have a few drinks over this festive period, why not have them early evening and allow your body to process the alcohol earlier, hopefully resulting in a more restful sleep.

**DAY 6:**

# FORAGE AND MAKE YOUR OWN SUSTAINABLE WREATH



**Janet Thomas,**  
Head Gardener –  
ESS Defence, Marine  
& Aerospace.

December is one of the quietest months in the gardening calendar here in the UK. It's pretty cold, the days are very short, and the lack of light makes it difficult for anything to grow. However, after the winter solstice comes the promise of spring. The days start to lengthen, albeit very slowly in the beginning, but then things pick up pace and before you know it spring is starting to creep in, along with the first snowdrops and crisp sunny mornings.

So, what better use of your time during the winter months than to get jobs

done around the garden that you never have enough time to do the rest of the year, like repairing tools and tidying the sheds? It's also a good time to think about new garden projects and plan what to grow in the spring and summer. You can't beat looking through the seed catalogues with a mug of hot chocolate on the go!

Something else I like to do in the garden on the run up to Christmas is make a wreath for my front door using evergreen foliage.

A simple wreath is pretty easy to make using greenery foraged from outside. Some of the greenery I like to use are sprigs of rosemary, olive tree branches, ivy, holly and conifer and spruce

cuttings, but any evergreens you can get your hands on will work.

As well as a good bunch of evergreens, you'll need the following materials:

- A metal hoop which can be purchased from a craft shop or garden centre – you could make your own out of an old coat hanger or using willow branches which can be curved into a hoop
- Craft/florist wire
- Ribbon
- Any decorations you might like to add, for example cinnamon sticks, pine cones, dried orange slices, berries or ribbons.

## MAKING YOUR OWN WREATH



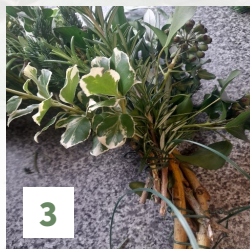
1

Make or buy a ring for your wreath. This one was made using willow branches and secured with florist wire. Collect evergreen branches and herbs from the garden.



2

Make small bunches of a selection of the greenery. I made about 12 of these for this wreath.



3

Working around the hoop, secure the bunches onto it using the florist wire.



4

When you have reached where you started, you can check for gaps and fill them in with greenery.



5

And there you have it – a beautiful all-natural wreath for the garden shed door! Personally I like them plain, but you can add decorations as suggested above.

And how about a challenge to all you seasoned and budding vegetable growers out there: why not have a go at growing your own veg for your Christmas dinner next year? It's not an easy task but imagine how amazing it would be to serve home grown veggies on Christmas Day!

### Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

#### Brussels sprouts

These will need to be sown between March and May. I prefer to sow them in modules and transplant them into their permanent position when they are big enough (as shown in the first picture) around June time.

It is best to keep them covered with some netting if possible as they are prone to being attacked by caterpillars. Harvest in time for Christmas when they look like fully grown sprouts!

#### Parsnips

Another veg with a long growing season, these can be sown directly outside between March and May.

Prepare the soil to a fine tilth and create a shallow trench about an inch deep. Drop the seeds in about an inch apart and push the soil back over. Water in and leave to grow. These can stay in the ground until they are needed and are very tolerant of cold weather. They need very little care beyond this.

#### Carrots

Sow autumn carrots in late summer. In the same way as parsnips, ensure you sow them thinly and thin them out to about an inch apart when the green tops come through. These may need a fleece over them if it goes below zero prior to harvesting.

#### Potatoes

These are a little more complicated as they are not frost tolerant. Late varieties can be purchased as seed potatoes around mid-July and planted immediately.

They can go in trenches in the ground or in some kind of container like a dustbin with holes in the bottom for drainage. Cover the seed potato and water in, then when the foliage comes through apply another layer of compost. Repeat two or three more times then let them grow.

You'll need to keep an eye on the water and protect the foliage if a frost

is forecast as this will cause the green to die back and the potatoes may be damaged. Or harvest them a bit earlier than December and store in a paper bag in a cool, dark place.

#### Red cabbage

A good variety is January King. Again, this is a slow growing crop that remains in the ground for a long time.

This will need to be sown in modules in late spring and planted out with protection like the Brussels sprouts. It can be harvested from December onwards.



**DAY 7:**

# BE MINDFUL OF THE HIDDEN CALORIES IN YOUR WARMING FESTIVE DRINKS

**Calories are everywhere at Christmas!**

Christmas brings with it lots of indulgence, but while we may be aware of the impact our alcoholic drinks are having, do we consider our seasonal hot drinks as contributing to our calorific splurge?

