

**ASDA**

Save money. Live better.

**INCLUSIVE  
FESTIVE FEASTING:  
SOMETHING FOR  
EVERYONE THIS  
CHRISTMAS**



# Introduction



'Tis the season to be jolly! But with more than half<sup>1</sup> of Christmas dinner guests with a specific dietary requirement or preference, for some, it could be less Christmas cheer and more Christmas fear.

Christmas is one of the most important times of the year for food. From work parties, to cocktails and canapés with neighbours, to the big Christmas Day lunch itself, the season often revolves around what we're eating and drinking. With 60%<sup>2</sup> of British households now having a member of the family with a specific dietary preference, cooking at Christmas becomes more complicated, as we're having to think beyond the much-loved turkey and pudding, to make sure everyone sat around the table feels included on the big day.

From gluten intolerances, to plant-based diets and the growing trend for low and no alcohol, festive shopping lists are becoming longer and longer, adding stress to an already busy, hectic time, when all anybody wants to do is put their feet up and feast.

At Asda, we want to ensure you're ready to cater for everyone this Christmas. We're committed to helping you understand things don't need to be stressful when cooking for others, and it's not about what people can't eat, it's about what they can!

For Brits hosting seasonal soirées this year, we understand how important it is to make things as simple as possible, ensuring nobody feels uncomfortable and can enjoy festive feasting without worry.

Christmas should be a time for fun, filled with gatherings with friends and families, and a time when food is at the heart of every moment. It shouldn't be a time for concern - that's why we're committed to championing inclusivity, helping educate the nation on how to cook for those with dietary requirements or preferences, to understanding the delicious range of festive foods they can cook for everyone to enjoy. In this guide, you'll find practical tips and advice on everything from the big Christmas meal to low alcohol cocktails, and a shopping list of all the wonderful free from and vegan products Asda has this season, helping make Christmas as inclusive as possible.

**Joanna Johnson**

Senior Manager Asda Own Brand Innovation

1. Asda research, 2000 British adults, August 2018  
2. Ibid.

# Background

Over 40% of Brits<sup>3</sup> with a dietary requirement or preference have eaten something over Christmas they shouldn't have for fear of upsetting the host or being seen as 'fussy'. Rather than having guests suffer in silence, we need to do more to make sure everyone feels at-ease around the table, no matter their diet.

Across the country, Christmas dinner means juicy turkey, crispy and fluffy fat roast potatoes, rich gravy, a kaleidoscope of veg and a sweet and fruity pudding. But for the 6 million Brits that have never had a Christmas dinner<sup>4</sup>, the most important dinner of the year means something completely different.

As the number of dietary requirements and preferences continues to grow, our Christmas tables will follow-suit, adapting from the traditional dinner to something inclusive for everyone. With only 28% currently asking guests if they have a dietary requirement or preference<sup>5</sup>, hosts need to be thinking about more than just table decorations as diets continue to change.

As a result, 70%<sup>6</sup> of Brits with a food requirement or preference have been given food they can't eat, with a third of guests forced to go hungry at the table, and 30%<sup>7</sup> of hosts stating they're unsure what they could possibly cook at Christmas for those with a specific diet.

**We want everyone to feel included this Christmas, so to write this guide, we've enlisted the help of six parenting, food and lifestyle bloggers, each with a different Christmas story about festive feasting with a special diet, from vegan, to gluten free and allergies in between!**



**Sophie Skipp**  
@FeedFelixFast

I'm Sophie, the Mum who arrives at every party with back up food just in case my son, Felix, is allergic to all the food on offer. Felix was first diagnosed with multiple food allergies seven years ago following an anaphylactic reaction to cheese. It may sound a little strange but following that dreadful event, I started to worry how our family would enjoy Christmas dinner together? It's the celebration when food takes centre stage, our family loves Christmas food!

Feed Felix Fast was started to offer a little inspiration to families who like us, want to offer great choices for those following a diet restricted by food allergies and intolerances. If you're managing multiple food allergies but still want to enjoy delicious food around the kitchen table it can be daunting - especially as you don't want to make a mistake at such a special time of year!

