

WELLNESS

HELLO

and welcome to the December issue of our Wellness Newsletter.

DECEMBER 2022

HEALTHIER MIND

HEALTHIER FOOD

HEALTHIER BODY

HEALTHIER WORLD

### Why wait until January to start thinking about our health and wellbeing?

There are so many small changes we can make right now to look after ourselves, as well as helping others and the world around us.

This month we bring you our **12 Days of Wellness**, covering 12 seasonal topics to inspire you to feel your best this festive season. This includes tips for enhancing your physical and mental wellbeing, ideas for making savings, sustainable gift giving and a plant-based Christmas feature.

We also have delicious recipes from ESS Regional Executive Chef, **Matt Moseley** and ESS Defence and Government Services Culinary Director, **Scott Freeman**.

If you want to spread out the festive cheer, why not set aside some self-care time and read one article a day throughout December?

Wishing you all a wonderful festive season and a happy (and healthy!) new year.

*Harjeet Moore*

Employee Experience Director

Please note that we are in the process of updating our Wellness Commitment.

As part of this, the frequency and format of our newsletters will be changing. We look forward to launching the new style newsletter in Spring 2023!

WELLNESS

brought to you by





# THE 12 DAYS OF WELLNESS

DAY 1:

## DECEMBER WELLNESS

HEALTHIER BODY

### ESS WELLNESS WEBINAR: HOW TO HAVE A HEALTHIER CHRISTMAS WITHOUT MISSING OUT

HEALTHIER BODY

WEDNESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER AT 14:30

Christmas is all about enjoying yourself and indulging in traditional foods

We can still have an enjoyable Christmas whilst making some small changes to support our health and make sure that we feel our best. Join us for our top tips on how

to have a healthier Christmas for you and your family, covering alcohol, healthier recipe tweaks, cost saving tips and more! Click [HERE](#) to join.

## WELLNESS Q&A:

WEDNESDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 14:00

Join our festive quiz over on our @WeAreESS Instagram page to learn more about Christmas food, traditions and how other places around the world celebrate Christmas.

You can also ask our nutrition and wellbeing experts any questions you have about looking after your health this December.

**DAY 2:**

# THE MOST WONDERFUL (AND STRESSFUL) TIME OF THE YEAR!

HEALTHIER MIND

As well as being the most wonderful time of year, the holiday season can also end up being the most stressful time of year, but no one can do it all!

It's easy to get swept up with trying to make everything perfect – the best outfit, gifts and decorations – forgetting that, often, all any of us really want is to have some great food and make some fun memories with our loved ones. Think back to your holiday memories – what are the things that you remember most?

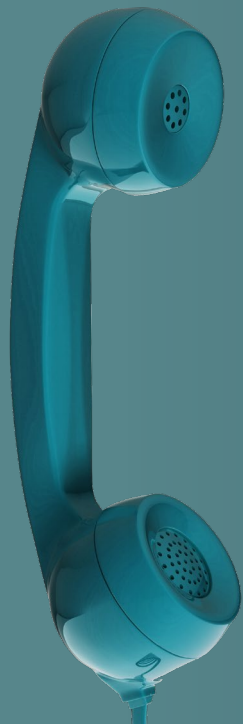
**Take a moment to be mindful and set your intentions for this holiday season**

Make a note of one thing you want to prioritise and one thing you want to focus less of your energy on.

**DAY 3:**

# IT'LL BE LONELY THIS CHRISTMAS...

HEALTHIER MIND



At Christmas time, we are often surrounded by cheery songs on the radio, festive parties, gifts and good wishes.

Though for many people, more than you may think, Christmas is a time of loneliness, with Age UK estimating that around 1.4 million older people across the UK are expecting to feel lonely at Christmas. And it's not just older people, anyone can end up alone at Christmas for many different reasons, such as the loss of a loved one or living far away from relatives.

So, why not reach out to someone who might be lonely this Christmas? More than ever before, we need to support one another. Get in touch with old friends that you've lost contact with, as well as acquaintances, distant relatives and your neighbours.

Make that initial contact by sending a text, posting a card or even giving them a call, then make some plans such as going to grab a coffee, inviting them over for dinner – even a friendly, meaningful chat goes a long way.

