



**charts that
explain UK
attitudes to...
festive snacks**

Xmas crunch: how to max snacks sales this festive season

We've been talking turkey with a panel of 1,000 shoppers to find out how Brits' eating habits change at Christmas. The following 10 charts reveal the central role crisps and snacks play at festive get-togethers, from casual Xmas drinks through to Twixtmas 'picky bits' and beyond...

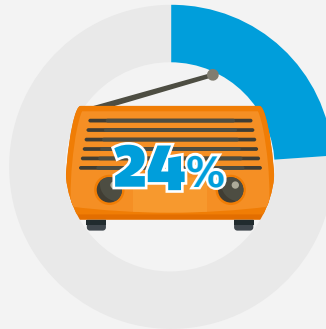
1

It's not Christmas until the tree's up

Christmas may be in the minds of retailers all year round – it is the biggest sales event of the year by far, after all – but when do shoppers start planning for it? Sooner than you might think: **47% start planning the big Christmas shop in early December; 28% do so in November and 16% start even earlier.** That's why it's crucial to get people in the mood with seasonal packaging, limited-edition flavours and in-store displays before the festivities start in earnest. Christmas starts with rituals, and for almost half [49%] of shoppers that moment is putting up the tree. “For retailers, that's a reminder that festive shopping missions begin well before Christmas week,” says PepsiCo marketing director Rob Pothier. As we're about to explore, crisps and other bagged snacks are front of mind for shoppers when they're deciding what to eat at these Christmas rituals. “Snacks play a role across multiple festive moments, from hosting guests and family gatherings to movie nights with friends,” adds Pothier. “Seasonal flavours help meet consumers' increased willingness to experiment during Christmas.” By extension, they also help retailers make the most of the seasonal sales opportunity.



Putting up the Christmas tree



Christmas music on the radio

What marks the start of Christmas?



Christmas products on sale in supermarkets



Start of Christmas school holidays



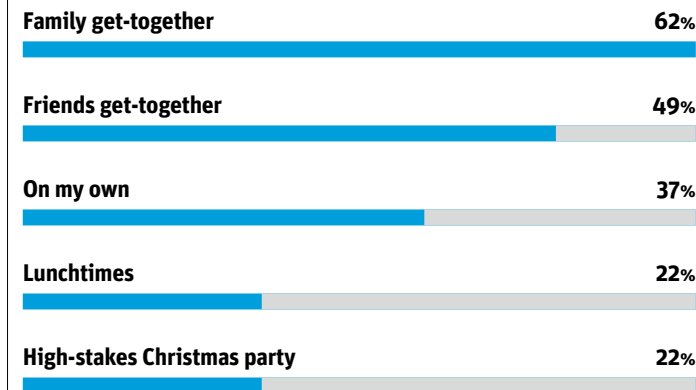
Work Christmas party

Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people (GB demographically representative)

2 Festive snack flavours are a hit at family gatherings

When we asked our shoppers about their go-to crisp flavours throughout the year, all the classics came up. Cheese & onion was top with 30% of the vote, next were ready salted (21%) and salt & vinegar (15%). **However, people are more adventurous at Christmas: 73% are more likely to try new things and 84% are likely to try limited-edition festive flavours.** This depends on occasion. People are most likely to stock up on limited-edition flavours when they're hosting family (62%) or friends (49%); 37% eat them alone and 22% grab them for lunch. Pothier says: “This shows how retailers can make the most of Christmas by ensuring they have a good supply of core crisp flavours and festive flavours during the season.”

Which Christmas occasions would you choose festive snack flavours for?

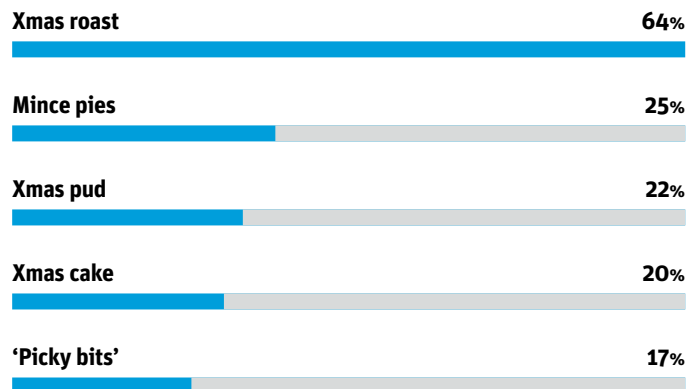


Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people (GB demographically representative)

3 Nearly a fifth of Brits look forward to 'picky bits' most...

No prizes for guessing what tops the menu for most people on Christmas Day: 54% tuck in to roast turkey for their main meal and 64% told us roast dinner is the food they look forward to most. But what might raise eyebrows is that turkey isn't the main event for everyone. Mince pies (25%), Christmas pudding (22%) and Christmas cake (20%) are also high on people's wish lists, while **nearly a fifth (17%) said they look forward to 'picky bits' – casual meals typically comprising snacks and dips – most at Christmas**. "Christmas eating is much bigger than a single meal," says Pothier. "Retailers have opportunities to engage shoppers across multiple festive food and snacking occasions throughout the season."

