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FUN FACTS

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WINTER



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Well, here we are – winter's rolled in like a grumpy old uncle who's pinched your best armchair. But don't fret; this issue is packed with ways to embrace the chill (and maybe even outsmart it).

If you've stuck wondering what to buy for family or friends who 'don't want anything' we've got you covered. Our guide to making your own Christmas gifts will save you from the last-minute dash round the shops, save money and earn you brownie points for thoughtfulness.

For those who fancy outdoor adventure, check out page 5 our Nature Detective feature will have you peering at footprints in the frosty mud like a junior Sherlock.

And because we know December can sneak up on you, we've included a thrifty way to count down the days: a Toilet Roll Advent Calendar. It's proof that with a bit of creativity (and a lot of loo rolls), you can keep the magic alive without breaking the bank.

While on the subject of saving the pennies our 15 frugal food tips will also help you create a feast on a shoestring with clever planning.

And finally, as the nights draw in and the heating bill climbs faster than Santa up a chimney, remember — a little laughter, a cosy night in, and time with the ones you love are the best winter warmers of all. Here's to family chaos, comfort food, and keeping the festive spirit alive (even if the fairy lights don't work).

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FAMILY Issue 78
northernlifefamilymagazine.co.uk

NORTHERN LIFE Published by
MEDIA Northern Life Media Ltd



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NATURE DETECTIVES

Mission Brief

Attention, junior explorers! Your mission - should you choose to accept it - is to head outdoors this autumn and winter and spot as many of nature's secrets as you can. From tiny tracks in the mud to twinkling Christmas lights, the wild world is full of hidden wonders - and you're the detective on the case! The more things you find, the more points you'll score.

How to Play

1. Wrap up warm and head outdoors with your list.
2. Tick off each item as you spot it - some are easier than others!
3. Add up your points at the end to see what level of Nature Detective you are.



	Points
<input type="radio"/> A bright red leaf	5
<input type="radio"/> A squirrel gathering food	10
<input type="radio"/> A conker or acorn on the ground	5
<input type="radio"/> A toadstool or mushroom	5
<input type="radio"/> A hedgehog or signs of one	15
<input type="radio"/> Someone splashing in a puddle	5
<input type="radio"/> A big crunchy pile of leaves	5
<input type="radio"/> Birds flying in a 'V' shape	10
<input type="radio"/> A pumpkin display	5
<input type="radio"/> Smoke from a bonfire or chimney	5

	Points
<input type="radio"/> A robin with a red chest	5
<input type="radio"/> Frosty patterns on a window or leaf	5
<input type="radio"/> A snowman or snow sculpture	10
<input type="radio"/> Someone wearing a woolly hat and mittens	5
<input type="radio"/> A tree with bare branches	5
<input type="radio"/> Animal tracks in snow or mud	10
<input type="radio"/> Christmas lights or decorations	5
<input type="radio"/> Steam rising from a hot drink	5
<input type="radio"/> A bird feeder or bird table	5
<input type="radio"/> A beautiful winter sunset	10

DETECTIVE CHALLENGE

Score over 100 points to earn your Official Nature Detective Badge!



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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE **PREP**

Is your child preparing for
SATs, 11+ Exams or GCSEs?

Preparing a child for exams is a well-rounded process that involves not just academic study but also emotional support, time management and a healthy lifestyle. The following is a guide on how to get your child exam-ready:

Understanding the Curriculum.

Ensure your child (and you) understand what is going to be covered in the exam. This means reviewing the curriculum and marking key subjects or topics that require more attention. Most GCSE students do not know their exam board!

Tuition Support.

If your child is struggling with certain subjects, tuition can offer tailored support. Rarely will children improve passively so plan ahead. Early intervention and support can make a big difference. Ensure your tutor is a qualified teacher and DBS checked.

Create a Study Plan and break it down.

Create a study schedule with your child that breaks down the syllabus into manageable chunks. Include time for tuition sessions, self-study, and rest. Consistency is the key to success. Ensure that your child has a regular study routine. Even if it is just an hour of focused study every day, consistency helps. Mix the subjects to avoid burnout. Vary the subjects your child works on each day. This will help keep them engaged and reduce stress.

Encourage Active Learning.

Encourage your child to discuss the material with you, their school teacher or their tutor. Explaining concepts out loud often reinforces understanding. Visual tools like mind maps, coloured revision notes or flashcards help your child remember important points and make revision more interactive. Remember, making revision notes is a technique in itself. They have to be colourful, in short form and not packed together.

Simulate exam conditions.

Regularly test your child under timed conditions to replicate the exam environment. This will help with time management during the real exam.

Healthy Study Environment.

Create a quiet, organised study space. A distraction-free environment can help your child focus better. Minimise distractions and limit access to devices that might distract them (social media, games, etc.) during study hours. This will help maintain concentration.

Emotional and Psychological Support.

Encourage your child with positive reinforcement. Focus on their efforts and progress rather than just the outcome. It is normal to feel anxious about exams. Help your child manage stress by staying positive, having a proper sleep routine and having regular but light physical activities.

Praise efforts, not just results. Emphasise the importance of effort and learning rather than just the grades. This encourages a growth mindset. The grades will come!

Health and Well-being.

A balanced diet is very important. A well-nourished body supports brain function. Ensure your child has a balanced diet with fruits, vegetables and healthy snacks to maintain energy levels. Adequate sleep is essential for concentration and memory. Ensure your child has a regular sleep routine, especially as exams approach. Regular physical activity reduces stress and boosts mood, so encourage your child to take short breaks to stretch, walk or exercise.

So plan ahead and give your child the best chance of success!

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To enter scan the code or visit northernlifemagazine.co.uk/competitions.
Deadline for entries 20/11/25 unless otherwise stated.



Competition time

WIN A DECODEN MAGIC DELUXE PACK

A NANO TAPE MAGIC ULTIMATE CREATIONS DELUXE KIT

This kit from Curious Universe has everything to make amazing nano tape crafts. This versatile tape and the included charms, sequins, sprinkles and more can be used for lots of creative fun! Follow the steps, then scan the QR code for more ideas. Make cute kawaii designs, from bubble tea squishies to bubble pets, bag charms and more!



Q. What kind of designs can you make?



WIN A HAMA BEADS MERMAIDS GIFT SET

The Hama Beads Mermaids Gift Set will bring fantasy to life, bead by bead!. Create colourful mermaids by placing the beads onto the pegboard, then iron using the special ironing paper to fuse the beads together. You'll be left with a permanent design, and there are bead supports provided to show it off upright. The set includes 4,000 beads, two pegboards, bead supports, string, colour design sheet, instructions, ironing paper, and a storage tray. Kids will love this unique way to create!