**Do you have time to make one phone call a week?**

If you would like to help fight loneliness this Christmas, and all year round, head to **Age UK** to find out how you can support an elderly person.





**DAY 4:**

# HOW TO MAKE HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS MORE INCLUSIVE

As we get into the festive spirit, it's a good time to remember that we all have different traditions and beliefs and not everyone celebrates the same holidays.

Here are some of the things we can all do to include others in our celebrations during December and all year round.

**Think about your theme**

Why not go for a winter wonderland event instead of focusing things around a Christmas tree and the nativity?

**Do some research**

Google to find out about other cultural celebrations and ask others whether they celebrate Christmas or any other holidays this December.

**Give yourself reminders**

Add some important dates into your calendar, such as Ramadan or the Lunar New Year, as a reminder to wish your friends and colleagues all the best.

**Connect through food**

Why not arrange a potluck and ask everyone to bring in a different cultural dish they would like to share?

**Change up your social events**

It's important not to focus all social events around alcohol to make sure that as many people as possible feel comfortable attending.

**Food for everyone**

When organising a get together, make sure to ask about dietary preferences or restrictions people may have so that everyone can join in.

**Accessibility**

When booking a venue, make sure it is accessible. Not all disabilities are visible, so if you're not sure, the best thing to do is ask. To learn more and help create awareness, get involved with the **International Day of People with Disabilities** on 3<sup>rd</sup> December.



DAY 5:

# DECEMBER AROUND THE WORLD: HANUKKAH

Few months present as many cultural celebrations as December.

In the UK, from the start of December (or maybe even October these days) signs of Christmas start to pop up everywhere you look! But there are many other religious and cultural festivals which also take place during December, such as Hanukkah.

**Hanukkah** is a Jewish festival, also known as the **Festival of Lights**, beginning on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar. This year, Hanukkah will begin in the evening of Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December and end in the evening of Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December.



**Scott Freeman**, Culinary Director, ESS Defence & Government Services, told us what Hanukkah represents to him and his family:

*"Hanukkah is a time where families come together in December for eight nights, light the Menorah and, amongst other things, enjoy each other's company and food. In our household, we eat a lot of chicken soup, and here is my recipe for it. I've also served this before with chopped fresh dill and matzo balls for a more filling supper."*



## HANUKKAH CHICKEN SOUP RECIPE

SERVES 10

### Ingredients:

- 1 whole chicken (buy this from your butcher and ask for the giblets to be kept)
- 2 onions, chopped roughly
- 3 carrots, peeled and cut into rounds
- 1 parsnip, peeled and cut into equal sized pieces
- 3 litres of cold water
- Noodles (I use rice noodles, but vermicelli noodles also work well)
- Salt and pepper

### Method:

- 1 Place the chicken and the giblets in a big pan of cold water and bring to the boil. Skim off the impurities and then remove the chicken and giblets and set to one side.
- 2 Add the 3 litres of cold water to a clean stock pot and place all of the ingredients back into the water.
- 3 You must continue to skim off any fat throughout the cooking process.
- 4 Turn the heat down and simmer the soup for 2 hours. Season the soup and remove the chicken and giblets.
- 5 Let the chicken cool down and then shred the meat and add this back to the soup.
- 6 Discard the giblets.
- 7 If you are using rice noodles, soak these in warm water for a few hours to soften them, then place a portion into a soup bowl. Pour on the hot soup, include the vegetables and shredded poultry, and enjoy.

Each 551g portion contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
451kcal 1899kj	13g	3.5g	5.4g	0.29g
23%	19%	18%	6%	5%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 82kcal/345kj



## DAY 6:

# IDEAS TO SAVE SOME PENNIES AT CHRISTMAS

HEALTHIER MIND



Despite our best efforts, sometimes festive spending can spiral out of control, but spending mindfully can save us some money here and there without us missing out.

Here are some of our top tips to keep on top of your spending this Christmas:

### Make a list and check it twice

Make a list of who you need to buy for, your budget for each person and any gift ideas. Make sure to update this to keep track of your purchases.