I'm doing everything I can in the hope Felix remembers our table surrounded by family and friends sharing a meal. In November we start by stirring our Christmas pudding, building up to the big day when we'll make jokes, tell stories and enjoy the same special dishes year after year.

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## Becky O'Leary

@Will\_We\_Ever\_Eat\_Out\_Again?



I talk about anxiety a lot in my blog 'Will We Ever Eat Out Again?'. You see, Peggy (my 6-year-old little Coeliac) and Chris (my husband with Crohns Disease) have unique dietary requirements - put the two together and it can sometimes feel impossible to find food to satisfy us all. So you can imagine how stressful Christmas can be, especially at Christmas when the celebration should be bringing people together at the table. But we've learnt to adapt and found solutions that mean we don't miss out and everyone is included. When Asda invited us to take part in their 'Christmas Inclusion' project we jumped at the chance to support the drive to increase awareness of how to cater for special diets like ours at Christmas!

3. Asda research, November 2018  
4. *ibid.*  
5. *ibid.*

6. *ibid.*  
7. *ibid.*





**Claire Latham**  
@ukglutenfreakids

Many moons ago, I discovered that I was gluten-intolerant. The adjustment was hard at first as the availability of products that we have now simply wasn't there, but it was nothing compared to discovering that my children were also allergic to gluten. In fact, we then learnt that most of our extended family had coeliac disease! Whilst we have adjusted well to eating at home, as a mum I still worry when the kids are away from me – even more so over Christmas with the number of festive gatherings they have. The concern that they might get ill from eating the wrong thing, or made to feel left out because they can't eat certain foods, fills me with dread and I'm sure that I'm not the only parent who feels the same. This is why I am thrilled to work with Asda on their inclusivity project, allowing our children to feel included whatever the event!



**Natalie Tamara**  
@thetofudiaris

I'm Natalie Tamara, a thirty-something living in Leeds. I run The Tofu Diaries where I share vegan recipes, travel stories and ideas for living a kinder lifestyle. I love experimenting with new ingredients and recipes inspired by my meat-free travels in over 75 countries, but I also try to get back to basics by creating vegan versions of classic recipes. For me, that's what Christmas is all about – the old familiar flavours that bring back shared memories – and it's why inclusivity at this time of year matters so much. Cooking for a vegan at Christmas can feel daunting, which is why communication from both sides is vital; leaving any preconceived ideas about vegans or veganism at the door is just as important too. Likewise, as a vegan it's important to talk to your hosts beforehand and banish any nerves that you might get served something you can't eat!

**Mike Brook**  
@DaddyFreckle



Mike - aka Daddy Freckle, father of two, influencer of some. My eldest daughter has a dairy and egg anaphylaxis, so my blog was born out of a desire to share what I've learnt and to support others when it comes to life with a child with food allergies. When it comes to food at Christmas, all the goodies traditionally indulged in, from the mince pies, to the Marie Rose sauce on the prawn cocktail and right up to the tour de force of the Christmas pudding, have been inedible to many allergy and intolerance sufferers. It has meant the joys of one of the main statements of the festive period have often been unavailable to many. But it does not have to be the case that people don't get to enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner. With many new and exciting recipes and products available it's now easier and more accessible than ever to create a Christmas dinner that can be enjoyed by all. That's why I have got involved in Asda's Christmas Inclusivity campaign to raise awareness of the availability of foods and recipes which are allergen and intolerance friendly, and help people catering for allergies and intolerances comfortable and confident to make a perfect Christmas dinner.

**Sophie Scott**  
@healthfullyvegan



After many months of confusion as to what could be behind the chronic headaches I was facing on an almost daily basis, I decided it was time to ditch the dairy and give a plant-based diet a try. This transition had its challenges at first (how was I going to live without cheese?!) but I quickly realised how fun it was to experiment with alternative ingredients to create my favourite meals with a new twist – especially over Christmas, when I can show others how the festive season can be just as delicious on a plant-based diet. Working with Asda means I can explore how there's a substitute for almost everything, showing others just how much is out there and helping them see all the things I can eat, rather than what I can't.





