

Everyone loves the holiday season. It is a chance to spend time with family and friends and have a break from the everyday routine. The Christmas holiday is a time for decorating the house and filling it with smells of mince pies. Young children get excited at the thought of all those presents waiting to be opened under the Christmas tree. Preparations can be hard work for those in charge but it is all worthwhile.

Planning in advance is the key to a successful and stress free Christmas holiday. Shopping for gifts at the last minute is a sure fire way to raise the blood pressure! Many people shop by mail order or on the Internet in order to beat the crowds. The only last minute shopping that needs to be done is perishable food items. Christmas dinner can also be prepared in advance to a degree with the aid of the freezer. The cook should leave other family members to do the dish washing afterwards!

Most people like the traditional way of doing things and that includes decorating the tree on Christmas Eve. Some people also like to attend church on Christmas Eve and the carol service can be a moving experience, setting the mood for the Christmas holiday. Christmas dinner is usually turkey with all the trimmings. Turkey can be dry, so it's a good idea to have a stuffing with apples and sage and plenty cranberry jelly. Roast potatoes, mashed potatoes, sprouts, bread sauce and thick gravy are the perfect accompaniments followed by Christmas Pudding and brandy butter sauce. For those preferring something less rich, cheese and crackers is ideal.

Deciding what to buy children can be difficult. There is so much choice but many parents are on a budget. Young children will often spend more time playing with the gift wrapping than the actual present! The little gifts put into the Christmas stockings are sometimes, the most appreciated. Whatever the present, the thought of Father Christmas coming down the chimney is the highlight of the Christmas holiday.

It's tempting to overindulge in food and drink during the festive season. Membership of fitness gyms tends to go up during the month of January with everyone desperately trying to lose the pounds they gained over the Christmas holiday. Drinking too much is more of a serious problem, especially at the office party. No one wants to start the holiday with a hangover!