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CUT PRICE CHRISTMAS FOR SIX IN TEN BRITS THIS YEAR

It will be a cut price Christmas for the majority of Brits this year, according to new research from uSwitch.com. Six in ten (59%) will be cutting back, spending less on presents, food, cards and booze in an attempt to save money^[1]:

- **Budget meal: over a third of Brits (37%) will be buying 'own brand' and a fifth (21%) 'value' items for their Christmas dinner this year. 37% will be shopping at cheaper supermarkets^[2]**
- **Downgraded dinner: almost two in ten (17%) will be enjoying a cheaper joint of meat this year while 12% will go without a traditional Christmas pudding^[2]**
- **Austerity measures: 43% will be dishing up smaller portions to avoid leftovers this year while a fifth (19%) won't be serving up snacks^[2]**
- **Cut price: 57% will be spending less on food, 60% less on alcohol and 59% less on cards^[1] - 64% plan to spend less on presents^[1] in a bid to save almost £70 this year^[3]**
- **Cut back Christmas: a third of Brits (32%) are trimming their gift buying list this year^[4], with friends (55%), colleagues (36%) and siblings (25%) the most likely to miss out^[5].**

Cash-strapped consumers will be enjoying a cut price Christmas this year, according to new research from uSwitch.com, the independent price comparison and switching service. Six in ten (59%) will be cutting back in an attempt to rein in the spend^[1]. Instead of a shopping list, consumers will have a Christmas 'chopping list' with presents, alcohol, cards and plenty of food the first things to go.

Although festive food is important to Christmas celebrations, in a bid to keep costs low but bellies full, Brits will downgrade their dinner with a third (32%) buying own brand and a fifth (21%) filling their baskets with value items. Almost four in ten (37%) will head to cheaper supermarkets in order to keep a lid on Christmas food costs^[2].

Almost two in ten cash conscious consumers (17%) will also be buying cheaper joints of meat while more than one in ten (12%) will go without a traditional Christmas pudding^[2]. And although traditionally the season of excess, second helpings and cold turkey leftovers may be a thing of the past as this year more than four in ten people (43%) will dish up smaller portions and a fifth (19%) won't be buying snacks^[2].

Altogether, 57% will be spending less on food. But in addition to this, 59% will be spending less on cards, and six in ten (60%) will be enjoying a slightly less 'merry' Christmas – being forced to cut back on alcohol^[1]. People won't be dressing to impress this year either – 60% will be splashing out less on Christmas clothing^[1].

On top of this, almost two thirds (64%) plan on spending less on presents^[1]. To achieve this almost a third of Brits (32%) will be trimming their Christmas gift buying lists^[4]. Friends will be the first to go (55%) but there will also be less festive cheer at work, as over a third (36%) say they won't be buying presents for colleagues. A quarter (25%) won't be shopping for their siblings this year^[5].

With hard-up consumers hoping to save almost £70 on average, and over a fifth (22%) at least £100^[3], by cutting back on gifts, it looks like there will be fewer presents under the Christmas tree this year.

Ann Robinson, Director of Consumer Policy at uSwitch.com, says: “Cash-strapped consumers face a dilemma this year. Another year of squeezed finances means that they either have to tighten their belts at the expense of Christmas cheer, or they face a struggle to afford a good Christmas, which can take the joy out of it. From the looks of it, this year Christmas will be a much leaner one and this could spell trouble for retailers.

“Although this year we will eat less, drink less and receive fewer gifts, hopefully fewer of us will suffer with a financial hangover. For consumers worried about losing the magic of Christmas, it may be tempting to splash the cash. But with the cost of living causing many family finances to be already stretched to breaking point, it may be a chance to enjoy the simple pleasures of the season instead.”

For more information visit www.uSwitch.com or call 0800 093 06 07

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Notes to editors:

Research carried out online with the uSwitch.com Consumer Opinion Panel in November 2011 amongst a sample of 1,523 GB adults.

1. When asked "Will you be spending less on any of the following this Christmas?" 57.3% said 'food – yes'; 60.4% said 'alcohol – yes'; 59.1% said 'cards – yes'; 55.9% said 'decorations – yes'; 64.0% said 'Presents – yes'. Overall, 58.7% said yes to something.
2. When asked "Will you be downgrading your Christmas dinner in any of the following ways to save money?" 43.0% said 'buying less of everything to avoid leftovers/ smaller portions'; 33.9% said 'cutting back on alcohol'; 10.1% said 'having a cheaper joint of meat'; 7.3% said 'replacing turkey with chicken'; 19.0% said 'not having snacks'; 11.7% said 'not having a Christmas pudding'; 37.0% said 'shopping at cheaper supermarkets'; 31.9% said 'buying own brand goods'; 21.1% said 'buying value range goods'; 5% said 'going without Christmas dinner altogether'.
3. The average amount saved by cutting back on presents is £68.31. 5.6% said '£100 - £125'; 1.5% said '£126 - £150'; 0.5% said '£151 - £175'; 0.5% said '£176 - £200'; 1.5% said 'more than £200'
4. When asked "Is there anyone that you're not buying a present for this year that you normally buy for in order to save money?" 31.8% said 'yes'
5. When asked "Who will you be taking off your list?" 24.9% said 'sibling'; 55.1% said 'friends'; 36.3% said 'colleagues'.

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uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

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