Which Christmas foods do you look forward to most?



Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people (GB demographically representative)



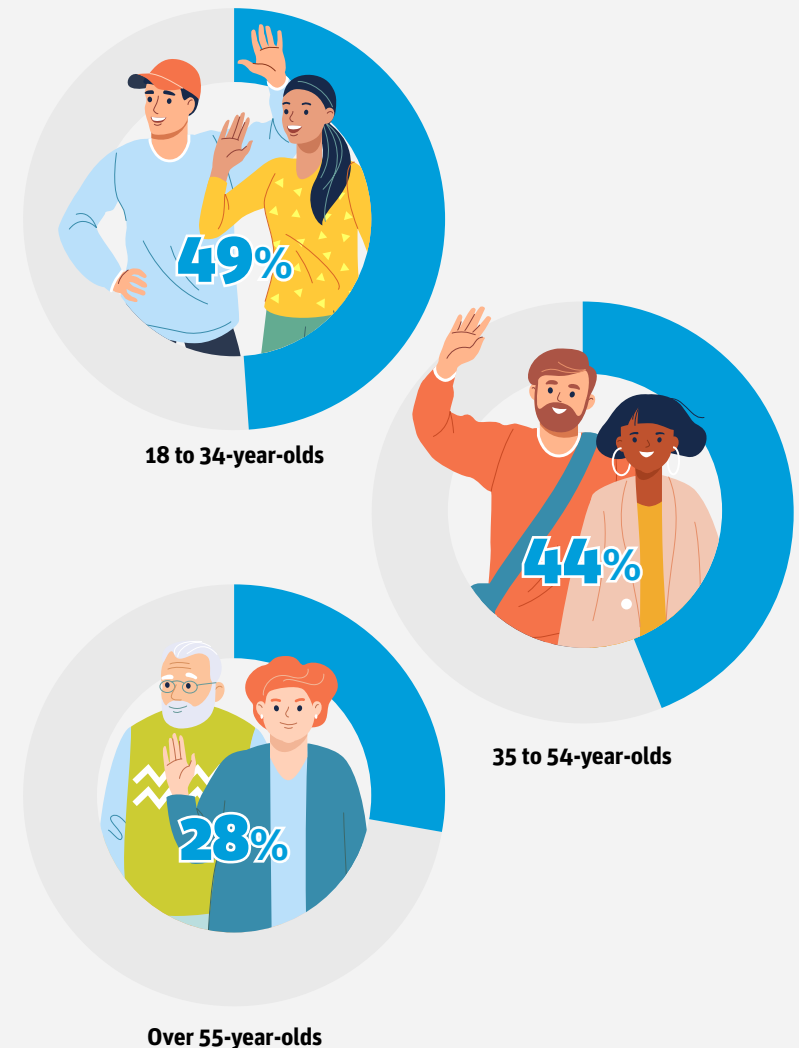
... and half of Gen Zs say they're better than turkey

Our research also reveals surprising differences between age groups' Christmas culinary choices. The popularity of picky bits, for example, correlates inversely with age. **The younger you are, the more likely you are to agree picky bits are better than the Christmas roast.**

Nearly half (49%) of people aged 18 to 34 told us that picky bits are better than the main Christmas meal, compared with 44% of people aged 35 to 54 and just 28% of people aged over 55 (the group that also looks forward to the roast most). This reflects the more informal dining habits of younger people and demonstrates the value of having compelling, well-merchandised snacks ranges in stores throughout the festivities.

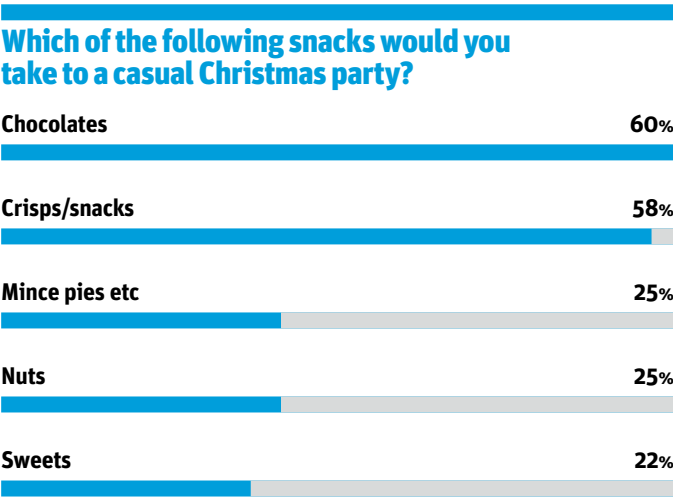
Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people (GB demographically representative)

'Picky bits are better than the main Xmas meal' – who agrees?