**Watch out for these regular culprits!**

**Creamy additions:**

Eggnog, whipped cream or any creamy additions can turn your drink into a calorie bomb – they're delicious, but they do add up.

**Sweet additions:**

Syrups and sugary mixes are often used to create festive flavours, while adding lots of extra calories! And do you need really those extra marshmallows?

**Large portions:**

Festive cups and mugs can be deceptive – you may be sipping on more calories than you realise, especially if refills are involved.

**Alcohol calories:**

Don't forget about the alcohol itself – it brings its own calories to the party. So, think about whether you need the Baileys in your hot chocolate or the whisky in your Irish coffee!



DAY 8:

# DON'T LET ALCOHOL PUT A DAMPENER ON YOUR DECEMBER

As Christmas approaches, it can be hard not to get carried away with all the good cheer!

Many of us may be attending office parties before the holidays, not to mention the annual Christmas catch ups with friends and family. Before we even get to Christmas Day, it's easy to see how our alcohol consumption can start to add up.

There's nothing wrong with enjoying a drink sometimes, but it's important to pay attention to how alcohol is affecting your health and wellbeing.

Here are five tips to help you drink mindfully this December:

- 1 To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level, don't drink more than **14 units in a week** on a regular basis. This amounts to roughly six standard glasses of 13% wine or six pints of 4% beer.
- 2 If you choose to drink up to 14 units, spread this out over three or more days and avoid binge drinking. The free **Drinkaware** app is available to help people track and calculate their units, set goals and measure their progress over time.
- 3 Try allocating alcohol-free days every week. Tell your friends and family about your goals so they can support you and hold you accountable. It will also demonstrate to others, including children, that Christmas doesn't have to revolve around alcohol.
- 4 Try to explore some low-alcohol or alcohol-free options. You could have set days where you will stick with these, or you could alternate between these and alcoholic drinks.
- 5 Alcohol not only reduces our sleep quality, it can also lead to us feeling groggy and anxious the next day. Avoid drinking alcohol a couple of hours before you are planning to go to sleep to help reduce these effects.

## What 14 units looks like



or



## Always drink responsibly.

If you are worried about your own or someone else's drinking, Drinkaware's trained advisors are available to give you confidential advice on their online Drinkchat service. For more information and support, head to the **Drinkaware** website.

# NON ALCOHOLIC DRINKS GUARANTEE A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The festive period often results in us drinking more than usual which increases our alcohol units and calories very quickly with no nutritional benefits.

The government recommends that we consume a maximum of 14 units of alcohol over a minimum of three days.

Try the below alcohol-free recipe from **Stephanie Robertson**, Head of Wine & Service at Restaurant Associates...



## ROSEMARY FESTIVE SPRITZ

- 2 lemons
- 2 oranges
- 4 sprigs rosemary
- 180ml sugar
- 60ml honey
- soda water

- 1 Use 1 lemon's worth of peel.
- 2 Juice the lemons and oranges into a liquid measuring cup. Top up with water to make one cup of juice.
- 3 Combine peel, juice, rosemary, sugar and honey in a saucepan over a medium heat. Simmer for one minute until the sugar dissolves.
- 4 Remove from heat and cool. Strain, discard the solids and let the syrup cool completely.
- 5 To serve, fill a tumbler glass with ice cubes, add 2-3 tablespoons of syrup, fill with soda water and stir.
- 6 Garnish with rosemary sprigs and lemon slices.

DAY 9:

# STAY ACTIVE OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK

With the whirlwind of celebrations over Christmas, it can be easy to forget about staying active, while at the same time over-indulging.

Why not incorporate some festive activities into your routine to make yourself feel good?

- Go for a Christmas-themed walk or run to enjoy all the festive lights and decorations.
- Dance the night away at Christmas parties to combat the extra calories consumed.
- If it snows, build a snowman or have a snowball fight to increase your activity.
- If you are hitting the shops, turn it into a gentle work out by parking further away or getting off the bus early then taking the stairs instead of the lift – make sure you wear comfortable shoes!

Short, sharp bursts of 10-15 minutes of exercise will add up and help burn off those extra calories!

Why not try the following tips to help keep your Christmas an active one?

#### Get involved with tech games that encourage exercise

Many of us bought a Nintendo Wii™ when they first came out, but how many of us moved on and forgot about it? Why not get it or a similar game back out and get the family involved to help burn a few extra calories?

#### Take a brisk walk after dinner rather than the post dinner nap

We often feel dozy after our Christmas dinner, so why not take the family out for a walk? Just remember to wrap up warm and take a broly just in case!