Q. What mythical creature do you create?

WIN COLOURBLOCKS PAINT STICKS

Colourblocks Paint Stick Sets allow your child to explore the magic and excitement of Colourblocks with these bright and colourful paint sticks, offering the perfect way to explore the world of colour! The pack contains six different paint sticks complete with colourful colourblock character tops. With little or no mess, they create a happy experience for all! Get creative and have fun.



Q. How many paint sticks are included?



WIN A BESPOKE FAMILY STORYBOOK WITH STORYDO

Create a personalised family storybook with Storydo. Answer guided questions, add photos, and our BookBuilder crafts a beautiful keepsake capturing the people, milestones, and rituals that shape your child's life. Rooted in storytelling expertise, it helps children build identity and belonging—a meaningful, lasting gift your family will treasure.

Q. What does Storydo help children build?

WIN A SQUISHMALLOWS ROCK PAINTING KIT

Create 'Mallow art that really rocks with this awesome Squishmallows rock painting kit! With four river stones, paints, stencil sheets, paintbrushes and a design book, this gorgeous kit will help you perfect and collect adorable Squishmallows rocks to treasure or share.

Q. How many river stones are included?



WIN A HALLOWEEN BUNDLE WITH SMART GAMES AND ALL JIGSAW PUZZLES

This Halloween, puzzlers can win a fang-tastic prize from SmartGames and All Jigsaw Puzzles. Tackle the Graveyard Shift brain teaser, to rescue a lost cat from ghostly ghouls and escape the eerie cemetery. For jigsaw fans, three hauntingly good puzzles - Cosy Halloween, Arachnophobia, and Birds of Pumpkin Farm - deliver fiendish fun. Whether you love brain teasers or jigsaws, this bundle promises monstrous seasonal thrills!

Q. What animal do you rescue in The Graveyard Shift?

Fun facts about our FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Christmas is one of the most magical times of the year – full of sparkly lights, tasty food, and fun traditions. But have you ever wondered where those traditions came from? Many of the things we do today have been around for hundreds – or even thousands – of years! Here's the story behind some of our favourites:

Santa Claus

- The jolly man in the red suit we call Santa Claus was inspired by Saint Nicholas, a kind bishop from the 4th century who lived in what is now Türkiye
- He was famous for secretly giving gifts to people in need, and over time his story spread across Europe.
- In the Netherlands, he was called Sinterklaas, which became "Santa Claus" when Dutch settlers brought the tradition to America.

Christmas Trees

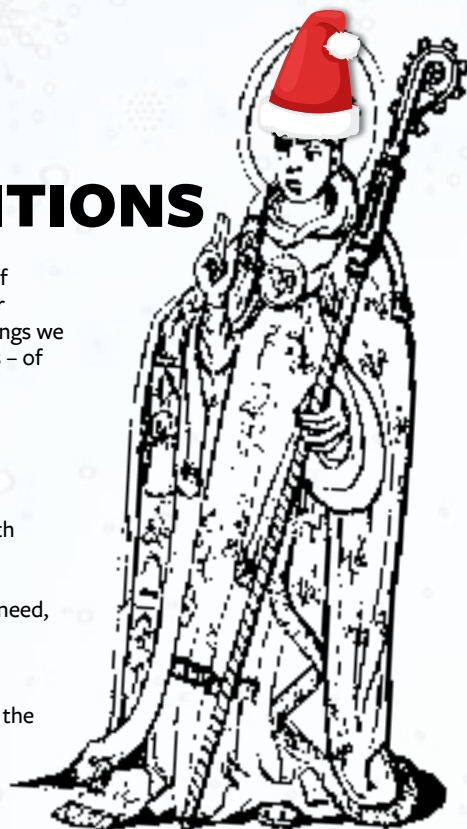
- Decorating a tree indoors started in Germany over 400 years ago. People brought evergreen trees inside to remind them that life goes on, even in winter.
- Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (who was German) made the Christmas tree popular in Britain in the 1800s.
- Soon, families all over the UK were decorating their own trees with candles, fruit, sweets – and later, shiny baubles and fairy lights.

Giving Gifts

- The idea of giving presents goes all the way back to the Three Wise Men, who brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to baby Jesus.
- Viking-style giving! Vikings gave each other carved wooden toys and animal horns at winter festivals — no wrapping paper, just raw festive power!
- Rock 'n' roll surprise! Elvis once gave his friends brand new cars for Christmas — because "thank you very much" just wasn't enough!

Christmas Stockings

- According to legend, Saint Nicholas once dropped gold coins down a chimney, and they landed in a pair of stockings drying by the fire. Ever since then, children have hung stockings by the fireplace hoping for treats, sweets, and small surprises from Santa.



Santa came from Turkey!



Christmas Dinner

- In medieval times, people might have eaten roast goose or even peacock!
- Henry VIII is the first known English king to have eaten turkey. At that time the bird was seen as something of an exotic delicacy and would have been just one of a variety of fowl to be placed before the hungry monarch
- Today, we add extras like Yorkshire puddings, stuffing, pigs in blankets, roast potatoes, and of course – Christmas pudding and even curry or pizza!

Pizza for Christmas dinner?



Christmas Carols

- People have sung songs to celebrate winter for over 1,000 years!
- Many of the carols we know today, like 'Silent Night' and 'O Come All Ye Faithful,' were written hundreds of years ago.
- Carol singers used to go door-to-door in their villages, and this tradition still continues today.



Christmas Cards

- The first ever Christmas card was sent in 1843 by a man called Sir Henry Cole.
- The first Christmas card ever made was kinda rude! It was printed in 1843 and showed people drinking wine — even a child with a glass!
- One card flew into space! In 1965, astronauts on the Gemini 6 sent a Christmas card from space, complete with a fake UFO sighting as a joke!

ODD FESTIVE FACTS!

Impress your friends and family with these unusual Christmas facts:

1. Rudolph wasn't always part of the team!
He was invented in 1939 for a Christmas story written to advertise a shop in America – and he became so popular that songs and films soon followed.

2. The biggest Christmas gift ever was the Statue of Liberty!
France gave it to the USA in 1886 as a symbol of friendship – and it arrived in time for Christmas!

3. The tallest Christmas tree ever was taller than Big Ben!
It was a giant 67-metre fir tree put up in Seattle, USA, in 1950. That's as tall as 15 double-decker buses stacked up!