5 More than half take crisps to casual Christmas parties

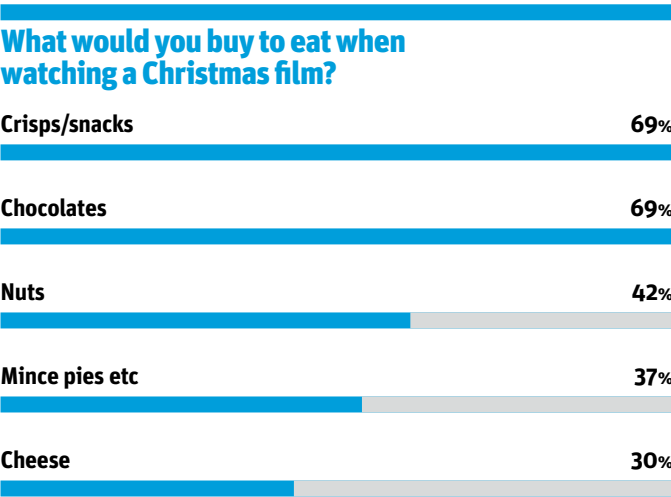
No one likes to turn up at a party empty-handed. Well, almost – just 9% of people told us they wouldn’t bring snacks to a casual Christmas get-together. More than half (58%) said they’d bring crisps, putting them only just below chocolate (60%), a traditional gift for hosts. **“Crisps have become a Christmas staple,”** says Pothier. **“Larger sharing bags of crisps perfectly align with entertaining and group occasions at Christmas.”** Again, particularly when it comes to Gen Z. People aged 18 to 34 are far more likely to bring crisps to casual Christmas parties – 69% said they would, compared with 51% of people aged over 55. Just 3% of Gen Zs wouldn’t bring any snacks, compared with 15% of over 55-year-olds.



Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people
(GB demographically representative)

6 Crisps are a must-have when watching Christmas movies...

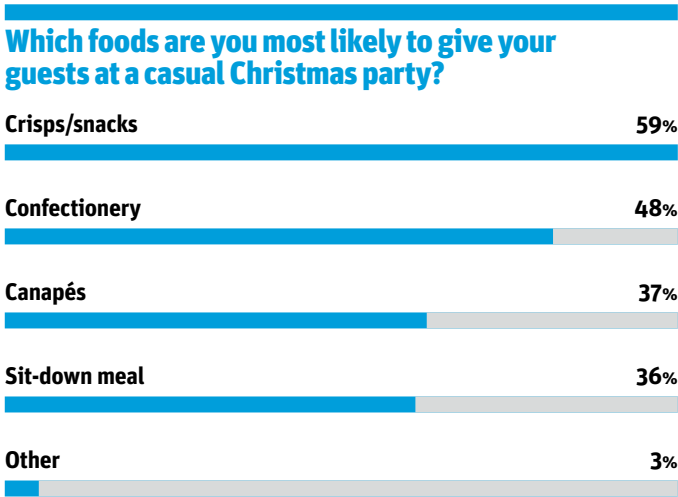
Movies matter at Christmas. Indeed, after opening presents and playing games with loved ones, settling down for a Christmas movie is the most meaningful part of the season for Brits [Tesco Christmas Trends Report 2025]. And your favourite festive flick just isn’t the same without a sharing bag of Walkers Sensations to tuck in to. **“Movie nights, family evenings and relaxed moments at home all create important snacking opportunities for retailers throughout the Christmas period,”** says Pothier. **“Christmas isn’t just about the big day itself.”** Crisps and other bagged snacks are Brits’ top snack choice (jointly with chocolate) with Christmas movies: 69% of people would buy them for a night in front of the telly.



Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people
(GB demographically representative)

... and the no 1 nibble served at casual Christmas parties!

It’s official: nothing beats crisps when it comes to Christmas party snacks. Fifty-nine per cent of people told us that crisps are the snacks they’re most likely to serve at casual Christmas parties, making them by far the most popular. **“Convenience and shareability make crisps a natural fit for festive entertaining,”** says Pothier. **“They’re easy to serve, easy to share and work across a wide range of social occasions.”** Don’t just take our word for it. Research carried out by Tesco ahead of Christmas 2025 found that crisps and dips were the food most enjoyed at festive parties by 39% of people. The same research found that 73% of people planned to entertain at some point during the festivities.

