

Nanny state Christmas feast

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Introduction

Christmas dinner is the family event of the year for many, regardless of the increasing interference from nannying public health officials.

Strict guidelines endorsed by the NHS and other public health bodies set a daily limit of six grams of salt,¹ 30 grams of sugar² and 25 grams of saturated fats^{3,4} per individual. This note constructs a meal within these limits, demonstrating the impact these recommendations could have on the cherished Christmas feast.

Guidelines are likely to become increasingly stringent. In 2021, Henry Dimbleby conducted an independent review for the government of the country's food intakes.⁵ The report's recommendations included sugar and salt taxes which were dismissed by prime minister Boris Johnson. However, there is due to be a white paper published by February 2022 which may propose further legislation according to Dimbleby's recommendations.⁶

Drawing upon a range of food 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 1945.⁷

Key findings

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

- **Breakfast**, which includes a quarter slice of toast with two teaspoons of strawberry jam, a quarter of a flute of champagne with a tenth of a glass (15ml) of orange juice.
- **Lunch**, which includes three thin slices of turkey (cooked with no salt), garnished with two tablespoons of red cabbage and one pig in blanket. One tenth of a medium glass of red wine to accompany.
- **Pudding**, which includes three quarters of a teaspoon of Christmas pudding with three quarters of a teaspoon of custard.
- And finally, one cream cracker with 7.5 grams of brie as an **evening snack**.

¹ NHS, *Salt: the facts*, 2021, www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/salt-nutrition/, (accessed 7 December 2021).

² NHS, *Sugar: the facts*, 2020, www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/, (accessed 7 December 2021).

³ NHS, *How to eat less saturated fat*, 2020, www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/eat-less-saturated-fat/, (accessed 7 December 2021).

⁴ The daily maximum recommendation is 30g for men and 20g for women. Therefore, 25g is used in the calculations.

⁵ Dimbleby, H., *The Plan: National Food Strategy Independent Review*, July 2021, p. 4.

⁶ House of Lords, *National Food Strategy Independent Review: Volume 814*, 20 July 2021, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-07-20/debates/5043F5F3-506E-46D9-9013-3C9DA0BFACE9/NationalFoodStrategyIndependentReview>, (accessed 13 December 2021).

⁷ O'Malley, A., *Christmas Recipe from the Archives*, 18 December 2015, <https://blogs.lshtm.ac.uk/library/2015/12/18/christmas-recipe-from-the-archives/>, (accessed 7 December 2021).

Table 1: typical Christmas Day food and drink consumption within recommended intake limits

Items	Approved amount	Alcohol (units)	Salt (grams)	Sugar (grams)	Saturated fat (grams)	Calories (kcal)
Breakfast						
Croissant	Quarter of a croissant	0	0.11	1.05	2.5	70
Cereal	15 grams (half a bowl of cereal)	0	0.14	0.75	0.1	57.5
Bread	quarter slice	0	0.11	0.23	0.05	26
Butter	Five grams, half ration	0	0.08	0	2.6	37
Strawberry jam	Two teaspoons	0	0	4.24	0	23.2
Celebrations mini-chocolate	Quarter of a chocolate	0	0.03	3.75	1	33.75
Orange juice	Tenth of a glass	0	0.009	1.14	0	5.5
Champagne	Quarter of a glass	0.38	0	0.38	0	20
Lunch						
Turkey	Half serving, three small thin slices	0	0.72	0	0.3	96
Gravy	A quarter of a pot	0	1.13	0.7	0.5	66
Cranberry sauce	Eighth of a tablespoon	0	0.003	0.78	0	3.25
Bread sauce	Eighth of a tablespoon	0	0.09	0.51	0.1	8.875
Roast potatoes	Four and a half roast potatoes	0	0.32	0	2	190
Pigs in blankets	One pig in blanket	0	0.31	0	0.9	40
Brussels sprouts	Five Brussels sprouts	0	0.01	1.45	0.15	25
Red cabbage with apple	Two tablespoons, a fifth of a portion	0	0.008	3.82	0	18.6
Carrots	25 grams (quarter-portion)	0	0.018	1.725	0.025	9.75
Parsnips	50 grams (half-portion)	0	0.015	2.7	0.1	36
Goose fat (cooking)	Two teaspoons	0	0.005	0	1.65	67.5
Additional salt (cooking)	None	0	0	0	0	0
Wine	Tenth of a glass	0.24	0	0	0	15.9
G&T	Tenth of a glass	0.1	0	1.8	0	6.1
Pudding						
Christmas pudding	Three quarters of a teaspoon	0	0.006	0.75	0.113	8.175
Brandy cream	One tablespoon	0	0.001	0.19	0.425	6.55

Items	Approved amount	Alcohol (units)	Salt (grams)	Sugar (grams)	Saturated fat (grams)	Calories (kcal)
Custard	Three quarters of a teaspoon	0	0.003	0.41	0.17	5.13
Port	Two fifths of a glass	0.8	0	0	0	36
Evening snacks						
Brandy	Third of a measure	0.33	0	0	0	36
Cream crackers	One cracker	0	0.1	0	0.5	35
Brie	7.5g	0	0.01	0	1.1	22
Stilton	22.5g	0	0.44	0	5.175	92.25
Nuts	15g-half serving	0	0.195	0.75	1.2	92
Pate	17g-half serving	0	0.295	0.3	1.6	47.5
Crisps	30g	0	0.17	0	0.9	154
Mince pie	20th of a mince pie	0	0.009	0.76	0.165	11.5
Turkey sandwich	Quarter of a sandwich	0	0.61	1.575	1.475	134.75
Total		1.85	5.01	29.75	24.79	1521
Daily limit		2	6	30	25	2500

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.
- Daily calorie intake⁸, as well as salt⁹, sugar¹⁰ and saturated fat¹¹ limits are taken from NHS source.
- Alcohol units and calories have been compiled from the Drinkaware unit and calorie calculator tool.¹² 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.

⁸ NHS, *What should my daily intake of calories be?*, 2019, www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/food-and-diet/what-should-my-daily-intake-of-calories-be/, (accessed 13 December 2021).

⁹ NHS, *Salt: the facts*, 2021, www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/salt-nutrition/, (accessed 7 December 2021).

¹⁰ NHS, *Sugar: the facts*, 2020, www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-does-sugar-in-our-diet-affect-our-health/, (accessed 7 December 2021).

¹¹ NHS, *How to eat less saturated fat*, 2020, www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/eat-less-saturated-fat/, (accessed 7 December 2021).

¹² Drinkaware, *Unit and Calorie Calculator*, 2021, www.drinkaware.co.uk/tools/unit-and-calorie-calculator/, (accessed 7 December 2021)