4. Some countries hide their brooms at Christmas.
In Norway, people believe witches come out on Christmas Eve – so they hide all the brooms to stop them being stolen!

5. It's not always snowy!
Most UK Christmas Days are actually mild and wet – the last widespread white Christmas here was in 2010.



Make Christmas MAGICAL

**and
Money-
Saving!**

Looking for Christmas gifts that are full of magic but don't cost the earth? The best presents aren't the poshest ones, they're the thoughtful, creative, memory-making kind. Whether you're crafting with the kids or giving old treasures a new sparkle, these fun and affordable ideas will keep the festive spirit high (and your purse happy).

Gingerbread Christmas Tree Biscuits

These Christmas tree decorations look great, make a beautiful gift and taste delicious.

For the recipe and instructions visit northernlifefamilymagazine.co.uk/recipes



Make It (Homemade Magic)

Salt Dough Decorations

A Christmas classic! Mix flour, salt, and water, roll it out, and cut into festive shapes. Bake, paint, and hang 'em on the tree, making keepsakes that'll last for years.

Voucher Books

Kids can create little books of vouchers, such as 'Help with the washing up,' or 'Read a story together.' Grandparents and siblings will be chuffed to bits when they can cash in a favour or get a hand with the jobs around the house!

Beaded Jewellery or Keyrings

A handful of beads and some string can be turned into necklaces, bracelets, or keyrings. Colourful, personal, and proper lovely.

Den Kit

Bundle an old sheet, some pegs, and a torch together. Instant 'build your own den' kit - hours of imaginative fun for the little ones.



Jar Treats

Fill a jar with homemade biscuits, brownie mix, or hot chocolate powder. Tie on a ribbon and a hand-drawn label for a gift that looks as good as it tastes.



Painted Flower Pots

Give old pots a fresh coat of paint and add seeds or a small plant. A gift that grows and keeps on giving.

DIY Craft Kit

Fill an old tin or basket with pens, crayons, stickers, and paper. A homemade 'craft kit in a box' that'll keep kids entertained for hours.

Baking Bundle

Shop for a second hand mixing bowl, spoon, or cookie cutters, and pair with a handwritten recipe and dry ingredients in a jar. Sweet, thoughtful, and practical.

Toy Fix-Up

Give a pre-loved doll, teddy, or toy car a bit of TLC. A fresh outfit or a lick of paint, and it's like new.

Movie Night Basket

Pop a DVD of a favourite family film into a basket with popcorn and snacks. Add some homemade tickets and you've got a full-on movie night.



Salt dough -
A Christmas
classic!

Re-love It (Second-hand sparkle)

Board Game Refresh

Pick up a preloved board game, give it a clean, and repackage it in a decorated box or bag. Add homemade scorecards or a few treats for a night in with the family.

Puzzle in a Jar

Pop puzzle pieces into a decorated jar with a tag saying 'Some Assembly Required.'

Frame and Art Upgrade

Grab an old frame and get the kids to jazz it up with paint or glitter, and add a photo, a child's artwork, or an uplifting quote - a simple, thoughtful pressie.



Story Time Bundle

Grab a second-hand mug, give it a wipe-over, then fill with cocoa, tea bags, or candy canes. Wrap in cellophane and you're sorted. Consider adding a second-hand book for a cosy night in.



Jewellery Treasure Box

Source a small box, jazz it up with paint or stickers, and fill with beads, costume jewellery, or friendship bracelets—a mini treasure trove for little hands. 📌



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Toilet Roll Advent Calendar (Tree Style)

STUFF YOU'LL NEED

- 24 (or 25) clean cardboard toilet rolls
- Large piece of cardboard (a cereal box works) for the backing
- Green paper or green paint + brushes (brown for the 'trunk' is nice)
- PVA glue or glue stick (grown-ups can use a glue gun if you want it extra strong)
- Safety scissors (Ask an adult for help)
- Tissue paper or thin wrapping paper (for 'doors')
- Number stickers or a marker (1–24 or 1–25)
- Small treats/notes (stickers, jokes, sweets, tiny toys, acts of kindness)
- Extras to decorate: star cut-out, ribbon, sequins, stickers, washi tape

HOW TO MAKE IT

Paint or Wrap the Rolls (optional)

Paint rolls green (and 2–3 rolls brown if you want a trunk). Let them dry.

No paint? Wrap each roll with green paper and tape the seam.

Make the "Doors"

Draw and cut 24–25 circles of tissue/wrapping paper a little bigger than the end of a roll (about 7–8 cm wide). Write numbers 1–24 (or 25) on the circles or add number stickers.

Fill the Rolls

Pop one treat/note into each roll.

Glue or tape a numbered circle over the opening to seal it. (This will be the side kids punch through each day.)

Plan the Shape

On your cardboard backing, sketch a simple triangle for the tree.

Dry-Fit First

Place the sealed ends all facing out and arrange the rolls on the backing inside your triangle (don't glue yet) until you're happy with the look.

Glue the Rolls

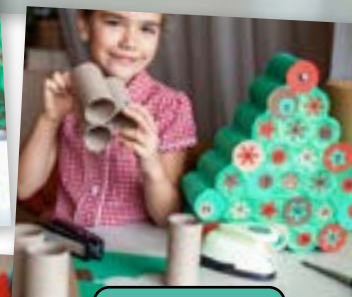
Lift one roll at a time, add glue to the side touching the backing and to the sides touching its neighbours, then press back into place.

Add the Trunk and Star

Glue 2–3 brown rolls at the bottom for the trunk. Cut a star from yellow card and stick it at the top.

24-PAY LAYOUT:
rows of 1-2-3-4-5-6
(that's 21) +3 brown rolls
as a trunk = 24

25-PAY LAYOUT:
rows of 3-4-5-6-7 = 25
(add a star on top)



TIP: Glue small clusters (e.g., groups of 3) first, then glue the clusters together—it's easier for kids.

Decorate the Tree

Add ribbon 'garlands,' stickers, sequins, or paper 'baubles' between the numbers. You can also wrap the backing in green paper for a neat finish.

Hang or Stand

To hang: glue a ribbon loop to the back.

To stand: cut the backing a little bigger than the tree for a sturdy base.

Count Down!

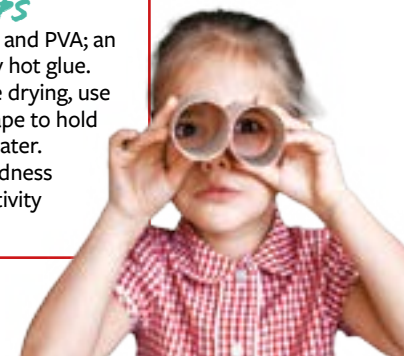
Each day, find the number, push through the paper door, and enjoy the surprise inside.

