



# Government-approved Christmas Day “feast”

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## Introduction

Dinner on Christmas Day is the centrepiece of the season for millions of families across the world. An annual opportunity to truly treat yourself and celebrate Christmas with your closest family and friends.

But can such a feast be reconciled with public health advice that recommends just 6 grams of salt, 30 grams of sugar and 30 grams of saturated fats? To answer that question this research applies these strict dietary limits to a day of feasting that happens but once a year and is not exactly known for temperance.

Drawing upon a range of foods and drink that are staples of the British diet at Christmas, the below menu limits the quantities to match current official NHS and DrinkAware guidelines that are far more draconian than the rationing advice [published at Christmas in 1945](#).

## Key findings

At the TaxPayers' Alliance, we hope that those who adhere to guidelines this year enjoy their:

- Single quarter of a Celebrations mini-chocolate.
- Fifth of a portion of red cabbage.
- Eighth of a tablespoon of cranberry sauce with which to flavour an unseasoned turkey.
- 3 grams of Christmas pudding swimming in a single gram of Brandy Cream.
- Near-empty glass of gin & tonic containing just 2.5 millilitres of gin and 25 millilitres of tonic.

## Typical Christmas Day food and drink consumption within recommended intake limits

Item	Approved amount	Alcohol (units)	Salt (grams)	Sugar (grams)	Fat <sup>1</sup> (grams)	Calories (kcal)
<b>Breakfast</b>						
Croissant	¼ of a croissant	0	0.1	1.9	2.6	66
Cereal	½ a bowl, 15 grams	0	0.1	1	0.1	58
Bread	¼ of a slice, 10 grams	0	0.1	0.3	<0.1	26
Butter	1 teaspoon, 5 grams	0	0.1	0	2.4	37
Strawberry Jam	2 small teaspoons, 8 grams	0	0	4.5	0	0
Celebrations	¼ of a mini-chocolate	0	0	1.2	0.2	11.2
Orange juice	1/10 of a glass, 15 ml	0	<0.1	1.1	0	5.5
Champagne	¼ of a flute, 31 ml	0.4	0	0.4	0	21.5
<b>Dinner</b>						
Turkey	6 thin slices, 125 grams	0	0.6	0	1.1	192
Gravy	4 tablespoons, 56 grams	0	0.6	0.3	0.2	33
Cranberry Sauce	1/8 of a tablespoon, 1.2 grams	0	<0.1	0.8	0	3.2
Bread Sauce	1/8 of a tablespoon, 1.2 grams	0	0.1	0.6	0.1	8.7
Roast potatoes	5 roast potatoes, 128 grams	0	0.3	0	1.9	178
Pigs in blankets	One pig in a blanket	0	0.3	0	0.9	40
Brussels Sprouts	2 Brussels sprouts, 50 grams	0	<0.1	1.4	0.1	25
Red cabbage	1/5 of a serving, 30 grams	0	0.2	4.3	<0.1	20.4
Carrots	5 thin slices, 25 grams	0	<0.1	1.8	<0.1	10.2
Parsnips	½ a parsnip, 50 grams	0	<0.1	2.7	0.1	36
Goose fat for cooking	1 and a ½ teaspoons, 7.5 grams	0	<0.1	0	1.6	67.5
Salt for cooking	None	0	0	0	0	0
Red Wine	1/6 of a medium-sized wine glass, 29 ml	0.4	0	<0.1	0	94
Gin & tonic	1/10 of a glass, 2.5ml of gin, 25ml of tonic	0.1	0	1.8	0	6.1
<b>Pudding</b>						
Christmas pudding	2/5 of a teaspoon, 3 grams	0	<0.1	0.9	0.1	10.4
Brandy cream	1/10 of a tablespoon, 0.05 ml.	0	<0.1	0.2	0.4	7
Custard	1 teaspoon, 5 grams	0	<0.1	0.5	0.2	6
Port	2/5 of a glass, 20 ml	0.8	0	0	0	30.8
<b>Evening snacks</b>						
Brandy	2/5 of a single measure, 8.3 ml	0.3	0	0	0	20.3
Cream Crackers	2 crackers, 16 grams	0	0.2	0	1	70
Brie	1 serving, 30 grams	0	0.4	0	4.4	87
Stilton	1 serving, 30 grams	0	0.6	0	6.9	123
Nuts	½ serving, 15 grams	0	0.2	0.7	1.2	92
Pate	½ serving, 15 grams	0	0.3	0.3	1.7	48.5
Crisps	1 serving, 30 grams	0	0.2	0.5	0.9	153
Mince pie	1/20 of a mince pie	0	0.1	0.7	0.2	11.3
Turkey sandwich	¼ of a sandwich	0	0.5	2.9	1.2	135
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1734</b>
<b>DAILY LIMIT</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2500</b>

<sup>1</sup> Refers to saturated fats

## Methodology

- Food weights, salt, sugar, saturated fat and calories were taken from the typical analysis (traffic-light labels) for the own-brand range of Sainsbury's, except for brandy cream, bread sauce and the Celebrations mini-chocolates.
- Alcohol units and calories have been compiled from the DrinkAware unit and calorie [calculator tool](#). Sugar content where necessary has been sourced through a range of third party sources.
- The limit for each of these was taken from recommended NHS and DrinkAware guidelines.

## Sources

DrinkAware, *UK alcohol unit guidance*, 2018.

NHS, *Fat: the facts*, 2017.

NHS, *Salt: the facts*, 2018.

NHS, *How much sugar is good for me?* 2018.

NHS, *What should my daily intake of calories be?* 2016