# An All-Inclusive Christmas

Last Christmas, 59% of Christmas dinner guests had a specific dietary requirement or preference, that's 38 million people requiring something a little different to suit their dietary needs.

For those hosting over the season, this growing number of dietary requirements and preferences means thinking about what to lay the table with other than turkey and stuffing, what canapés work best for those following a plant-based diet, or what to top a dessert with other than cream?!

Of those catering for vegans at Christmas, almost 30% admit they wouldn't even know where to start when it comes to cooking, with a further 20% thinking any festive vegan dish they make will be too boring to serve.

Due to these worries, 45% of hosts said they'd be reluctant to invite someone over for Christmas dinner if they had to cook something separately for them. For hosts who have catered for special diets, 20% said they had to spend an additional 2+ hours in the kitchen preparing a meal, but that doesn't need to be the case.

**Blogger and mum to food-allergy sufferer, Felix, has a few top tips on how to make the most inclusive Christmas ever:**

## **1 Ready to Roast:**

A traditional roast is one of the easiest meals to create free from the top 14 allergens. A generous joint, roast potatoes and vegetables are all naturally free from gluten, dairy, eggs, soya and nuts! Just make sure you're using a free from gravy for an added lick of sauce.

## **2 Time For Trimmings:**

For many families, the kids are more interested in the trimmings than the main roast. Chipolatas and sausage meat are nearly always gluten free, so make the perfect accompaniment for any coeliac guests.

## **3 Spot On Spuds:**

Whilst goose fat potatoes may have been all the rage recently, for vegan and vegetarian guests it's not ideal! Instead, try roasting your potatoes in cold pressed rapeseed oil - it has a very high burn temperature, so you can still enjoy a perfect roast potato - crispy on the outside and fluffy in the middle.

## **4 Find That Foil:**

If you're worried your roasting tins have traces of allergens on them Christmas is the perfect time to get hold of some heavy-duty foil roasting trays. You also have the added benefit of less washing up when you fling them in the bin. Asda has the perfect trays for just £2!

## **5 Keep Away Contamination:**

Cross contamination is a big worry for lots of families at Christmas with family and friends piling-up plates with every festive food they can. To avoid cross contaminating cutlery and trays, try cooking an allergen-free feast - it's a lot easier than most think, and means everyone at the table can enjoy lunch without worry (see page X for an all-inclusive Christmas recipe!).





For a delicious vegan, allergen-free Christmas table centrepiece, our innovation chef, Andrew Johnston, has provided a recipe for a Festive Butternut Squash Wreath.

### Ingredients

#### For Layers of squash

- 2 medium sized butternut squashes (peeled, deseeded and thinly sliced) – if you have a mandolin, this is much easier, but a sharp knife will do the trick
- salt & pepper
- 5g finely chopped rosemary
- 5g finely chopped thyme
- olive oil

#### For the Grain Mix

- 250g cooked quinoa
- 100g roughly chopped dried cranberries
- 200g pomegranate seeds
- 25g finely chopped parsley
- 5g finely chopped thyme
- 5g finely chopped rosemary
- 2g ground nutmeg
- salt & pepper