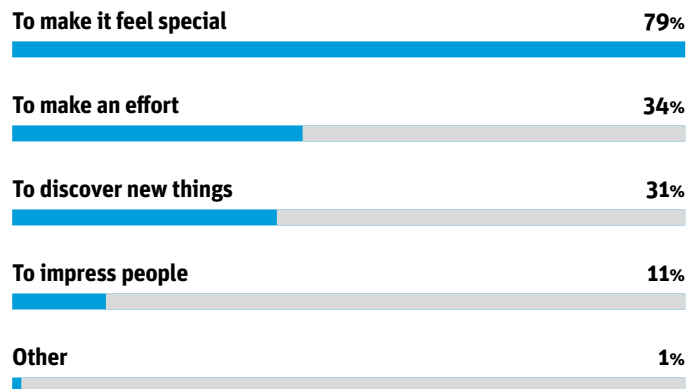


Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people
(GB demographically representative)

8 Premium snacks help Christmas feel special

Not just any snack will do at Christmas. Three quarters (75%) of people said they tend to trade up to premium snacks (see chart 9). Younger people are most likely to do so: 84% of 18 to 34-year-olds said they trade up at Christmas, compared to 70% of people over 55. Whatever their age, their reasons for trading up are clear. **“Premiumisation at Christmas is less about showing off and more about enhancing the occasion,”** says Pothier. **“Shoppers are looking to make festive moments feel more special, and premium snacks help them do that.”** Seventy-nine per cent of those who trade up do so to make an event feel special. The desire to make an effort (34%) and discover new things (31%) are also important factors.

Why do you buy more premium snacks at Christmas?

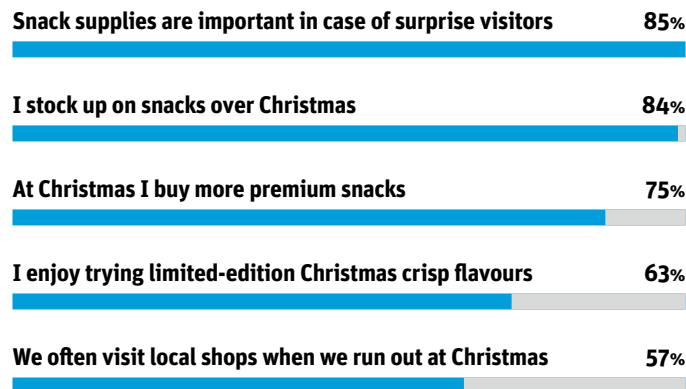


Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people
(GB demographically representative)

9 Stocking up on snacks is crucial at Christmas

The below chart makes the central role crisps play at Christmas clear. Eighty-five per cent of people agreed it's important to have a well-stocked snacks cupboard in case of surprise visitors at Christmas and 84% stock up before the festivities begin. Fifty-seven per cent also often visit local shops to replenish snack supplies. **“Christmas is a season of spontaneity as well as planning,”** says Pothier. **“Retailers that make it easy for shoppers to stock up on sharing snacks can help them feel prepared for any festive occasion.”** It's clear: well-stocked central snack fixtures and secondary displays – say, alongside soft drinks to put everything for key occasions within easy grabbing distance – have key roles to play in stores.

Which of the below statements do you agree with?

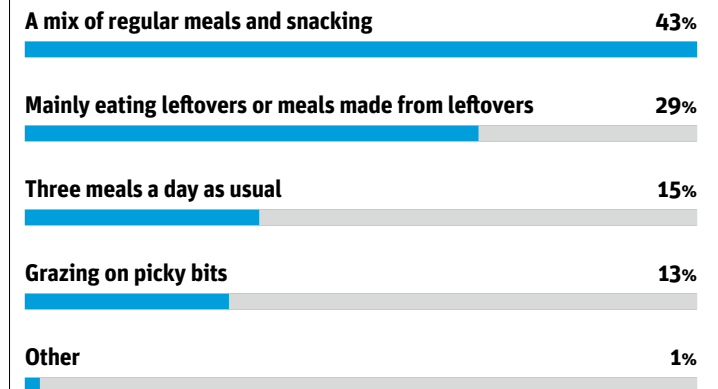


Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people
(GB demographically representative)

10 Most people graze during 'Twixtmas'

Convention goes out the window in the hazy hinterland between Christmas and new year known as 'Twixtmas'. Just 15% of people stick to the usual three square meals a day; 43% say they mix meals up with snacks while 29% mostly stick to leftovers and 13% graze on picky bits. **“The days between Christmas and new year have become a distinct eating occasion in their own right,”** says Pothier. **“Twixtmas is increasingly characterised by grazing, sharing and informal snacking.”** So the opportunity for snacks brands and retailers goes far beyond the build up to the big day – Twixtmas and new year are also crucial. Then, in January, planning for next Christmas can begin!

How do you tend to eat during 'Twixtmas'?



Source: Toluna poll of 1,000 people
(GB demographically representative)