### Take a break from social media

Scrolling can lead to impulse buying and trying to live up to the 'perfect' images we see online.

### Start early to spread out the cost

Keep a checklist of your must-have festive goodies, then pick them up when they are on offer in the months leading up to Christmas.

### Secret Santa

Why not ask the adults in the family if they want to try out secret Santa? Not only does this save money, but it also saves time and headspace!

### Start a savings pot

If you can, take some of the pressure off by putting aside some money each month, whether it's for Christmas or any unexpected costs that might crop up throughout the year.

For more support and advice around financial concerns, visit the [NHS website](#) for lots of information, including useful links and helplines.

## DAY 7:

# MINDFUL EATING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

HEALTHIER MIND

Believe it or not, mindful eating isn't all about eating less.

It's about taking the time to actually enjoy what you are eating and noticing your body's signs of hunger and fullness. Christmas and the holidays are a time to enjoy your favourite foods, but do you ever feel like you've overdone it, leaving you feeling sluggish and maybe even a bit unwell? Here are our mindful eating tips to help you feel your best this December:

### Eat with all your senses.

Look at the colour of the food, feel the texture, smell the scent, take your first bite and chew slowly, noticing all the flavours and textures.

### Notice your hunger and fullness cues.

Start to pay attention to how your body and mind feel when you are hungry and full. Many of us only notice these signs when it's too late, and either we are completely ravenous or over full.

### Pause and think.

Thinking about having seconds but aren't sure whether you really want them? Try to think about how you will feel after eating more. Instead of telling yourself 'I shouldn't eat this', which often makes you want it more, say to yourself 'I can eat this if I want to, but is it going to make me feel good?'



DAY 8:

# DON'T LET ALCOHOL PUT A DAMPENER ON YOUR DECEMBER

As Christmas approaches, it can be hard not to get carried away with all the merriness and good cheer!

Many of us may be attending office parties before the holidays, not to mention the annual Christmas catch ups with friends and family. Before we even get to Christmas day, it's easy to see how our alcohol consumption can start to add up.

There's nothing wrong with enjoying a drink sometimes, but it's important to pay attention to how alcohol is affecting your health and wellbeing.

## What 14 units looks like



or



Here are five tips to help you drink mindfully this December:

- 1 To keep health risks from alcohol to a low level, don't drink more than **14 units in a week** on a regular basis. This amounts to roughly six standard glasses of 13% wine or six pints of 4% beer.
- 2 If you choose to drink up to 14 units, spread this out over three or more days and avoid binge drinking. The free **Drinkaware** app is available to help people track and calculate their units, set goals and measure their progress over time.
- 3 Try allocating alcohol-free days every week. Tell your friends and family about your goals so they can support you and hold you accountable. It will also demonstrate to others, including children, that Christmas doesn't have to revolve around alcohol.
- 4 Try to explore some low-alcohol or alcohol-free options. You could have set days where you will stick with these, or you could alternate between these and alcoholic drinks.
- 5 Alcohol not only reduces our sleep quality, it can also lead to us feeling groggy and anxious the next day. Avoid drinking alcohol a couple of hours before you are planning to go to sleep to help reduce these effects.

### Always drink responsibly.

If you are worried about your own or someone else's drinking, Drinkaware's trained advisors are available to give you confidential advice on their online Drinkchat service. For more information and support, head to the **Drinkaware** website.





## DAY 9: SUSTAINABLE GIFT GIVING IDEAS

Trying to do our bit for the planet can feel overwhelming at times.

Many of us mean well by placing our used wrapping paper and old cards in the recycling bin but when these are covered in glitter or tape, this can do more harm than good.

We hope our sustainable gift giving ideas inspire you to be generous to your loved ones and the planet this December!

### Wrapping the right way

Buy recyclable wrapping paper, use minimal tape and remove any tape before recycling.

### Reduce, reuse, recycle

Reuse gift bags and ribbons and only buy gift bags and greeting cards that can be recycled (no foil or glitter).

### Go natural

Use natural decorations to make your gifts look beautiful such as pinecones, leaves or dried flowers rather than plastic bows.

### Food glorious food

Buying edible gifts with a long shelf life can be a great idea as the odds are they will not go to waste!

