




Cost effective Christmas

*Christmas doesn't
have to be expensive

*Don't put pressure
on yourself


*Read on for our hints
and tips to enjoy
Christmas on a budget



*Be realistic with
your expectations
you place on
yourself

*Remember it's
the thought that
counts, not the
value of the gift

*YOU can create the
Christmas magic,
not the presents



A string of colorful Christmas lights (red, orange, green) hanging across the top of the page.

Expectations of Christmas

If you're concerned about Christmas spending this year, you are not alone - More than half (53%) of us think it will be a stressful Christmas due to the cost-of-living crisis

Don't plan the 'perfect' Christmas - first work out what you can afford

Christmas adverts are not realistic. Keep it real.

Sometimes it is important to manage the expectations of our children and support them to understand that the value of a gift goes further than the cost. Encourage your children to make presents for the family such as painting a picture for Grandparents and show them that a present made from the heart is worth more than a present from a shop.

If your child is wanting an expensive toy, explain to them that certain items may not be possible, but support them in working out how they can achieve it. Maybe putting money on their wish list so that it can go towards the item or getting them to wait for the post-Christmas sales to possibly pick up a bargain.

This will not only help you to manage their expectations, but it will help your children to learn to appreciate the value of saving and a sense of achievement when they get the item they desire. Involve your children with the planning of Christmas so they can have a voice as to how the festivities happen. With everyone involved and planning a piece of the day, it may be the best Christmas yet!



Remember what is important

Christmas is not about how many presents are under the Christmas tree or about how much money you have spent on each other. It has been said many times before that a child who has been given a gift will spend hours playing with the box, whilst the toy sits on the side.

Sometimes the 'stocking filler toy' may be the toy that is played with the most. The simplicity of this goes to show that children do not need to have the latest, most expensive toy for Christmas to be special. It is the simple things that bring so much joy and spending time with loved ones is what the Christmas spirit is about.

When the Covid-19 pandemic reached us and we were forced to be away from our loved ones, it wasn't the presents that were missed. It was the people that were missing from our homes. If you are unable to spend money on presents, then this is okay. It is more important that you spend quality time with your children and create memories with them.

Play board games or guessing games such as charades, watch a Christmas movie or bake some Christmas cookies! Listen to Christmas music whilst you make homemade Christmas decorations and wrap up warm for a Christmas morning walk. Why not be creative and collect leaves and pinecones and make your own Christmas reef to hang on your front door ready for the arrival of Santa? This would be a fun activity that all the family can get involved with and is something you can do together.

Plan your menu for the holiday - Work out what you are going to eat then go shopping.

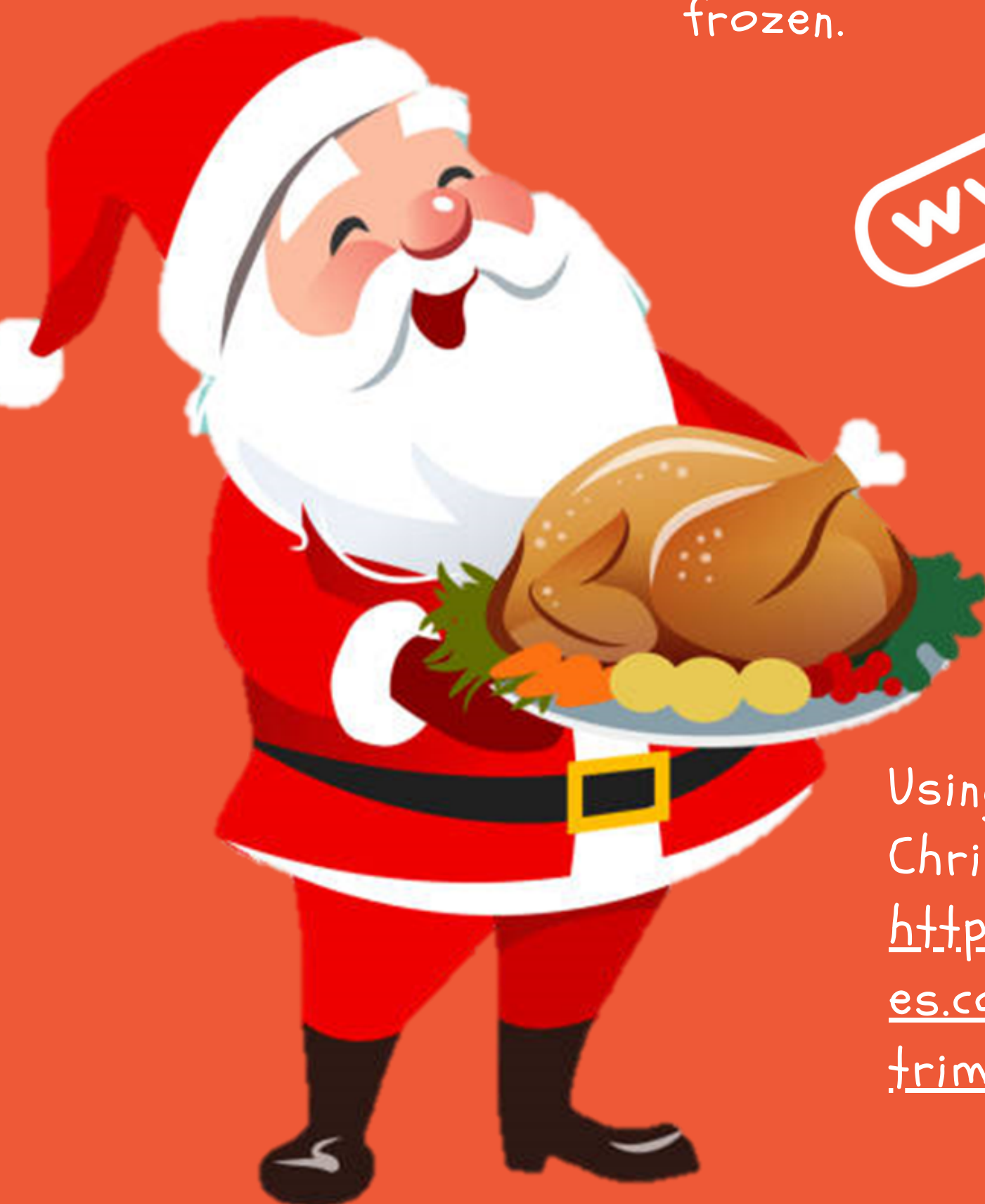
When shopping - stick to your list and don't be tempted by special offers.

