



Set the mood. Festive table runner, £22.99, wayfair.co.uk

Take food to another level. Slate and wood serving stand, £34.99, kitchencraft.co.uk



All that glitters... Star tealight holder, £1.99, gingerray.co.uk



Fancy a drink, deer? Sleigh bottle holder, £69.95, annabeljames.co.uk



Yule have to try one of these... Star bowls, £15 for a set of three, johnlewis.com



Three wise nibbles. Cranberry print wooden snack dish, £22, johnlewis.com



Tray chic! Two-tier serving set, £32.99, kitchencraft.co.uk

Bright spirits. Spices of winter scented candles, £2.50 for a pack of two, ikea.com



Treats and tipples. Christmas cheese cake, £50, paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk; **Luxury tea advent calendar**, £60, whittard.co.uk; **Seville Orange Marmalade Gin Liqueur**, £29.95, rosebudpreserves.co.uk; **Warner's Apple & Pear Gin**, £40, warnersdistillery.com; **Calvet Cremant de Bordeaux Rosé**, £12.99, ocado.com; **Stowford Press Low Alcohol Apple Cider**, £4 for 4 x 330ml, ocado.com; **Filippo Berio Gran Cru Balsamic Vinegar**, £10 for 250ml, ocado.com; **Cartwright & Butler Fig Chutney**, £5.99, prezzybox.com



The meaning of Christmas

The true spirit of the festive season is about taking time out of our busy lives, slowing down and connecting with those who bring us comfort and joy. Sharing and giving are central to this annual celebration, and what better way to spread the love than feasting together? It doesn't have to be costly; a small group of loved ones, gathered over a selection of lovingly prepared food.

Decorate and set your table thoughtfully: candles for a cosy ambience, red or gold glasses for a shimmer of opulence and sprigs of mistletoe on beautiful placemats for a look inspired by nature. Voila!

Blogger spotlight



Karen Burns-Booth blogs at lavenderandlovage.com and has a passion for seasonal produce and recipes. Widely travelled, she's embraced an array of foods, techniques and traditions. The Christmas section of her blog has wonderful ideas for imaginative twists on traditional festive dishes.

Try 'Roast parsnips with brown sugar and cinnamon', 'Sausage, cranberry, red onion and walnut stuffing' or 'Spiced cranberry and walnut Bundt cake' – all jolly good for this time of year!

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

MADE WITH LOVE *Books to inspire when cooking for others this season*



1



2



3



4

1 Christmas Feasts And Treats by Donna Hay (HarperCollins, £20) **2 Cook Share Eat Vegan by Aine Carlin** (Octopus, £14.99) **3 Let It Snow by Agnes Prus** (Hardie Grant, £7.99) **4 Mary Berry Cooks Up A Feast by Mary Berry and Lucy Young** (DK, £25)