#### Keep a routine

Why stop exercising over the Christmas period if you have a regular routine? Staying active will help reduce the potential for an expanding waistline, and it will help your mental health too!

#### Keep your exercise sessions short

You don't need to go all out and do a full hour session over the festive period. Short, sharp bursts of 10-15 minutes will all add up and help you to burn those extra calories without it impacting on the festivities.

## DAY 10:

# REVAMP, REVIVE AND REUSE FROM CHRISTMASSES PAST

## A YULETIDE REVIVAL

By making small, conscious choices, you can enjoy a festive and joyful Christmas while minimising your impact on the environment – it's a wonderful way to celebrate the season while taking care of our planet. The Christmas jumper tradition has evolved into a popular way for people to join in the holiday spirit, whether it's a solo fashion statement or a group activity!

Here are some ideas for how to recycle an old jumper into a new festive favourite:

- **Add-on appliques:** Sew or glue on fun Christmas-themed appliques like snowflakes, reindeer or holly to breathe new life into your jumper.
- **Tinsel trim:** Use tinsel or metallic ribbon to create borders or patterns on your jumper to add a touch of sparkle and holiday glam.
- **Embroidery extravaganza:** Get crafty with a needle and thread and embroider holiday motifs, your favorite Christmas quotes or festive characters onto your jumper.
- **Pom-pom power:** Attach colourful pom-poms to your jumper for a playful vibe – you can go for a scattered look or create specific patterns.
- **Festive patchwork:** Cut out Christmas-themed fabric patches and sew them onto your jumper in a patchwork style.
- **Bling it on:** Embellish your jumper with sequins, rhinestones or beads, creating your own holiday-inspired patterns or a full-on sparkling effect.
- **Funky elbow patches:** Add funky elbow patches that complement the jumper's design.
- **Furry friends:** Attach plush Christmas characters or animals to your jumper using thread or glue for a cute and cuddly look.
- **Ribbon weaving:** Use festive ribbons to weave a pattern on your jumper, especially on sweaters with a looser knit.
- **Jingle bell jazz-up:** Sew jingle bells into patterns on your jumper for festive sound effects as you move.



### Now your Christmas jumper is sorted, what about your tree?

The choice between a real and artificial Christmas tree depends on personal preferences, traditions and environmental considerations.

Some people choose a real tree for its authentic charm, while others opt for artificial trees for their convenience and long-term sustainability. If sustainability is a priority, consider factors such as the source of the real tree and the materials used in the artificial tree.

**7 million real Christmas trees are bought by UK households each year, with 250 tonnes thrown away into landfills every year<sup>1</sup>.**



### Save the Children

To sign up and donate visit:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/christmas-jumper-day>

Don't forget to send your photos to [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk)

## DID YOU KNOW...?

### You can rent a real Christmas tree?

*Yes, you read that correctly!* Basically, you rent a tree and give it back after Christmas. If you want to, you can rent the same one the next year or opt for a bigger or smaller tree, depending on your circumstances. The tree's lifespan is up to eight years, meaning you could potentially save eight trees.

This is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint. Choosing a locally grown tree will help reduce your carbon footprint even further. Why not consider giving it a go this year!



**DAY 11:**

# EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY THIS CHRISTMAS!

**Giving back is a great way to lift your spirits over the festive period while helping someone less fortunate.**

Here are some thoughtful ways that you can spread kindness and make a positive impact:

**Donate to charities:**

Pick organisations that resonate with you, whether it's a local food bank, a children's charity or a cause close to your heart, your donation can make a difference.

**Offer your time:**

Volunteering is a hands-on way to make a direct impact and connect with your community.

**Donate gifts:**

Consider donating gifts to children or families in need. Many organisations run gift drives during the Christmas period to help everyone experience the joy of receiving a present.

**Support small businesses:**

Shop locally or support small businesses, helping them to thrive and contributing to the local economy.

**Host a charity event:**

Organise a charity event, fundraiser or holiday-themed gathering where the proceeds go to a chosen cause.

**Adopt a family:**

Contact local organisations that facilitate family adoptions for Christmas so you can provide gifts, food and holiday cheer to a family in need.

**Random acts of kindness:**

Spread kindness by performing random acts of goodwill. Whether it's paying for someone's coffee, leaving uplifting notes or offering assistance, small gestures can have a big impact.

**Serve meals to those in need:**

Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or organise a community event. Sharing a warm, nourishing meal with those who may be struggling is a beautiful way to give back.

**Visit the elderly:**

Many elderly people spend the festive season alone so consider visiting a local care home to bring some festive cheer.