Shop in advance, buy a little each week and freeze what can be frozen.

What's on the menu?

Cook as much as you can yourself (except Christmas pudding it's cheaper to buy)

Swap things out - use cava or sparkling wine for Bucks Fizz and chicken for turkey.



Christmas Lunch for £2.49 a head
<https://metro.co.uk/2021/12/18/how-to-make-a-three-course-christmas-dinner-for-under-250-a-head-15788658/>

Tips for a low cost Friendly Christmas lunch
<https://savings4savvymums.co.uk/traditional-christmas-dinner/>

Using Chicken for Christmas lunch
<https://cheapfamilyrecipes.co.uk/roast-chicken-trimmings/>

10 Easy ways to have Christmas on a Budget
<https://pennypinchinmom.com/christmas-dinner-on-a-budget/>

Christmas recipes on a budget
<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/budget-christmas-recipes>

Craft ideas

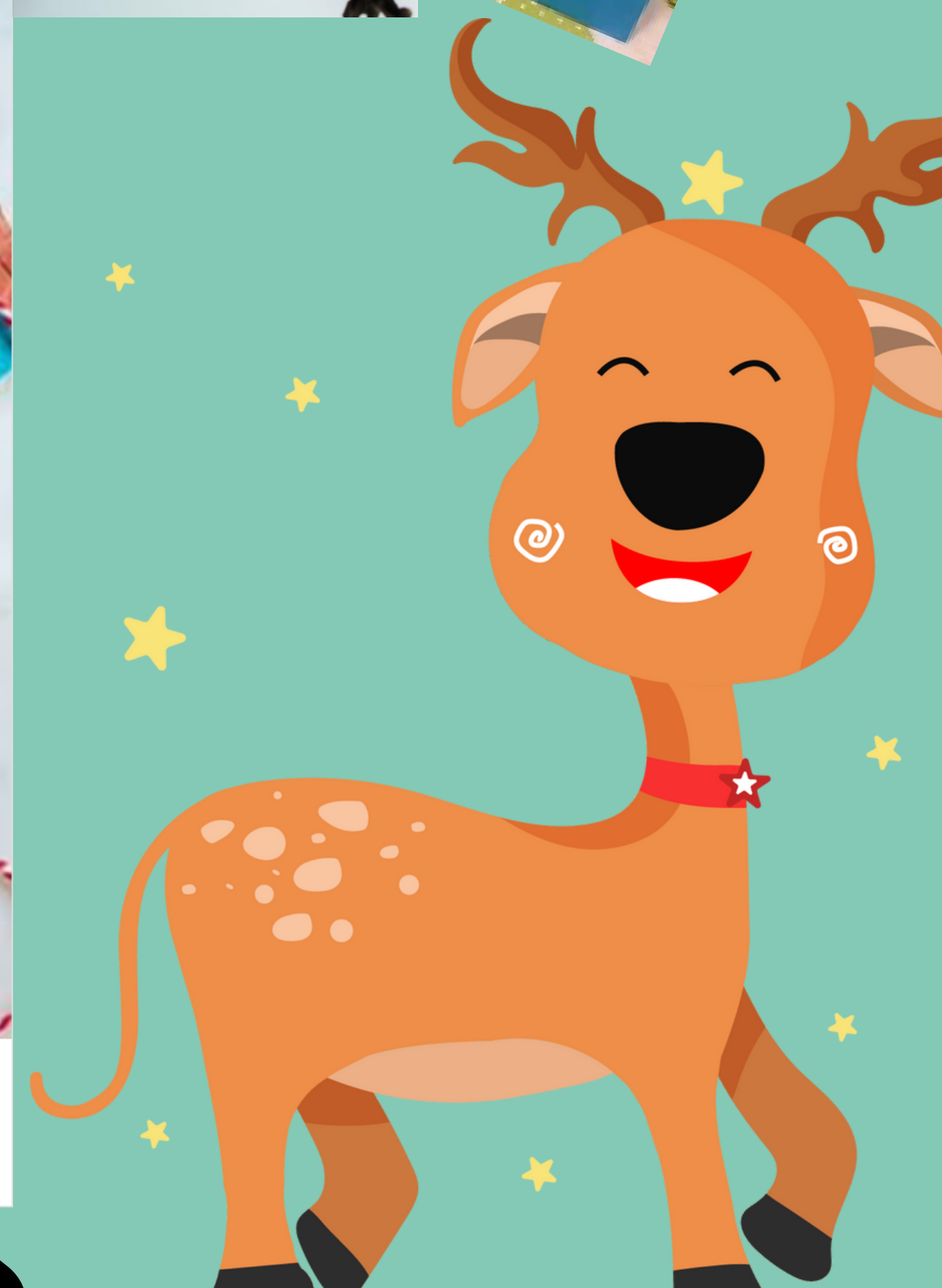
Check out this website (click on image) for 50 easy and fun Christmas crafts for children to make:



50 Easy Christmas Crafts for Kids That Will Keep Them Busy Until Santa's Arrival

They're fun for adults, too!

GH Good Housekeeping / Dec 9, 2022



Making gifts and creating your own wrapping can save you money and be so much fun! – Get the children involved and let their Christmas creativity shine

Receiving home-made gifts is so special and can be treasured for years to come

Reuse gift bags wherever you can and remember not to throw any away you're given this year, save them for next year!

Use parcel paper and create your very own Christmas print using paints or stamps

Gifts and wrapping

Why buy new when you can get bargains and hidden gems in Charity shops – check them out, you never know what you might find

If you have access to the internet, try Facebook Marketplace or eBay too

Making jams or preserves; save old jars from previous use and then use a range of frozen fruit and add some sugar.

You can make a lovely home made gift, you could decorate the jar too with ribbons to make it even more Christmassy.

Make a list – and check it twice! – Christmas shopping on impulse is dangerous. So make an old-fashioned shopping list and stick to it. Remember, shops spend a fortune on targeting your spending impulses – a list helps you beat them.

Time to ban unnecessary presents – not only are they a waste of money but think of the landfill



Cost effective gifts

Secret Santa – You are not alone, everyone is trying to save the pennies this Christmas. A great way to still enjoy gifting is Family and/or Friends Secret Santa.

Place names in a bowl and close your eyes, pick someone (keep it to yourselves) and purchase one present rather than many. Come together at Christmas and everyone has a gift to receive

'Make a date' package – Plan a date for each month of the new year, such as a picnic in the park or a bubble bath. Once you've planned the dates, write them on cards and decorate – create a voucher with some pens and paper and look forward to making memories in the new year

Pledges – Whether it's breakfast in bed, cleaning someone's car or fixing something for someone – your time could be the best present. So pledge to do something nice. Not only will you make someone feel good, you'll feel a sense of pride knowing you've helped



Local Schemes

List of Foodbanks in Somerset -
Emergency Help & Advice -
<https://www.impactpathways.org.uk/Food-Banks-in-Somerset/Help-and-Advice/>



Somerset Community
Foundation -
www.somersetcf.org.uk

Somerset Household
Support Fund -
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/somerset-household-support-fund/>

Christmas Sparkle - Service in
Taunton and Wellington who
aim to give a Christmas gift
to every child living in difficult
circumstances - About
Christmas Sparkle Project
<https://www.christmas-sparkle.org/>

Citizens Advice
Somerset - Free,
confidential, advice to
help you
<https://citizensadvice-somerset.org.uk/>

Village Agents / Surviving
Winter Grants -
<https://somersetagents.org/>

Mindline in Somerset
<https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/4269-2/>

Warm Spaces - Spaces to find
warmth, welcome & help. Every
space can offer something
different. Some may offer free
food, advice, somewhere to charge
your phone or maybe just
somewhere to be comfortable &
warm with no judgement -
<https://www.youngsomerset.org.uk/warm-spaces>



Please Remember;

You are not alone if you are worried about the affordability of Christmas this year. Many families across the country are feeling the same. But with some forward planning and open imagination, the Christmas Spirit is more affordable than you think. We hope our hints and tips have helped.

Christmas is just one day.
Far more important is a happier, financially less-stressed New Year

Final thought – Keep in mind that if the adult in the house has a positive attitude and is happy, the children are too.

"Merry Christmas everyone"

DON'T FORGET

