Lerra

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Family Christmas countdown

Tick things off from autumn to Boxing Day. Cross out anything that does not suit your family.

Our key dates (check your school or council for term dates)

Last day of term _____ First day back _____

Christmas Day plans _____ Budget _____

Autumn: set the shape of Christmas

- [ ] Check school, work and childcare dates and add the fixed ones to the calendar
- [ ] Agree who is celebrating where, and any handovers between households
- [ ] Choose an overall budget for gifts, food, travel and activities
- [ ] Decide what to keep, simplify or skip this year
- [ ] Ask about dietary, access or timing needs for anyone joining you

Late November: gifts and invitations

- [ ] Write gift ideas for each person and note what is already bought
- [ ] Order anything that needs delivering, leaving time for delays
- [ ] Check dates for school plays, carol services and class parties
- [ ] Confirm festive outfits, costumes or contributions the school has asked for
- [ ] Book travel, a food shop slot or childcare for the busy days

First week of December: cards and food plan

- [ ] Write and post cards, checking last posting dates with Royal Mail
- [ ] Draft the menu for the main meal and any other gatherings
- [ ] Make the shopping list and split the jobs between adults
- [ ] Put up decorations, if your family likes them, and check the lights work
- [ ] Plan an easy, quiet evening for each week so December is not all events

Second and third week: wrap up and prepare

- [ ] Wrap gifts and keep a note of who they are for
- [ ] Send in teacher gifts and any end-of-term items
- [ ] Return school forms, library books and anything borrowed
- [ ] Place or collect food orders
- [ ] Charge devices, buy batteries and check you have enough bin bags

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Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

- [ ] Pack bags for anywhere you are staying or visiting
- [ ] Prepare what can be done ahead: vegetables, table, drinks
- [ ] Agree the plan for the day, including who is cooking and who is clearing
- [ ] Keep medicines, contact numbers and a spare phone charger to hand
- [ ] Leave time for rest, play and a walk

Boxing Day and the days after

- [ ] Note any thank-you messages to send
- [ ] Check opening times and transport before going out
- [ ] Leave a day with nothing planned
- [ ] Check the first day back at school or work for everyone
- [ ] Write one thing to keep and one thing to change for next year

Notes and next year