**Environmental giving:**

Support environmental causes by participating in tree-planting events, clean-up drives or donating to organisations dedicated to preserving nature.

**Create care packages:**

Assemble care packages with essentials and festive treats to distribute to the homeless or individuals facing tough times.

**Giving back doesn't need to be a grand gesture.**

It's all about having a positive impact on someone's life or a good cause, whether that be big or small.

**DAY 12:****BE MINDFUL  
THIS  
CHRISTMAS****Presence Over Presents: A Mindful Christmas Celebration**

Practicing mindful eating during the festive period can enhance your enjoyment of the festivities while promoting a healthy relationship with food. Mindful eating doesn't just need to include what, how and how much

we eat – it starts from the moment we go to buy the food. Being more mindful of what we are buying not only supports our health but looks after the environment, local communities and our wallets too.

**Here are some tips on how to be mindful during the festive season:****Make a shopping list:**

Thinking about what you need to buy over Christmas and making a list will help to prevent costs spiraling with all the extras you can be tempted to buy! Read on to find out how our Culinary Director Scott Freeman prepares for a budget-friendly Christmas.

**Shop locally:**

Thinking about where you will shop this Christmas could help cut down on food miles and reduce your carbon footprint. Shopping more locally will also help support local communities.

**Think about the ingredients you buy:**

There are always healthier ways to enjoy an indulgent treat, particularly when cooking from scratch.

Being mindful of what products you choose and comparing the nutrition profile and price of different options will help to reduce calories on the plate and pounds spent.

**Plan balanced meals:**

Aim for a balance of plant and animal-based proteins, vegetables and carbohydrates in your festive meals. This can help prevent excessive consumption of one food group.

**Be selective:**

Choose the foods that you really enjoy and don't feel obligated to eat everything on the table.

Prioritise your favorite dishes and savour them.

**Choose sensible portions:**

While it's tempting to indulge during the festivities, be mindful of portion sizes. You can enjoy your favorite dishes without overloading your plate. If you feel like more, you can always go back!

If you end up with leftovers, why not try Executive Chef Jay Averill's festive tray bake?

**Eat with awareness:**

Be present in the moment while you're eating. Put away distractions like phones or electronic devices and focus on the food in front of you.

Pay attention to your body's hunger and fullness cues so you eat when you're hungry and stop when you're satisfied. This helps prevent overeating and promotes a balanced approach to meals.

**Savour each bite:**

Take the time to savour and enjoy each bite of your festive meals.

Pay attention to the flavours, textures and aromas. This can enhance your overall dining experience.

**Mindful indulgence:**

If you decide to indulge in treats or desserts, do so mindfully. Instead of mindless snacking, savour the flavours and enjoy the experience.

# GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR CHRISTMAS LEFTOVERS

## LEFTOVER FESTIVE TRAYBAKE



**Jay Averill**, Regional Executive Chef – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, has got the post-festive period covered with his recipe

for a leftover festive traybake – a great way to use up those Christmas leftovers with all the classic flavours and no waste!

**Serves 2-4**

(depending on the amount of leftovers!)

### Ingredients:

- All your leftover Christmas dinner vegetables and trimmings (e.g. turkey or sliced up pigs in blankets, carrots, sprouts, parsnips, stuffing, roast potatoes)
- A teaspoon of olive oil to drizzle over
- Any leftover herbs (thyme, rosemary or sage)
- A small wedge of brie (or leftover cheese)

- 2-3 teaspoons of cranberry sauce
- 1 teaspoon of pine nuts (optional)

### Method:

- 1 Heat the oven to 200°C. Place the roast vegetables and meat trimmings\* on a roasting tray and drizzle with olive oil, cracked black pepper and scatter the herbs around the dish. Roast for 15 minutes to allow the vegetables to heat and crisp up.
- 2 Break the brie wedges into small pieces and dot around the tray of vegetables, return to the oven for 6-8 minutes to allow the cheese to melt.
- 3 Remove from the oven, drizzle with the cranberry sauce and sprinkle with toasted pine nuts.
- 4 Serve and enjoy!

*\* If adding any leftover turkey or pigs in blankets, ensure the meats are thoroughly recooked.*

### CHEF'S TIP

This dish tastes even better served with some slices of warm crusty bread and/or a drizzle of green pesto.

### NUTRITIONIST'S TIP

If you don't have any leftover cheese or are looking for another way to boost up your protein and fibre, you could add a can of chickpeas to the traybake.

# A BUDGET FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

De-boned and rolled chicken instead of turkey ... a step by step guide.