HINTS AND TIPS

Kids use safety scissors and PVA; an adult should handle any hot glue.

If rolls are wobbly while drying, use a few bits of masking tape to hold them in place; peel off later.

No sweets? Fill with kindness challenges, jokes, or activity coupons.



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DELICIOUS Winter Wonders

These easy, tasty treats will fill your home with warmth, sweetness and festive cheer.

GINGERBREAD SYRUP

Makes 300ml | Prep: 10 mins, plus cooling
Cook time: 20–25 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 300g granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Put 500ml of water in a large, heavy-based saucepan with the sugar, spices and salt and bring to the boil. Watch carefully or the mixture may overflow. Reduce to a rolling simmer and cook for 15–20 minutes uncovered, or until the consistency of maple syrup. Remove from the heat and stir through the vanilla. Leave to cool completely. Transfer to a jar or bottle, seal with a lid and store in the fridge for up to 1 month. If your syrup crystallises over time, re-liquify in a bain marie.



BENNETTOPIECOM



REINDEER ★ SHORTBREAD

Makes 8 | Prep time: 20 mins
Cook time: 15 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 200g unsalted butter, softened
- 100g caster sugar
- 300g plain flour
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- pinch of salt
- 16 Opies Cocktail Cherries
- 16 mini pretzels
- 32 candy eyes or mini chocolate chips
- 50g thick Icing

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan) and line a baking tray with parchment paper. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the softened unsalted butter and caster sugar until light and fluffy. Add the plain flour, vanilla extract and pinch of salt to the bowl. Mix until the ingredients come together to form a dough. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to a thickness of about 1/2cm, use a large dinner plate as a template to cut a large circle and place on a lined baking sheet. Place the baking tray in the preheated oven and bake for 12–15 minutes, or until they are lightly golden brown around the edges. Once baked, remove from the oven and cool on the baking tray for a few minutes and cut into wedges, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Use icing to glue one a cocktail cherry at the end of each cookie to represent the reindeer's nose.



FABFLOUR.CO.UK/EASY-PEASY-BAKING



GINGERBREAD ★ TRAYBAKE CAKE

Makes one 20cm x 30cm traybake | Prep time: 15 mins
Cook time: 30 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 200g unsalted butter + 40g for icing
- 150g light brown sugar
- 4 tbsp black treacle
- 2 eggs
- 300g self raising flour
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 150ml milk
- 75g cream cheese
- 200g icing sugar
- crushed gingerbread men, to decorate

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 160°C (fan). In the mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add in the treacle and eggs, followed by the flour, ginger and milk, mixing after each addition until a thick, smooth batter is formed. Pour the batter into the prepared tin and bake for 25–30 minutes until risen and springy to the touch. Allow to cool completely. Make the icing by combining the 40g butter, cream cheese and icing sugar until no lumps remain. Using a palette knife or the back of a spoon, spread evenly on top of the ginger sponge and sprinkle with crushed gingerbread men.



MINCE PIE ★ TURNOVERS

Makes 8–10 portions | Prep time: 30 mins
Cook time: 25 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 400g plain flour
- 200g unsalted butter
- 4 tbsp cold water
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice (optional)
- Jar of mincemeat
- 1 egg for egg wash
- granulated sugar for sprinkling
- cream

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan). In the large mixing bowl, rub together the plain flour, mixed spice and butter with your fingertips until a breadcrumb consistency is achieved. Add in the water and bring together to form a dough. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and roll it out into as large a rectangle as possible, keeping a thickness of about 3–4mm. Cut the dough into as many squares as possible (approx 10cm x 10cm), then reroll the trimmings until you have 8/10 squares. Place a heaped tablespoon of mincemeat into the centre of each square, use your finger to brush the edge of the pastry squares with your beaten egg then fold one corner over to the opposite to form a triangle. Crimp the edges with a fork and place on the baking tray. Brush each turnover with your egg wash, cut a small vent in the top of each one and sprinkle with granulated sugar before placing in the oven for 20–25 minutes until golden brown. Serve warm with cream.



FABFLOUR.CO.UK/EASY-PEASY-BAKING



Cut the Waste, Keep the Taste!

15 Simple Ways to Waste Less Food
and Save Money

1. Plan Like a Pro

Spend 10 minutes each week planning your meals around what's already in the fridge. It stops double-buying and keeps those forgotten yoghurts from growing their own ecosystem.

2. Your Freezer Is Your Best Mate

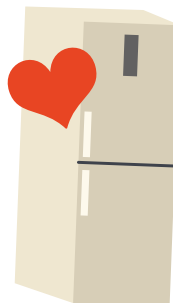
Freeze bread, leftovers, herbs, even milk! Think of it as a pause button for food. Just label and date things - no one wants 'mystery stew' night.

3. Rotate Your Stock

When unpacking groceries, move the old stuff to the front and new to the back. Simple, but it works - supermarkets swear by it!

4. Have a 'Use Me First' Box

Stick a basket in the fridge for food that's nearly out of date. It's a visual reminder - and a great source of easy snacks.



5. Use Every Last Drop

Add water to nearly-empty sauce bottles and shake - perfect for pasta sauce or stew bases. A splash of frugality never hurt anyone!



6. Keep It Cool (But Not Arctic)

Set your fridge to about 4°C. Too warm and food spoils; too cold and your salad freezes solid. Milk and meat go on the bottom shelf where it's coldest.



7. Freeze fruit

Don't bin overripe bananas or soft berries — chop and freeze them in reusable bags or containers. Perfect for quick smoothies, baking, or adding a fruity boost to breakfast.

8. Serve Smaller Portions

Kids' eyes are often bigger than their bellies. Dish up smaller portions - they can always ask for seconds. Less waste, fewer tears at the table.

9. Get Creative with Scraps

Carrot tops? Make pesto. Broccoli stalks? Chuck them in soup. Stale bread? Breadcrumbs or pudding.

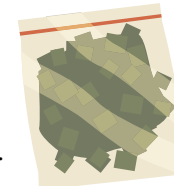
10. Shop Smart, Not Hungry

Never shop on an empty stomach - you'll buy half the shop! Make a list and stick to it.

Nothing wasted, everything tasty.

