



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Waste not, want not: Two thirds of households buy too much food for Christmas**

**-Admiral teams up with professional home economist to help people plan the perfect Christmas dinner -**

- **One in 20 throw away excess food rather than turning it into other meals at Christmas**
- **12% of Brits splashed out more than £100 per person for Christmas dinner last year**
- **Roasties, turkey and pigs in blankets are voted Christmas dinner favourites**
- **Ferrero Rocher, Quality Street, and After Eights are voted nation's favourite Christmas chocolates**
- **One in five have first alcoholic drink before 11am on Christmas Day**
- **53% of claims involving food and drink in December relate to red wine spillages**

A new investigation by [Admiral home insurance](#) has revealed that **two thirds (65%) of households in the UK end up with more food than they need at Christmas**, and one in 20 people throw excess ingredients in the bin, rather than turning them into other meals.

Admiral has worked with a professional home economist to create [an online tool and help families plan ahead to make the perfect Christmas dinner](#), prevent overbuying, save money, and avoid unnecessary food waste this Christmas.

The tool helps people work out how much of each key ingredient they'll need to cook the perfect Christmas dinner for their guests, and guides them on how many sweet treats and desserts to buy to make sure they're properly stocked up for guests this festive season.

The investigation found that two fifths of Brits (42%) buy their ingredients for Christmas dinner a week before the big day. But while some are more organised, buying at the start of December (25%) or two weeks before Christmas Day (25%), others are less organised, opting to buy their food on 23<sup>rd</sup> December (17%) and even as last-minute as Christmas Eve (5%).

With many people yet to buy their ingredients, Admiral is encouraging people to plan ahead to make their Christmas feasts memorable for all the right reasons this year.

### **Cost of Christmas this year**

Last Christmas, more than **one in ten households (12%) splashed out over £100 for each person joining them for the festive feast**. On average, homeowners spent £41.30 per person to feed their dinner guests in 2019.

Meanwhile, 22% of people said they are planning to spend even more money on food this Christmas.

With many restrictions still in place across the UK, 17% of households said they would be spending less because they weren't expecting as many guests around their Christmas table this year, and 12% want to cut down because they either ate too much or bought too much food last year.



However, younger households are looking to splurge this year, as 30% of those aged between 18 and 34 are planning to spend more on their dinner in a bid to treat themselves and their family this Christmas, in comparison to just 7% of people aged over 65.

### Stocking up for Christmas

The study found that some people are storing traditional Christmas foods in the wrong places, meaning food could potentially be going to waste.

To help make people's Christmas go without a hitch, professional home economist, Becky Wilkinson, has shared her tips with Admiral on where ingredients should be stored.

One in ten (11%) believe that a Christmas pudding should be kept in the fridge, but Becky says that is not necessarily the right thing to do. "Where you store Christmas pudding or Christmas cake is often dependent on the recipe followed, but, as a rule, this **should never** be kept in the fridge."

And with many a sweet tooth being catered to over the festive period, making sure the chocolates are in top condition for guests will be high on the priority list. Almost a quarter (23%) of people believe chocolate should be kept in the fridge, but Becky warns this can have an impact on the taste: "If you must store chocolate in the fridge, it should be sealed in an airtight container because the fat content in chocolate causes it to take on other flavours if not sealed properly."

### Before filling your fridge and stocking up , Becky recommends carrying out the four following checks to ensure your food is perfect for Christmas :

1. Make sure your fridge and freezer are running at the correct temperature before filling with Christmas treats. The recommended temperature is 5°C or below for the fridge and -18°C or below for the freezer. Fridge freezer thermometers are cheap and a very helpful tool to have if you don't already!
2. Before the Christmas buying starts, check that all the items in your fridge and freezer are in date, remove any that are not. Overfilling your fridge and freezer will make it difficult for them to stay at the correct temperature
3. It's important to store meat safely to stop bacteria from spreading and to avoid food poisoning. You should store raw meat and poultry in clean, sealed containers on the bottom shelf of the fridge, so they can not touch or drip onto other foods
4. Check your oven is working and has had a service if required. Also, give it a good clean to ensure for more accurate cooking times and optimum hygiene

### The nation's favourite festive foods

For many people, food is the best bit about Christmas but not everyone can agree on their favourite part. Admiral's investigation uncovered the nation's top ten food items from a traditional Christmas dinner, with roast potatoes (47%), turkey (40%) and pigs in blankets (32%) voted the three favourites. Yet, the more traditional additions that accompany a Christmas meal, like bread sauce and cranberry sauce, failed to make the top ten.

Rank	Top ten Christmas food items
1	Roast potatoes
2	Turkey
3	Pigs in blankets
4	Stuffing



5	Christmas pudding
=6	Sprouts
=6	Gravy
7	Vegetables
8	Christmas cake
9	Mince pies
=10	Chicken
=10	Beef

When it comes to dessert, Christmas pudding (18%) is the preferred choice for Brits, followed by Christmas cake (13%) and mince pies (12%). Given the choice, on average, people said they would ideally eat two mince pies on the big day itself, but more than one in 20 (7%) said they'd like to scoff more than five on Christmas Day.

### Top of the chocs!

As well as the traditional festive menu Admiral also questioned the nation to find out their favourite Christmas chocolates, with some perhaps surprising results. Ferrero Rocher won the top spot (15%), followed by Quality Street (12%) and After Eights (11%).