**Scott Freeman**, Culinary Director – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace.

With affordability being a key consideration for many this Christmas,

why not try something a bit different for your Christmas dinner this year? It could help you to reduce your food waste too.

Instead of the traditional huge turkey, I'll be turning my skills towards something a little more economical,

but with just as much of a wow factor: I'm cooking up a humble chicken (a standard choice of Sunday roasts across the country) ... but with a difference.

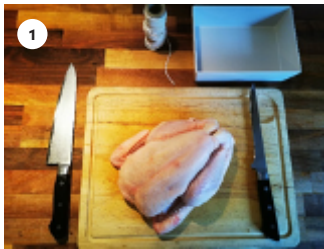
Instead of roasting, I am going to completely bone out the chicken, stuff it and roll it.

This will make for much easier carving at the dinner table and, if you think ahead and buy one now, you'll probably be able to get a nice large free-range chicken from your butcher

or supermarket for about £10. Do the prep now, freeze it and save yourself all the stress at probably 30% of the costs of a turkey! It takes less time to cook, so you won't spend the whole day in the kitchen either.

The step-by-step guide below shows you how to prepare your chicken to create your own Christmas Day showstopper. Just take your time and give it a try – you'll be amazed at the results...

*Happy Cooking and Happy Christmas!*



You will need a clean board, sharp knife, some string and a bowl for any scraps. I've used a medium free-range chicken.



Turn your chicken upside down onto your board.



Cut along the backbone first. Then cut either side of the backbone, following the contours of the bones to release



the meat along one side of the chicken. It's quite easy once you get going, but take your time and try not to pierce the skin.



Once you have done one side, repeat on the other side in exactly the same way.



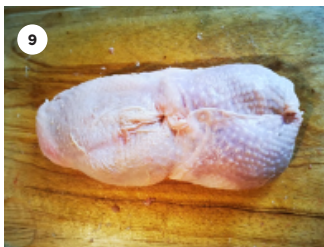
Remove the bones from the legs. Cut through the thigh to reveal the bone and cut around this and the leg bone completely. Repeat with the other leg.



Now remove the main carcass. Once both breasts are cut away, you simply use your knife to separate the bones from the meat. Keep the bones.



Lay the boneless chicken, skin side down on your board. If you want to add a stuffing, then now is the time to do this.



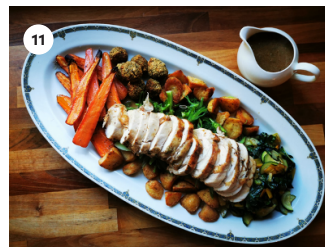
Roll your chicken up on the board. Ensure the skin covers all around the chicken. Secure the chicken with 4-5 knots of string to stop it falling apart.

You now have two options for cooking this:

1. Standard roasting, or
2. Poaching rather than roasting (my preference)



I use a home vacuum packing machine – well worth the investment if you batch cook and freeze for your family as I do!



**Roasting:** Take a hot pan with oil and warm up. Season the chicken all over with salt and pepper. Gently roll the chicken in the hot oil until it is golden brown all over. Roughly chop some carrots, onions and celery and place the chicken on top. Roast at 170°C for about 90mins or until the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted.

**Poaching:** Wrap the chicken tightly in several layers of clingfilm and secure with knots at either end. Bring a large pot of water to a simmer; place the chicken into the pot and poach for an hour. Remove from the heat and carefully remove the clingfilm. Now heat a large pan with some butter and oil and place the chicken into the pan, seasoning with salt and pepper, turning carefully until browned all over. Place into the oven as above, cooking for 30 mins or until the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted.

Serve with your favourite Christmas sides: roast potatoes, parsnips, carrots, Brussels sprouts, stuffing and pigs in blankets. You can also make stock from the bones for your gravy if you wish!

WELLNESS

# CHECK OUT WELLNESS ON OUR YouTube CHANNEL

Improve your Wellness by watching videos from our registered ESS Nutrition & Wellbeing Team.

Also follow us at **WeAreESS** on Instagram and TikTok.



YouTube



# ASK YOUR NUTRITION & WELLBEING SPECIALIST

You can ask anything to do with  
nutrition, health & wellbeing.  
So drop us an email and we will  
get back to you as soon as possible.

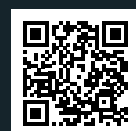


Leanne King BSc(Hons), PGCE, RNutr  
ESS HEAD OF NUTRITION & WELLBEING

WELLNESS

Email our registered ESS Nutrition & Wellbeing Team  
at [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk).

Subscribe to **WeAreESS** YouTube channel and follow  
**WeAreESS** on Instagram.



You Tube  