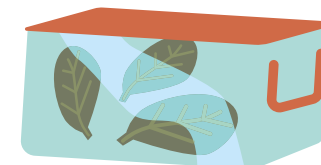
11. Love Your Leftovers

Turn Sunday roast into Monday pie, Tuesday soup or Wednesday sarnies. A little creativity goes a long way.



13. Batch Cook and Freeze

Cook big portions of chilli, bolognese, or soup, then freeze in family-sized tubs. Perfect for busy nights and stops you reaching for takeaway menus.



14. Store Food Properly

Potatoes like a cool, dark spot (not the fridge). Bananas, tomatoes, and onions prefer room temp. A little storage know-how saves a lot of waste.

15. Compost the Rest

For the peelings, scraps and bits you truly can't save - compost them. The kids will love watching waste turn into something useful for the garden.



Being frugal isn't about going without -

it's about making the most of what you've got. A little planning, a pinch of creativity, and a dash of know-how can make a huge difference to your budget and the planet. So here's to cleaner plates, fuller wallets, and less guilt at the bin. Now that's proper good saving!



12. Embrace the Wonky

Funny-shaped fruit and veg taste just as good - and are often cheaper! Perfect for soups, stews and smoothies.



Helping Children Cope with Loss:

10 Gentle Ways to Support Them

When a child experiences loss, they don't just need answers — they need love, patience, and understanding. These ten gentle ideas will help you comfort and support a grieving child while giving them space to heal at their own pace.

1. Use simple, honest words

When someone dies, it's tempting to soften the language—saying someone “passed on” or “went to sleep.” But young children often take words literally, and phrases like these can be confusing or even frightening. If a pet is said to have “gone to sleep,” a child might begin to fear bedtime.

Paul Parsons, Head of Clinical at Winston's Wish explains: “It can be really tricky as adults to talk openly and honestly when a child is bereaved but it's essential that we use age-appropriate but clear language. Don't shy away from talking about it or worry that you're going to make it worse.

“Younger children may be very confused about what is happening or they may have fears or worries that they don't know how to communicate to you. Offering a space to talk to them regularly will help them to be able to share what they are feeling.”

Being honest helps children understand what's really happened, without leaving them to fill in the blanks with their imagination.

2. Keep it simple

Children process things differently depending on their age and stage of development. Too much detail can feel overwhelming. Start with the basics: ‘Grandma died. That means her body stopped working and we won't see her anymore.’ Let your child guide the conversation by asking questions. This way, they can take in information at their own pace, rather than being overwhelmed all at once.

3. Allow them to grieve in their own way

We all grieve differently. Some adults stay busy, others need quiet time. Children are no different. One minute they may be crying, the next they're laughing and running around the garden. It doesn't mean they don't care - it just means their minds and hearts process grief in bursts. Give them permission to feel whatever comes up. Let them know it's okay to feel angry, sad, or confused. Offer comfort with hugs, patience, and gentle reassurance.

“Offer comfort with hugs, patience, and gentle reassurance.”

4. Encourage play and creativity

Not every child wants, or is able, to talk about their feelings directly. Play can be a safe way for them to express what's going on inside.

You might suggest drawing a picture of the person who died, writing a letter to them, creating a memory box, or even acting things out with toys. Children make sense of the world through play. When words feel too big, creativity can provide a softer outlet for grief.

5. Keep routines where possible

Loss can make the world feel unstable. That's why routines are so important. Bedtimes, school runs, and mealtimes may seem small, but they provide a sense of security. Of course, flexibility is necessary—some days will be harder than others—but keeping familiar rhythms helps children know that life, though changed, still has structure.

“Trying to keep to a routine as much as possible can be really helpful,” Paul says. “The death of a parent can turn a child's life upside down, but they can often find comfort in routine and structure. Try to maintain a sense of normalcy by sticking to regular routines that they are used to and over time develop new normal.

6. Show your own emotions

Many adults worry about crying in front of children, fearing it will scare them. But seeing you shed tears, or hearing you say “I miss Grandma too,” can actually reassure them. It shows that grief is natural and that feelings are safe to share. Children learn from what we model. If they see you allowing yourself to feel, they'll learn it's okay for them to do the same.

7. Share memories and create rituals

Talking about the person who died doesn't make things worse—it helps keep their memory alive. You might bring out a photo album when your child mentions them, share funny stories at dinner, or light a candle on birthdays and anniversaries.

These rituals reassure children that while someone is gone physically, the love and memories remain. It gives them something to hold onto.

8. Answer questions

Children often ask the same question over and over: “Where is Grandad?” or “When is the dog coming back?” This repetition doesn't mean you explained it poorly—it's simply their way of making sense of something so big. Older children may want more detail but might not know how to ask. You could gently check: “Do you want me to tell you about what happened?” Let them set the pace, and remind them they can come back with questions whenever they need.

“Children learn from what we model. If they see you allowing yourself to feel, they'll learn it's okay for them to do the same.”

9. Don't overlook the loss of pets


For many children, the death of a pet is their first encounter with grief. To them, the loss can feel just as painful as losing a person. Holding a small farewell ceremony, drawing pictures, or talking about happy memories can help them honour the bond. It also shows them that their grief matters.

10. Seek extra support if needed

Most children, with time and support, will find their own way through grief. But if you notice ongoing withdrawal, nightmares, aggression, overwhelming guilt, or changes in sleep and appetite, it may be a sign they need extra help. Counsellors, teachers, or grief specialists can provide a safe space for children to share feelings they might not express at home.

Grief is not about ‘getting over it.’ It's about learning to live with the loss while carrying forward the love and memories. As adults, we can't take away children's sadness, but we can walk alongside them - listening, comforting, and reminding them they're not alone.



For further advice about how to support a child or young person who is grieving the death of somebody, **Winston's Wish** advice hub - [winstonswish.org/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child/](https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child/) or call Winston's Wish team on 08088 020 021 (8am-8pm, weekdays), email on ask@winstonswish.org 