Rank	Chocolate
1	Ferrero Rocher
2	Quality Street
3	After Eights
4	Cadbury's Heroes
=5	Roses
=5	Terry's Chocolate Orange
=5	Celebrations
=5	Thorntons
6	Hotel Chocolat
=7	Other
=7	I don't eat chocolate
8	Matchsticks

### Kitchen chaos at Christmas

In a bid to help make sure Christmas goes without a hitch this year, Admiral is urging people to watch out for some common culinary mishaps as these can be costly.

Analysis of Admiral claims data, relating to damage involving fridge freezers over the last five years, reveals that 7% happened during the month of December alone, with **the average cost of each claim coming in at around £700<sup>1</sup>**.

According to Admiral data, the most common causes of fridge or freezer failures in December were where the fridge freezer has broken and stopped working by itself (30%), or power cuts and power surges (23%) that either damaged the fridge freezer wiring or the prolonged loss of power caused the food to defrost.

### 'tis the season to be Merry

Admiral found that one in five (20%) adults like to crack open the bubbly before 11.00am on Christmas day, and just less than one in ten (9%) open the alcohol before 10.00am.



Accidents can and do happen, and analysis of Admiral claims data relating to wine, gravy and sauce in the months of December found that 53% of claims, related to red wine being spilt on sofas, carpet, soft furnishings and even on laptops. To avoid any accidents spoiling the Christmas spirit, Admiral suggests standing glasses and bottles on a table and well away from small hands and pets if you can

**David Fowkes, Head of Household Underwriting at Admiral, said:** “Christmas is always a special period but this year will be even more important to households who, after a tough year, are looking to make the best of it with their close friends or family.

“Our study shows that people can easily go overboard and buy too much food for their Christmas dinner, leading to unnecessary food waste and people are also spending more money than they need to. As food plays such a big part of the festivities for many people, we want to help make sure the day goes as smoothly as possible – regardless of how many people you have around the dinner table.

“Unfortunately, not only are leftover ingredients being thrown away, but just a small percentage of people are giving excess food to food banks who would welcome the donations.

“We’d recommend carrying out a few simple checks around the kitchen a few weeks before Christmas. At Admiral we’ve seen examples where fridge freezers and cookers have been damaged in the build up to Christmas - some even on the big day itself - causing havoc and unnecessary stress for many households.

“Make sure you don’t over stock your fridge freezer so it keeps all of your Christmas food chilled at the perfect temperature, and it doesn’t spoil the festivities.”

### **What to do with leftovers**

For those who do keep their Christmas dinner leftovers and excess ingredients, more than one in ten (12%) only keep it for one day, which means lots of leftover Christmas food gets wasted unnecessarily each year.

To avoid unwanted food waste, Becky Wilkinson has shared some simple top tips with Admiral on what to do with leftover Christmas ingredients:

- **Roast potatoes and Brussel sprouts:** Break up the cold potatoes and mash together with the Brussel sprouts, place into a pan and fry. Add any leftover herbs or chestnuts to make extra tasty bubble and squeak.
- **Carrots:** Heat the ready roasted sliced carrots in a pan and add caraway seeds and vegetable stock. Blend together to make a warming soup.
- **Pigs in blankets:** Make your own mini toad in the hole’s by using an oiled muffin tin to heat the sausages and then pour over Yorkshire pudding batter. Bake until well risen.
- **Ham, turkey and gravy:** Mix together, place into a pie dish and top with ready rolled puff pastry for a quick and effortless pie.
- **Turkey:** For an oriental take on leftovers, try a turkey ramen or turkey stir fry.
- **Christmas pudding:** Break up the Christmas pudding and mix with a drizzle of festive liquor, spread the mixture over some ready rolled puff pastry and roll up into a large swirl. Slice into 2cm rounds and place into a lined spring form cake tin. Glaze with egg and bake until pastry is cooked through for a festive Chelsea bun.



**ENDS**

**Notes to editor:**

Becky Wilkinson, home economist, has worked on some of the biggest cooking shows in the UK (Tried and Tasted, Eat Well For Less). She is a Leith's trained chef and has a certificate in Healthy Eating and Nutrition accredited by the AfN. <http://beckywilkinsonfood.com/>

For households who are planning to spend more this Christmas, Admiral has created a useful guide on 'Celebration Cover.' It's an additional cover on home insurance policies designed to protect all gifts and other indulgences purchased at Christmas:

<https://www.admiral.com/magazine/guides/home/christmas-and-celebrations-cover>

1. Analysis of Admiral claims data for claims involving fridge freezers from December 2015 to December 2019 reveals the average cost of claims made during the month of December is around £700.

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**About Admiral:**

Admiral (a trading name of EUI Ltd and part of Admiral Group plc) is a UK based insurance company, founded in 1993 to specialise in car insurance. In 2005, it launched MultiCar, a product designed to help people with two or more cars get a better deal and in 2013, it launched its telematics product LittleBox which helps safe drivers receive discounts based on their driving style. Admiral also offers other insurance products including home insurance, travel insurance, pet insurance, van insurance, learner driver insurance and MultiCover, enabling customers to insure their cars and home on one policy. Admiral was also voted the UK's Best Car Insurance Provider at the 2018/19 Personal Finance Awards and the Admiral Group employs over 7,400 people in the UK and has over 5 million UK customers.