### Say no to plastic

Avoid buying items with lots of packaging, particularly plastic. Why not go one step further and write a review asking for the packaging to improve?

### Shopping online? Start early

Order as much as you can from the same retailer to reduce transportation and packaging. Click and collect from a local collection point where you can, and try to get ahead of the rush as next day shipping can add to the carbon footprint of your purchases.

Please help us to help the planet by sharing these ideas with your friends and family.



## DAY 10:

# A PLANT-BASED CHRISTMAS

There has been increasing interest in plant-based diets in recent years, with more and more of us reducing our meat intake to do our bit to help the planet.

According to the British Dietetic Association (BDA), following a more environmentally sustainable diet, such as that recommended by the **EatWell Guide**, means reducing meat (especially red and processed meat) consumption, moderating dairy intake and instead eating more plant-based sources of protein<sup>1</sup>.

Sustainability is a key consideration for many people these days. With more and more of us making lifestyle changes to support the planet and plant-based meals becoming increasingly popular, it's clear that sustainable eating is here to stay.

## Top tips for a plant-based Christmas dinner

Whether you want to reduce the amount of meat at your Christmas table this year or you need to cater for a loved one, we are here to help with our top tips for a plant-based Christmas dinner:

- Cook roasties using a vegetable oil with a high smoke point, such as sunflower oil, rather than using animal fats.
- Leave out the bacon when cooking your brussel sprouts and instead go for chestnuts.
- If you're catering for others with a plant-based diet, it's best to avoid the honey on the parsnips as, technically, it isn't vegan. Fear not, golden syrup is a great alternative!
- Include a plant-based protein option which could be a plant-based turkey alternative, nut roast, or a wellington (check out our featured recipe). And don't forget about the plant-based gravy!



This recipe has been created by **Matt Moseley** – ESS Regional Executive Chef

## MUSHROOM, SPINACH AND LENTIL WELLINGTON

SERVES 4

### Ingredients:

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 120g mushrooms
- 200g fresh spinach
- 240g tinned lentils (1 tin)
- 240g chickpeas (1 tin)
- 1 large onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp cranberry sauce
- 1 tsp golden syrup
- 3 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 1 vegan puff pastry sheet

### Method:

- 1 Cook the lentils until soft, according to packet instructions.
- 2 Peel and dice the onion, clean and dice the mushrooms.
- 3 Put the chickpeas into a bowl, keeping the chickpea water separate for use later.
- 4 Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the onion, garlic and mushrooms. Cook for around 5 minutes.
- 5 Crush the chickpeas with a fork, leaving a chunky texture.
- 6 Add the spinach, lentil, vegetable bouillon and mushroom mixture in with the chickpeas and mix together.

- 7 Add the flour and mix again, leave to thicken for 5 minutes. Once thickened, leave to cool.
- 8 Whisk 3 tbsp of the chickpea water along with the golden syrup to create a pastry glaze.
- 9 Lay out the pastry sheet onto a baking tray (you might not need the whole sheet). Brush the edges of the pastry with the pastry glaze to help the pastry to stick. Spread a thin layer of cranberry sauce on the pastry.
- 10 Place the filling onto the pastry and form into a long sausage shape. Tightly roll the pastry around the filling to form a wellington. Crimp the edges of the pastry between your thumb and forefingers to form a seal.
- 11 Lightly score the top of the wellington pastry with a knife and brush the top of the pastry with the pastry glaze.
- 12 Place into a pre-heated oven at 180°C (fan) / 200°C / gas mark 6 and cook for around 25 minutes until golden brown.

Each 368g portion contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
557kcal 2332kj	23g	10g	10g	2.2g
28%	33%	50%	11%	37%

of an adult's reference intake  
Typical values (as sold) per 100g:151kcal/634kj



DAY 11:

# PRIORITISING YOUR HEALTH THIS WINTER

HEALTHIER BODY

The winter season can be a challenging time to stay active, with colder temperatures, slippery conditions and fewer daylight hours.

