

# The sustainable Christmas dinner



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Everyone loves Christmas dinner, and with the big day fast approaching it's time to start planning your festive menu. Environmentally, this meal can be one of the least resource efficient occasions of the year.

To help you have a sustainable festive season the SRA has created this guide to point you in the right direction when sourcing your menu items. From wine and canapés to good old sprouts we've got it covered.

UK festive shoppers are predicted to spend £19bn on food and drink over the Christmas and New Year period. With much of this revenue finding its way back to the farmers, it's your chance to make purchases that have a positive impact on the environment and animal welfare.



## FOR STARTERS

### Wine

Vineyards are typically large monocultures (they only have one type of crop grown on them) this can affect the biodiversity (range of flora and fauna) in the area. They often require large amounts of chemical inputs to sustain them. So when buying your Christmas tipples you might like to consider the following:

- **Organic wine** This is made using organically grown grapes, thus excluding chemical fertilizers and pesticides, whilst also taking measures to protect soil health. This is carefully regulated and can be recognised through the Soil Association logo.
- **Biodynamic wine** This wine also has a lower environmental impact than some more intensively grown wines, reduced herbicide and pesticide use and consideration towards wildlife management, and is marked through the Demeter logo.
- **English wine** Limit your carbon footprint and go English! We grow and bottle up to 4 million bottles annually, including award winning Nyetimber and Chapel Down sparkling white wines.

### Smoked Salmon

News on sustainable fish is never far from the front page and it isn't always clear. So, to help you make an informed choice, here are a couple of useful pieces of advice:

- Wild-caught salmon stocks have depleted in the North Atlantic and have halved over the last two decades due to overfishing, changes in methods of fishing, pollution and environmental changes. For wild Alaskan salmon look out for the Marine Stewardship Council blue eco-label which will ensure that salmon comes from sustainable stocks.
- If you want to buy British, farmed salmon accounts for much of the salmon in the UK and there are varying levels of sustainability. By purchasing organic certified salmon you're guaranteed high levels of environmental practice that incorporates fish welfare. Freedom Foods also guarantees a high standard of welfare.

**Logos to look for:** Marine Stewardship Council: A credible standard and certification for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability; Soil Association: Confirms sustainable feed is used, stocking density remains low and high welfare conditions are met; Freedom Foods: An assurance mark of higher welfare farmed salmon

## MAIN COURSE

Turkey, potatoes and sprouts — a traditional British combination that provides the perfect opportunity to buy British produce. So you're reducing food miles, supporting the local economy and making the most of Britain's varied seasonal veg.

If you get the chance, check out what your local farmers market has to offer, otherwise look at what your supermarket stocks, whether it's local or British. Don't forget to look at the trimmings like condiments and ensure that these are British too!

### Vegetables

Look for local and British vegetables in your supermarket which carry any of the following certifications:

- LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) certified vegetables: This ensures that farmers adhere to high environmental standards and is cheaper than organic.
- Red Tractor certified vegetables will guarantee that produce has been grown, processed and packaged in the UK.

**Logos to look for:** LEAF Kitemark; Red Tractor Logo



## Turkey

As the centrepiece of the Christmas meal, you'll want to make sure you buy the right bird. So here is some useful information about turkey welfare and some tips on how to spot a high welfare, ethically reared turkey.

- Intensively reared turkeys are kept indoors in barns where they're subject to many health and behavioural problems. Fast growth rates will affect bone structure and limit mobility. They also have their beaks trimmed to reduce incidences of aggression and cannibalism which break out in the cramped and unstimulating environment.
- Organic or Free Range turkeys enjoy a life with access to the great outdoors and measurably higher welfare standards. They will be slower growing breeds, less susceptible to health problems associated with faster growing birds and they'll be given environmental enrichments such as straw for foraging and platforms for perching, helping them express a range of natural behaviours which they couldn't in barn reared conditions.
- Take a look at our Turkey Welfare factsheet which highlights different production methods.

**Logos to look for:** Soil Association; Organic Farmers and Growers

Where certified by either of the above, birds have access to outdoor space, low stocking densities and farmers have met very high standards of animal welfare

## WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THAT WASTE

As a nation we throw out the equivalent of 2 million turkeys, 5m Christmas puddings and a truly shocking 74m mince pies. Whilst this is the season to indulge, here are some useful tips to cut down on waste, save you money and to stop your bin from overflowing.

- Use up leftovers to make something else and take a look at the top five tips from Love Food Hate Waste
- Encourage your friends and family to take home unfinished food.
- Think carefully where to store products to avoid spoilage. For example, potatoes are best in a fabric bag, placed in a cool, dark area.

Still have some waste? Try to compost it if you have the space and facilities.

## MORE INFORMATION

**Soil Association**  
soilassociation.org

**Freedom Food**  
rspca.org.uk/freedomfood

**Marine Conservation Society Fish Online**  
fishonline.org

**Marine Stewardship Council**  
msc.org

**Linking Environment and Farming**  
leafuk.org/leaf/home.eb

**Red Tractor**  
redtractor.org.uk/home

**Love Food Hate Waste**  
england.lovefoodhatewaste.com