HALLÉ

The Snowman & Shaun The Sheep: The Flight Before Christmas



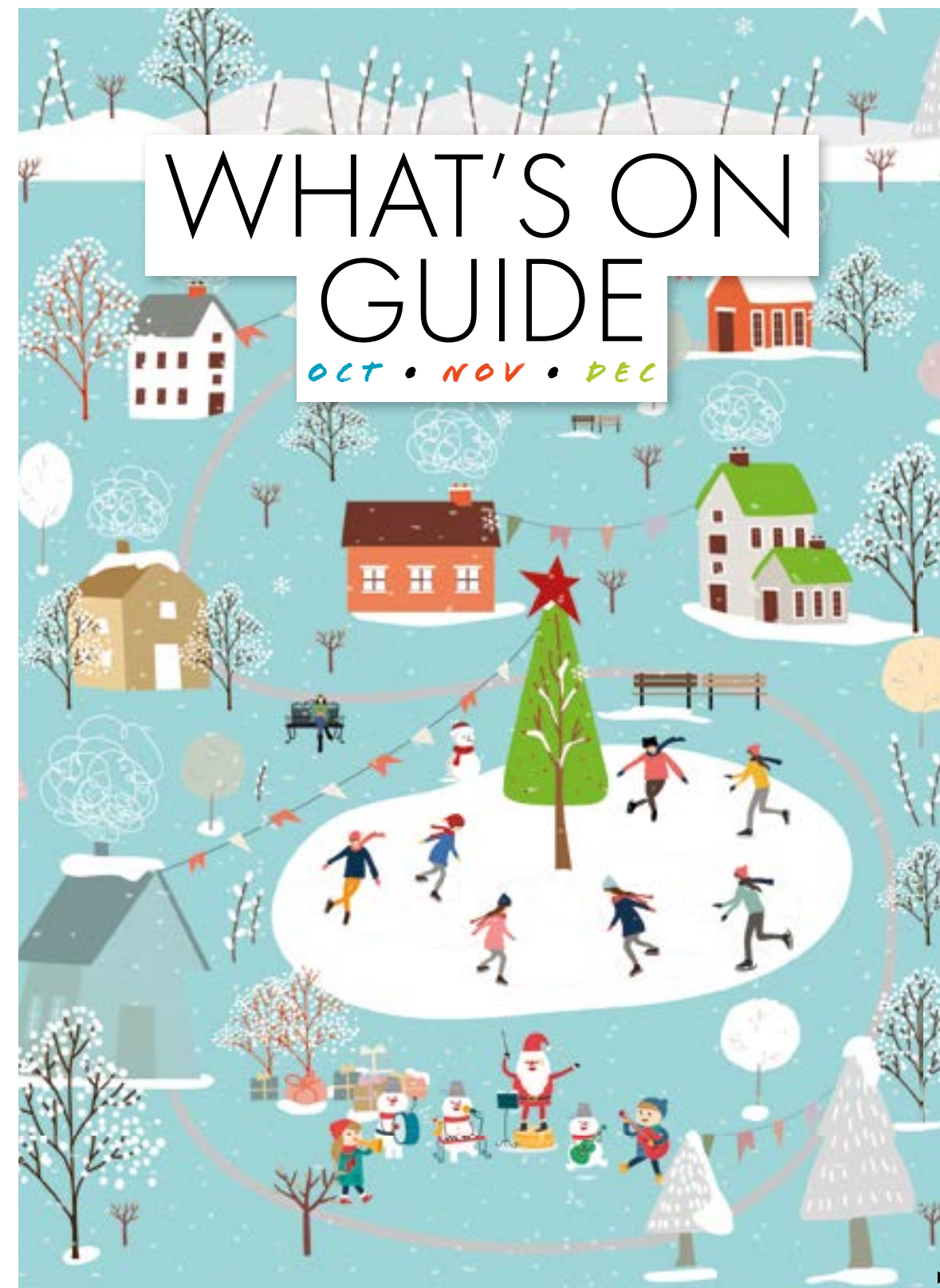
Sat 20 Dec, 4pm, Sun 21 Dec, 11am and 1.30pm, The Bridgewater Hall

Sit back and enjoy the films on the big screen whilst the Hallé orchestra accompany The Snowman as he soars through the wintry sky and Shaun the Sheep gets up to festive mischief in The Flight Before Christmas!

Euan Shields CONDUCTOR • Soloists from the Hallé Children's Choir SHIRLEY COURT, DIRECTOR

Don't forget our annual Hallé Christmas Family concert on Sun 7 Dec at 3pm.
Hop aboard for a musical sleigh ride adventure with the Hallé!

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WHAT'S ON GUIDE

OCT • NOV • DEC

11am-7pm

Christmas IN COLNE

COLNE TOWN CENTRE

SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2025

PERFORMING LIVE OUR UNMISSABLE MYSTERY HEADLINER! ALL WILL SOON BE REVEALED!

Plus FREE SANTA'S GROTTO | FREE REAL LIFE REINDEER | FREE GIANT SNOW GLOBE | FREE RODEO REINDEER | FREE FACE PAINTING | FREE DONKEY RIDES | FREE PUNCH & JUDY SHOWS | FREE GREAT ELF HUNT FESTIVE TRAIL | FREE DANCE PERFORMANCES FROM LOCAL DANCE SCHOOLS | FREE LIVE MUSIC FROM SEAN TOMS & BARNOLD SWICK BRASS BAND | FREE TORCHLIT PROCESSION | APPEARANCES FROM THE GRINCH & CINDY LOU & SANTA'S ELVES | HUGE CHRISTMAS MARKET | CHILDREN'S RIDES PLUS SO MUCH MORE!

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VEHICLE LEASING

OCTOBER

Fri 24th

THE HAPPA HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR PARTY!

Happa, Shores Hey Farm, Briercliffe, Burnley
Get ready for a night packed with family-friendly entertainment, including a lively disco, glitter tattoos, exciting party games and a fancy dress competition with fantastic prizes up for grabs. £12.95. 7.30 pm to 10 pm. happa.org.uk

BROOMSTICK HIDE & SHRIEK COMPETITION HUNT

Clitheroe Castle Museum, Castle Hill, Clitheroe
Have some Halloween fun by spotting the tiny broomsticks hidden all around the museum! Enter our competition for a chance to be the lucky winner of a goody bag of great souvenirs from our shop. 11 am – 4 pm. Adults - £5.10. Child - Free. lancashire.gov.uk

Sat 25th

THE BLACKPOOL TOWER CIRCUS

Blackpool Tower Circus, Blackpool
Experience stunts, comedy, and legendary clowns Mooky and Mr Boo at this historic circus. Until 5 Nov. theblackpooltower.com

AXE-THROWING

The Axe Imperium, The Fun House, Colne
Inject some spontaneity, some excitement, some togetherness! Reconnect with your partner, your children, your friends. Do something that makes you feel alive. Various times and prices. axestoashes.com/ axe-imperium

CUTE & CREEPY HALLOWEEN CREATIONS

Clitheroe Castle Museum, Castle Hill, Clitheroe
Make something spooktacular this month! Your little monsters can decorate a Wicked Wooden Halloween tealight (£3.50) or a Frightfully Fun Treat Bag (£2.50). 11 am – 4 pm. Adults - £5.10. Child - Free. lancashire.gov.uk