No one could blame you for wanting to give up on your daily walks or not heading out to that gym class once it gets dark. But it is still important to incorporate physical activity into your day to keep on top of your physical and mental health. Below are some tips to stay active this winter:

## Be realistic

Sometimes the weather or the darkness might get in the way of your workouts, so set yourself some realistic and flexible goals to keep you feeling motivated, e.g. workout twice a week for around 30 minutes (check out our Q&A for more on this!).

## Adjust your routine

If you struggle to be active or spend time outdoors in the week, can you schedule some time in at the weekend?

## Workout online

Weather looking bleak? Why not discover a fun and free workout video online. Don't forget to get the kids involved too!

## Do some chores

Vacuuming, sweeping and most cleaning counts towards your physical activity goals. Knock some items off your to-do list whilst also gaining health benefits.

## Work out to help out

Do you have a neighbour that would like their dog walking or could you do some litter picking in your local area?

Due to reduced sunlight and less time spent outdoors, the NHS recommends that we should consider taking a daily supplement of vitamin D during the autumn and winter months. For more information, visit the **NHS website** or speak with a health professional.

DAY 12:

# CHRISTMAS IS A TIME FOR GIVING

HEALTHIER BODY

Christmas is commonly known as a time for giving but that doesn't mean we have to spend a fortune.

There are so many ways that we can show our appreciation to others and give back to our communities. Get your friends and family involved and try our five ways to give back this festive season.

1 If you can, **remember to pop an extra item in your trolley** to put in your local food bank's donation box. If you prefer to shop online, by using **AmazonSmile** you can check out donation lists created by charities and donate with a few clicks.

2 **Stock up on your favourite charity's Christmas cards** this year, so as well as making your loved ones happy you will also be supporting a great cause.

3 Before Christmas is a great time to have a de-clutter and **donate your unwanted toys, books and clothes** to a local charity or shelter.

4 Take part in **Christmas Jumper Day** on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to help raise funds for Save the Children. You can sign up and find out more on **their website**.

5 **Give your time to help someone else**. This could be dropping round for a chat with your elderly neighbour or volunteering for a local cause (**International Volunteer Day** is 5<sup>th</sup> December).



Save the Children



International Volunteer Day



# Q&A



**Our Nutrition and Wellbeing Team are here to answer all your questions.**

If you have a nutrition or wellbeing query that we can help with, send us an email at [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk)!

**Q: I always start January with the best intentions but find it so hard to stick to my New Year's resolutions. Do you have any advice?**

**A:** The period between Christmas and New Year is a time when many of us are reflecting on the year just passed and how we will reinvent ourselves into the 'new me'.

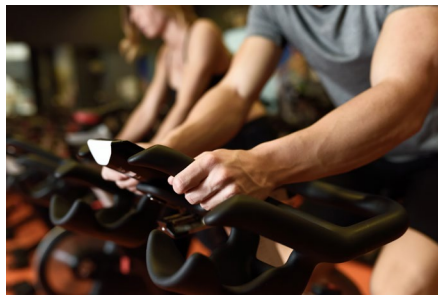
Many of us do have the best of intentions when we set our goals but it's easy to be over ambitious and leave ourselves feeling overwhelmed rather than inspired.

Resolutions often fail because they're unrealistic, too vague or based on what others or society is telling you to do, rather than what feels right for you.

A great way to ensure that your goal has the maximum chance of success is to follow the 'SMART' goal method.

- S Specific:** What exactly do you want to achieve? What specific actions will you take?
- M Measurable:** How will you measure or track your progress?
- A Achievable:** Is the goal doable? Do you have the necessary time, skills and resources?
- R Relevant:** How does the goal fit with your broader life goals? Why is it important to you?
- T Time-Bound:** What is the time frame for accomplishing your goal? Is this realistic?

We hope this will help you to achieve your goals this New Year!



## ASK YOUR NUTRITION & WELLBEING SPECIALIST

You can ask anything to do with nutrition, health & wellbeing. So drop us an email and we will get back to you as soon as possible.



Leanne King BSc(Hons), PGCE, RNutr  
ESS HEAD OF NUTRITION & WELLBEING

Email our registered ESS Nutrition & Wellbeing Team at [ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk](mailto:ess.wellness@compass-group.co.uk).

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