### Method

1. Preheat your oven to 180C
2. Brush your Bundt/wreath tin with a little vegetable oil, line with clingfilm (ensure the clingfilm covers the edge of the tin, set aside for later)
3. Place slices of butternut squash on a lined baking tray and brush with vegetable oil and season with thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper
4. Place in a preheated oven for around 3 minutes then remove and leave to cool
5. In a mixing bowl, place your cooked grains (easy cheat – buy cooked grains from Asda) fruit, chopped herbs and mix well
6. Now we are ready for assembly!
7. Begin by layering 2/3 layers of butternut squash into your tin, ensure a good coverage around the whole tin
8. Add the fruit, herb and grain mix, giving even distribution around the tin and patting firmly down as you go
9. Repeat steps 7 & 8, ensuring you press down firmly throughout the process (this will help the wreath stick together)
10. Once you have reached the top of the tin, give it a good press down and bake in the oven (180c) for around 20 minutes (every 5 -8 mins, give the wreath a press down with the back of a wooden spoon)
11. Once cooked remove from oven and cool down overnight in the fridge (this will ensure a set wreath that won't fall apart) – leave it in the lined wreath tin (during the cooling, every 10 minutes or so ensure you press the wreath down in the tin)
12. Once cooled and set, turn your tin the right way up, using the layer of cling film that has lined the tin to gently ease the wreath out
13. When you turn out your wreath ensure you have a lined baking tray ready for the wreath to lay on
14. When ready to serve, reheat in a hot oven until golden and cooked (around 35 – 40 minutes at 160c)
15. Remove from oven, and serve with the remainder of the grains in the centre of the wreath
16. Enjoy!



# Tips and Tricks

**Our Innovation Chef, Andrew Johnston, has a few handy tips for inclusive cooking this Christmas:**

**1** No Christmas lunch is complete without Yorkshire pudding, so for a gluten and dairy free option, try using cornflour, eggs and dairy-free milk. Just remember not to open the oven whilst they're cooking, otherwise they'll go flat!

**2** Canapes can be quite fiddly, especially if you have a large group of people coming over. Try your hand at making a vegan pâté, or Asda has a delicious new Extra Special Vegan Pâté with Roasted Parsnip, Chestnut and Sage.

**3** If catering for someone with a gluten free diet, key watch-outs are gravy, Yorkshire pudding, stuffing and roast potatoes (as they're often cooked in flour). Always good to keep free from versions of Christmas staples, like Asda's range of Extra Special festive stuffings.

**4** Every Christmas lunch or dinner needs to finish with a big sweet bang. For vegan diets (or anybody, really!) Asda's Extra Special Vegan Dark Chocolate and Salted Caramel Pots are the perfect treat to finish any feast with.





# Low-Ho-Ho Alcohol

Popping the cork on a crisp bottle of Champagne or indulging in sweet and spicy mulled wine are essentials at Christmas.

However, almost 30% of British adults (jumping to 50% for millennials)<sup>8</sup> are aiming to drink less this festive season, driving the trend for low / no alcohol as they cut-back on consumption over Christmas. This doesn't mean that the celebrations can't continue to flow, with everyone now able to enjoy a glass of fizz as low / no alcohol options continue to grow.

This growing number of low / no alcohol means hosts need to expand their selection of sips, ensuring those with dietary requirements and preferences have full glasses at any festivity.

For those avoiding alcohol this Christmas, the top tipples they'd love to try as low / no alcohol versions include:



## 1. White Wine



## 2. Beer



## 3. Red Wine



## 4. Cocktails



## 5. Sparkling



## 6. Cider



## 7. Mulled Wine



## 8. Champagne

With the number of adults drinking alcohol at its lowest level since 2005<sup>9</sup>, and the trend for low / no alcohol continuing to grow, serving-up something for everyone at Christmas parties is vital to ensuring every attendee has a glass to raise. Becky O'Leary, blogger and wife to Chris, who lives with Crohn's Disease, has shared some helpful tips to shaking things up this season when it comes to providing non-alcoholic drinks perfect for parties:

**1 Be prepared:** Before buying all your booze, ask guests what they might like to drink, and then make your low / no alcohol selection as impressive as possible, just so there aren't any dry glasses in the house.

**2 Celebrate with sparkling:** Christmas is all about celebrating, which is even more important as we head toward the new year. So, make sure you stock-up on low / no alcohol fizz (it looks the same as Prosecco or Champagne), that way you can top-up everybody's glass with bubbles before toasts (plus, toasting with water is bad luck!)