SKIPTON MONSTER TRIAL

Skipton High Street, Skipton
Ten monsters are hiding around town. Are you brave enough to find them? Find the monsters hidden in shop windows around the town centre and write down the letters they are hiding. Find the hidden word to be entered into a prize draw. Until 2nd Nov. Free. welcometoskipton.com

Sun 26th

SHREK THE MUSICAL

Skipton Town Hall, High Street, Skipton
A spectacular production filled with laughter, heart, and a whole lot of ogre-sized fun! Various times. £22. Until 1 Nov. skiptontownhall.co.uk

Tues 28th

CHILDREN'S PRINCESS AFTERNOON TEA

Park Hill Barn, Pendle Heritage Centre, Park Hill, Barrowford
Enjoy delightful treats, enchanting activities, and meet your favourite princesses in a beautiful setting. £22.50. 1.30 pm to 5 pm. parkhillbarn.co.uk

Wed 29th

THE ELF EXPLORER

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, The Railway Station, Station Road, Haworth
Step into a world of festive wonder with The Elf Explorer – a heart-warming steam train journey packed with Christmas cheer, mischievous elves, and a visit from Father Christmas himself. Various times and prices. kwvr.co.uk

WITCHES WORKSHOPS

Clitheroe Castle Museum, Castle Hill, Clitheroe
Enter the Enchanted Workshop, where you will make your own terrifying crafts. Brave the Yucky Dip in Cauldron Corner and meet friendly witches in their Lair. Every child takes home a special treat! Sessions are at 11 am, 1 pm, and 2.30 pm. £5 per child. lancashire.gov.uk

YOU CHOOSE

The Muni Theatre, Albert Road, Colne
Based on the brilliant book by Pippa Goodhart and Nick Sharratt, Nonsense Room Productions (Shark in the Park and Hairy Maclary Shows) brings you an interactive musical show for all the family. But in this show, you choose what happens! £12. 2 pm. themuni.co.uk

Thurs 30th

MATILDA

The Alhambra Theatre, Morley Street, Bradford
This anarchic production, about a strong and determined heroine with a vivid imagination, has won over 100 global awards, including 24 for Best Musical. Various times & prices. 30 Oct-23 Nov. bradford-theatres.co.uk

HALLOWEEN GHOST TRAINS

East Lancashire Railway, 23a Bolton St, Bury
Are you ready for a fang-tastically frightening time on board the Halloween Ghost Trains? Count Brian the Vampire, his trusted henchman Bogeye and the whole monster squad are just dying to meet! 30 Oct-1 Nov. eastlancsrailway.org.uk

THE PIRATES OF BUCCANEER BAY

The Muni Theatre, Albert Road, Colne
From the award-winning team behind Sleeping Beauty and The Wizard of Oz comes a brand-new family spectacular – The Pirates of Buccaneer Bay! Packed with laughs, thrills, and jaw-dropping surprises, this is the high-seas panto experience you won't want to miss. £14.50. 2.30 pm. themuni.co.uk



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Aladdin

SAT 3 - SUN 18 JANUARY 2026

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6, 7, 13, 14, 20 - 24 December 2025



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Colne St Bartholomew's presents
The magical world of C.S.Lewis

Finding Jesus in
Narnia

Sat 22nd Nov 11am-5pm
Open every day this week
Sat 29th Nov 11am-3pm

14 Life sized scenes
Discover Aslan & all the much loved characters from this epic adventure

Cafe * Refreshments
Raffle * Quiz *
Guided Tours
Find ASLAN on the high street

For opening times and further information
'Finding Jesus in Narnia'




November

Sat 1st

LIGHTPOOL FESTIVAL 2025

Blackpool Centre

The exciting programme features a spectacular mix of stunning light installations, captivating live performances, and mesmerising 3D projection shows. Free. lightpool.org.uk

BONFIRE NIGHT TOD

Todmorden Cricket Club, Burnley Rd, Todmorden

Bonfire and professional firework display. 8 pm to 10 pm. todmordenc.ccom

BONFIRE NIGHT BLACKBURN

East Lancs CC, Dukes Brow, Blackburn

RBL Blackburn Branch is hosting a family fireworks and bonfire evening with fairground rides, food, and a bar. Tickets are £3.50 if booked in advance or £5 if paid at the gate. £3.50. 8 pm to 10 pm. facebook.com/blackburnfamilyfireworksand-bonfireevening

Sun 2nd

BONFIRE NIGHT COLNE

Colne Cricket Club, Byron Rd, Colne

An unforgettable bonfire, hot food stalls and a firework display! 7 pm to 10 pm. Family ticket (2 adults, 2 children). Early Bird price is £20 if purchased before 26/10, if bought after £25. Colne's BIGGEST Bonfire & Firework Display! Tickers available from Colne Cricket, Helen Green Academy of Dance, Blondie Brownie and Pendle Home Entertainment. Opens from 3 pm. colnecricket.co.uk

Fri 7th

BONFIRE NIGHT BACUP

Bacup Cricket Club, Lane Head Lane, Bacup

Gates open at 5 pm. The bonfire will be lit at 5.30 pm. 'Silent' fireworks at 6.30 pm, followed by the main display at 7.30 pm. There will be lots to do to entertain the whole family, including fairground rides and children's stalls, which will run until 9 pm. Early bird £12. 5.30 pm to 9 pm. bacupcc.com



BONFIRE WEEKEND THORNTON HALL

Thornton Hall Country Park, Thornton in Craven, Barnoldswick

This sell-out spectacular returns – bigger, brighter, and louder than ever before! Get ready for a blazing bonfire, jaw-dropping fireworks, and a night packed full of crackling excitement, tasty treats, and sparkling family fun. £19.95. 5.30 pm to 10 pm. thorntonhallfarm.co.uk

Sat 8th

WALLACE & GROMIT WITH LIVE BRASS BAND

Life Church, Burnley

After the sell-out success of the last live-to-picture performance, presenting The Wrong Trousers with a live brass band at Life Church. 1 pm to 3 pm.

