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‘Tis the season to start saving for Christmas or face a ho-ho-hole in your finances

- Christmas set to cost consumers over £20 billion¹ this year
- One in 10 (12%) admit to splashing out £1000 or more on the big day
- Brits need to save £41 a week from now to cover festive expenses

Consumers are predicted to splurge more than £20 billion¹ this Christmas based on what they spent last year, with one in six (16%) admitting they take anything up to a whole year to pay off the cost, according to research from Halifax.

A similar number (18%) said they plan to spend even more than they did last year, with more than half of these (51%) saying it was because they thought prices would increase.

In a survey of over 2000 consumers, Brits spent an average of £452.41 each last Christmas. Women spent 15% more than men (£482.21 vs £419.33). Unsurprisingly, those with kids spent more than double those without (£589.28 vs £279.52), though there are regional variations – children put up the price of Christmas by 142% in the East of England (£550.40 vs £227.16), but only 61% in the North West (£617.62 vs £382.98).

Giles Martin, Head of Savings at Halifax, said: “Although it feels like summer has only just passed, it’s not long until the festive period, and some shops are already starting to sell festive stock. To avoid a bill shock, it’s worth starting to save now to spread the cost over several months. It’s reassuring to see that one in 10 of us already do this, and save through the year or use a savings account to save up for big events such as Christmas.”

Topping the Christmas list

The leaderboard of things we splash out most on is booze, presents and the Christmas roast. The survey indicated that Brits give their work colleagues the cold shoulder – more of us splash out on outdoor lights than we do for gifts for them.

Table 1: What we splash out on

Response	Percentage
Gifts for family/friends	51%
The main course (e.g. meat, vegetables etc.)	43%
Alcohol	31%

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Snacks/party food	26%
Dessert (e.g. Christmas pudding etc.)	23%
Christmas wrapping paper and tags	13%
Christmas cards	12%
Mince pies	11%
Tableware (e.g. centrepiece, crackers, etc.)	10%
Attending the work Christmas party	8%
Christmas trees	7%
Indoor lights/decorations	7%
The venue (e.g. restaurant/pub to have Christmas lunch/dinner etc.)	6%
Outdoor lights/decorations	5%
Gifts for work colleagues	3%
Gifts for children's teachers	2%

Source: Halifax

Going cold turkey

One in four (23%) admitted worrying about their Christmas spending, and one in 10 (8%) said they were scrooges who don't like spending any money at Christmas because everything is always too expensive. More than one in five (22%) of those who would spend less say it's because they need to save more for a rainy day.

To reduce the festive bill, people are most willing to cut back on Christmas cards. Many also admitted to re-gifting unwanted presents from the previous Christmas.

Table 2: What we cut back on

Response	Percentage
Christmas cards	28%
Christmas wrapping paper and tags	27%
Tableware (e.g. centrepiece, crackers, etc.)	15%
Indoor lights/decorations	13%
Christmas trees	12%
Gifts for work colleagues	12%
Outdoor lights/decorations	12%
Snacks/party food	11%
Attending the work Christmas party	10%
Gifts for family/friends	8%
Alcohol	8%

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The venue (e.g. restaurant/pub to have Christmas lunch/dinner etc.)	8%
Dessert (e.g. Christmas pudding etc.)	6%
Mince pies	6%
Gifts for children's teachers	5%
The main course (e.g. meat, vegetables etc.)	5%

Source: Halifax

Table 3: Average amount spent on Christmas by region

Region	Amount
North East	£663.78
North West	£522.82
Yorkshire and the Humber	£390.75
East Midlands	£412.54
West Midlands	£432.19
East of England	£408.77
London	£408.26
South East	£458.95
South West	£422.37
Wales	£436.73
Scotland	£512.28

Source: Halifax

Top tips on saving for Christmas

1. **Start early:** If you put aside money every week, it will soon add up and will help spread the cost of Christmas.
2. **Set a budget:** Having a savings goal to aim towards can help motivate you to reach your target. Think about everything you need to budget for – Christmas cards, gifts, food, crackers, trees and decorations – then set a budget.
3. **Decide where to put your savings:** A savings jar is a good start for small amounts as you can see it grow, but once it builds up, it's worth considering putting it in a savings account.
4. **Save elsewhere:** Try foregoing your daily coffee, for example. If you save £3 a day by having one less coffee, that's more than £200 saved between now and Christmas!

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Editors' Notes:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2080 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 16th - 17th February 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

¹GB adult population in mid-2016 was 50,340,973 according to the ONS; average amount spent by adults for Christmas 2016 was £452.41; $50,340,973 \times £452.41 = £22,774,759,594.93$ (£22.7 billion)

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