**3 Devil in the detail:** If serving or cooking food, make sure to steer-clear of using alcohol. Whilst it often burns off, it can still wreak havoc on those that require an alcohol-free diet. Big watch outs are things like Christmas cake or pudding, trifle, pâté and chocolates.





## Asda Good Living Mulled Apple Cider

When it comes to Christmas, nothing screams festive more than a glass of aromatic, spiced tippie to keep warm with. For a mulled apple cider everyone can enjoy, Asda Good Living has a delicious alcohol-free recipe for all to enjoy:

### Ingredients

- 1L apple juice
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 tsp whole cloves
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 orange
- 1 lemon (peel only)

### Method

1. Start by peeling your lemon with a vegetable peeler, making two strips of peel
2. Slice your orange into semi circles and set aside
3. Pour 1L of apple juice into a heavy-bottomed saucepan on low heat
4. Add the cinnamon stick, cloves, ground nutmeg, halved orange and lemon peel and stir carefully
5. Keep the juice heating until steaming, then it's ready to serve
6. Strain your cider through a tea strainer or fine sieve into individual glasses (make sure they have a handle, to avoid burning yourself!) and serve with a sprinkling of cinnamon or cinnamon stick



# Asda's Festive Shop Swap

This Christmas season, we launched our biggest range of free from and vegan products yet increasing our inclusive range by 26%, ensuring there is something for everyone at every event.

To help hosts shop the aisles this season, below is a handy "Shop & Swap" guide on what products to pop in your trolley when catering for dietary requirements and preferences

## For Christmas parties...

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Delicious, bite-size canapés are a must at any festive gathering. If catering for vegan diets, swap your spring rolls for our moreish Asda Party Mexican Bean Bites, with a crispy crumb and blend of warming spice.



No Christmas party is complete without a spread of cheese. For delicious dairy and gluten free fromage, pile cheese boards with our Free From Mature Cheddar Alternative, Free From Garlic and Chive Cheddar Alternative and Free From Wensleydale Alternative...all perfect for perching on our Free From Cheese Crackers.

For a sweet treat at the end of seasonal soirées, nothing beats a fruity mince pie. Our delicious Free From Mince Pies are perfect for gluten and wheat free feasting, and for any vegan diets, our regular Asda Mince Pies are suitable for plant-based diets!



Nothing quite says Christmas cheer like popping the cork on a bottle of bubbly. For bubbles without the booze, try our Nosecco or Be Free Sparkling – both tasty tipples for the growing number of Brits going low / no this Christmas.

## For Christmas lunch...

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A golden, bronzed turkey may be the traditional table centrepiece at Christmas, but for any guests following a plant-based diet, swap the turkey for our succulent Extra Special Vegan Mushroom and Chestnut Nut Roast with Cranberry Star Butter. For those with a hankering for something without Christmas flavours, we even have a new range of vegan pies, perfect for those cold winter evenings.

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Trimmings are always required at Christmas, and for those requiring gluten free food, we have three scrumptious stuffings for any Christmas spread: Extra Special British Pork, Sage and Caramelised Onion Stuffing, Extra Special British Pork, Cranberry and Orange Stuffing and Extra Special Pork Sage and Caramelised Onion Stuffing.



For some, Christmas lunch is all about smothering meat and veg in rich gravy. For any free from diets, our Asda Onion Gravy or Asda Free From Gravy Granules are perfect for gluten, dairy and wheat free feasting.

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The pièce de résistance of any Christmas lunch is, without a doubt, the sweet and sticky Christmas pudding or cake.

Full of rich, spiced fruit, our Extra Special Free From Christmas Cake and Extra Special Free From Christmas Pudding are delicious desserts without gluten.



For any vegan guests, our delectable Extra Special Vegan Dark Chocolate and Salted Caramel Pots are the ideal sweet treat, with indulgent dairy free chocolate ganache and runny caramel. Perfectly topped with gold iridescent glitter for that Extra Special festive feel, these decadent pots are sure-fire hits with everyone around the table.

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# ASDA

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For more information, please contact  
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