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

Burnley Mechanics, Manchester Road, Burnley

Peter Parnell's new book embraces story theatre and features verbatim passages from Hugo's gothic novel. £24. 7.30 - 10 pm. blcgroup.co.uk

Sun 9th

ENCHANTED – THE CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

The Muni Theatre, Albert Road, Colne

Performed by a cast of talented live singers, performing timeless classics such as Frozen, Tangled, Moana, Wicked, Beauty and the Beast, The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, The Lion King, and many more. £27. 2.30 pm. themuni.co.uk

Fri 14th

THE POLAR EXPRESS™ TRAIN RIDE – PREMIUM

Bolton Abbey Station

Bolton Abbey, Skipton. BD23 6AF

Do you believe? They certainly do, and that is why they are proud to introduce you to an exciting, magical journey like no other. A more relaxed sensory coach is available for those with Special Educational Needs. Runs from the 14th Nov -24th Dec. Prices range from £43.95 - £60.95. embsayboltonabbeyrailway.org.uk/events

Sat 22nd

FESTIVE STORYTELLING CLAUS

East Riddlesden Hall, Bradford Rd, Riddlesden

Families can join Mrs Claus for storytelling in the Great Hall this year, take a seat and enjoy a festive tale. 10 am – 3 pm. Adult: £7. Child: £3.90. nationaltrust.org.uk

FOREST FAMILY FUN

Harwes Farm, Colne

Qualified Forest School practitioners will lead Forest Family Fun sessions, incorporating a Forest School approach. This event is for families, children aged 0-18 years, and grown-ups get a chance to play out for free too! 10 am – 1 pm. £15.50 per child. harwesfarm.org

Wed 26th

MINCE PIE SPECIALS

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, The Railway Station, Station Road, Haworth

Travel in toasty Yuletide carriages as the festive journey continues into the New Year. The stations are transformed with a Christmas display, creating a magical glow as your train rolls in. £23 per adult, £11.50 per child. Until 4th Jan. kwvr.co.uk

Thurs 27th

MUSEUMS FOR PLAY & GROWTH

Cliffe Castle Museum, Spring Gardens Lane, Keighley

The session includes some of the "50 Things to Do Before You're Five" activities and a creative play zone to spark imagination, offering you and your child up to two hours of quality time spent in the museum. Just drop in. Free. 10 am to 4 pm. bradfordmuseums.org

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

The Muni Theatre, Colne

Created by Jonathan Rockefeller, this production of the critically acclaimed show features a menagerie of over 75 magical puppets, including the star of the show – The Very Hungry Caterpillar. £12. themuni.co.uk

Sat 29th

COLNE'S CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH-ON*Colne Town Centre, Colne*

Every year is bigger and better than the last, and this one will be no exception! There will be a huge festive market featuring over 50 traders, live festive music performances throughout the day, as well as an impressive array of free activities, including face painting, donkey rides, and comedy magic shows. Plus, with a huge headliner act and fireworks to close the event, it is not to be missed! Free. colnetowncouncil.org.uk

CHRISTMAS MARKET*East Riddlesden Hall, Bradford Rd, Riddlesden*

The beautiful Airedale Barn will be open for a cosy Christmas Market filled with seasonal gifts, homeware, and plenty of festive surprises. 10 am – 3 pm. Until 30th Nov. Free. nationaltrust.org.uk

December

Thurs 4th

A CHRISTMAS CAROL*Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, The Railway Station, Station Road, Haworth*

Join Scrooge, Marley & Co. on their journey of self-reflection and discovery of the true meaning of Christmas in the beautiful surroundings of the Yorkshire hills. £35 per adult, £30 per child. Until 23 Dec. kwvr.co.uk

Sat 6th

SNOW WHITE*The Alhambra Theatre, Morley St, Bradford*

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, don't miss the fairest panto of them all! Bring a touch of fairytale sparkle to your festive season with this year's magical pantomime Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs! £27-£45. Various times. bradford-theatres.co.uk



Sun 7th

SANTA SPECIALS*East Lancashire Railway, 23a Bolton St, Bury*

Steam into Christmas on the East Lancashire Railway's famously festive Santa Specials (starting Saturday 22 November, 2025). Your family will create enchanted memories to share as they embark on a magical journey through the Irwell Valley, alongside colourful characters and surprises. Runs from 22 Nov – 24th Dec. eastlancsrailway.org.uk/

Wed 10th

SANTA AND THE PIRATES*The Muni Theatre, Albert Road, Colne*
On a recent raid to the North Pole, Pirate 'Captain Thunder' and his motley crew have bagged themselves some rather special festive items. £12. 4 pm. themuni.co.uk

Fri 12th

SNOW WHITE – CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME 2025*Blackburn Empire Theatre, Aqueduct Rd, Blackburn*

Tom Rolfe Productions is thrilled to be back with a brand new production bursting with dazzling costumes, hilarious comedy, sensational singing, beautiful scenery, and the coolest Magnificent Seven ever! Various times & prices. 22 Nov-4 Jan. blackburnempire.com

Fri 19th

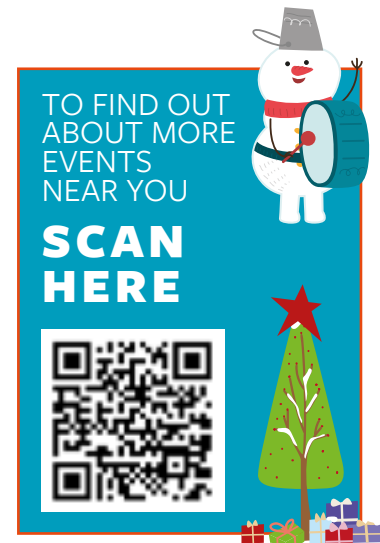
THE REINDEER WHO SAVED CHRISTMAS*Skipton Town Hall, High St, Skipton*
Narrated by Father Christmas himself, this touching story takes a closer look at the beloved tale of a

very special Red-Nosed Reindeer. 11 am, 2.30 pm and 6 pm. Various prices. skiptontownhall.co.uk

Sun 21st

THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL*Settle Victoria Hall, Kirkgate, Settle*
The fabulous Muppets band together to teach Scrooge (Michael Caine) the meaning of Christmas in this charming adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic tale. £4. 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm. settlevictoriahall.org.uk**DEAR SANTA LIVE!***King's Hall, Station Road, Ilkley*
Santa is determined to deliver the most fantastic Christmas present to Sarah, but he doesn't get it right straight away! With the help of his cheeky Elf, he finally settles on something 'perfect', just in time for Christmas Eve. £18.50. 1.30 pm & 4 pm. bradford-theatres.co.uk

Mon 29th

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK*Skipton Town Hall, High St, Skipton*
This year, Same Difference invites you on a festive adventure like no other. Jack and his mum are busy preparing their annual Christmas offering to keep the Giant away from the village—but disaster strikes when the cupboards are bare! Various times. £9. skiptontownhall.co.uk

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