

# A taste of Christmas

Baby, it's cold outside – so ensure your festive dinner party is warm and inviting. It's the season to eat, drink and be merry, and with **John Lewis & Partners** it's never been easier

One of the true pleasures of Christmas is gathering around the festive table with family and friends. And hosting can be a walk in the (snowy) park if you keep it simple. The best festive dinners are casual, when you dispense with seating plans, and catch up with guests over a sloe gin prosecco while the dinner cooks.

Set the tone with the table. For a fuss-free, modern feel, plump for a plain runner and tableware in graphic prints, topped with foliage. Green, a perennial favourite, adds a seasonal touch, and the Collector's House napkins from John Lewis & Partners' Emerald range keep the look fresh. Don't be afraid to serve your food straight from the pan. Attractive, high-quality cookware enhances the table and still shows off your dishes. It keeps the atmosphere relaxed and, a welcome bonus, leaves you with less washing up at the end of the night.

The menu should be equally relaxed, says Partner and Waitrose Food Editor Alison Oakervee. Start with tempting canapés that can be thrown together in minutes – think camembert with crudités and hunks of sourdough, warm nuts and smoked salmon blinis. "I'd rather spend time talking to friends than slaving in the kitchen, so I'll prep the main in advance and take shortcuts with the rest," says Alison.

After the roast, minds will turn to

dessert, so let Heston Blumenthal do the heavy lifting. The Heston from Waitrose Golden Delicious Christmas Pudding is crammed with fresh apple, cider and apple brandy, pine nuts and honey, with an apple brandy sauce centre. Or the gold-dusted Waitrose 1 Dark Chocolate & Orange Stollen Wreath will be a hit with chocoholics.

Relaxed evenings call for soft red wines that can be served without ceremony – think earthy merlot or



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**Alison Oakervee,**  
Partner and Waitrose Food Editor

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rustic shiraz. But don't forget guests who aren't drinking – soda water infused with botanicals, such as orange peel, cardamom or ginger, served in a dressed glass, can be as appealing as any boozy tippie.

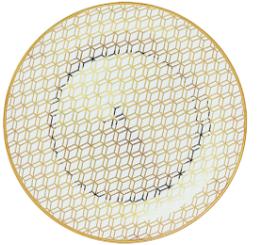
With everything planned, all that's left is to pop on a cheesy festive playlist and get the party started.

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Clockwise from top: John Lewis & Partners Brooks Velvet Side Dining Chairs, set of 2 **£250**; John Lewis & Partners Gold Dipped Highball Glass **£8**; John Lewis & Partners Peacock Glass Bead Placemat **£16**; John Lewis & Partners Geometric Decorated Platter **£15**; John Lewis & Partners Collector's House Embroidered Napkins, set of 4 **£20**; John Lewis & Partners Sparkle Table Runner **£15**; John Lewis & Partners Gold Decorated Small Plates, set of 4, **£20**; John Lewis & Partners Deco Coupe Glasses, set of 2 **£20**; Broste Copenhagen Tvis Cutlery Set, 16 Piece **£175**; Eaziglide Neverstick2 Open Frying Pan from **£34**; Croft Collection Luna Sauce Boat **£20**; Eaziglide Neverstick2 Non-Stick Roaster **£55**; Eaziglide Neverstick2 Non-Stick Saucepan Set with Lids, 3 piece **£130**



**Dine with festive sparkle**



John Lewis & Partners Gold Geometric Tableware, from **£15**



John Lewis & Partners Glass Bead Placemat, **£16**



John Lewis & Partners Coupe Glasses, set of 2, **£20**



Eaziglide NeverStick2 Cookware, from **£34**



**For the moments that make your christmas**