

BRING ON THE BANQUET

There's plenty of stunning English fare to bring to your Christmas table if you know where to look. Helenka Bednar unearths the must-have food of the festive season



Ready to roast – Moreton's Norfolk Bronze turkey

SLOW-REARED TURKEY

Morton's Family Farm in Norfolk has been preparing for Christmas since the start of 2020. Supermarket turkeys are often grown in a fleeting 16 weeks, but Moreton's Norfolk Black and Bronze turkeys are reared at a much slower pace. Chicks are ordered in February, arrive in June and spend 25 weeks slowly growing, feeding on the farm's rolling pastures and foraging among the trees. The turkeys also enjoy oats as part of their diet which creates a layer of fat on the bird, keeping it moist while it cooks.

The Morton's have been farming for four generations since the 1940s. Starting off with a dairy herd, they now rear (alongside their turkeys) award-winning free-range chickens, Mangalitza rare breed pork and pasture fed Jacob lamb. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the food industry but Morton's were quick to adapt with the launch of their online meat boxes.

"We hope online ordering is a trend that stays post lockdown," Rob Morton says. "[As a nation] we need to shift back to a more sustainable farming system with a focus on local, quality ingredients. Supporting our farms now will mean that we are in a much better position to deal with an issue like this, should it arise again."

Turkey weights range from 3.5kg - 8kg, priced from £60 - £110.
mortonsfarm.co.uk/christmas/

LUXURIOUS CHOCOLATE

Paul A. Young works some kind of magical alchemy when it comes to his innovative chocolates. This year the Christmas collection is all about reinventing classics and celebrating nostalgic flavours, with truffles including "Sherry Trifle Truffle", "Pigs in Blankets" and "Mint Humbug Caramel". Each one is hand made by Paul and his team at his two London shops in Soho and Islington and he was named "Outstanding British Chocolatier" by the International Chocolate Awards. Happily, the company have now launched an online shop so you don't even have to leave the house to try them.

4 piece box £7.00, 9 piece box £15.50, 25 piece box £40.00, 36 piece box £56.00. shop.paulayoung.co.uk



Paul A Young's 25 piece Christmas collection

CRANBERRY, PORT AND ORANGE SAUCE

The crowning condiment on Christmas day has to be cranberry sauce, and condiment masters Tracklements add a decadent flair to their version with port and orange.

The cranberries are carefully added in three stages, with gentle stirring so the berries aren't crushed. Finished with a hint of port added to the sauce as it starts to cool, it looks particularly charming on the table in its Le Parfait jar.

Enjoying 50 years in the business this year, Tracklements first started when founder William Tullberg tried his hand at making mustard after coming across a recipe in the 17th century diary of John Evelyn (a contemporary of Samuel Pepys). He sold his first few jars to the local pub, but it wasn't long before he was supplying Harrods with his mustard. Still based in Wiltshire, the company is headed up by William's son Guy Tullberg, who manages a team of 50 staff. They may have over 40 relishes, chutneys, mustards and sauces to their name, but everything is still made by hand.

"There's never any leftover cranberry sauce on our Christmas table – my whole family is mad for it!" Guy says. "But if I did find a few tablespoons at the bottom of the jar I'd use it as a jam and spread it on hot buttered toast – it's also delicious on top of peanut butter."
£5.80/310g jar. tracklements.co.uk/product/cranberry-port-orange-sauce-le-parfait/



Managing Director, Guy Tullberg gets stuck in with the stirring



A very different sort of cheese cake...

A CHEESEBOARD LIKE NO OTHER

You could serve up a cheese board at Christmas, or you could go one step further and serve up a towering cheese "cake". Godminster's Celebration Cake features their Vintage Organic Cheddar, Oak-smoked Vintage Organic Cheddar and is topped off with a Vintage Organic Cheddar heart.

Richard Hollingbery bought Godminster Farm in 1993 and it's now home to 320 organic dairy cows. In 1999 the farm was certified organic, and as a thank you, Richard made his first cheddar for friends and neighbours who had helped with the whole process. It went down so well and he knew he was onto something good. Since then, Godminster's cheddar has won a slew of awards, most recently receiving the Soil Association's Boom Award for The Nation's Favourite Organic Product (2019).

"I love knowing how much pleasure the cheddar gives," Richard says. "We have some fantastic fans and loyal followers . . . and it's great knowing that someone out there enjoys what you do as much as you do!"

Godminster's Celebration Cake £72, 2.65kg. Feeds 25-32.
godminster.com/products/godminster-celebration-cake-heart/



Richard Hollingbery >

A WHOLE BAKED HAM

Dukeshill launched over 30 years ago to produce mouthwatering hams, cured the “old-fashioned” way. The family-run business, which started out of a cow shed on a Wiltshire farm in 1985, embraces traditional, slow curing methods, which can take up to six months, producing wonderful flavours and textures.

Now based in Shropshire, having out-grown the original cow shed, Dukeshill is still run by the Hollingsworth family: Neale, Sarah and daughters Lucy and Laura. In 2003, the company was awarded a royal warrant and every Christmas since, Neale has personally delivered Dukeshill hams to Sandringham. The family-run business are suppliers to some of London’s top food halls, too, and this year were voted Online Food Retailer of the Year 2020 at the Farm Shop & Deli Awards.

Large whole, cooked, bone-in (min. 5.7kg) £89; Half, cooked, bone-in (min 2.6kg), £54
Large whole, uncooked, bone-in (min 7kg): £70; Half, uncooked, bone-in (min 3.3kg): £46
dukeshillham.co.uk/



Dukeshill hams are cured the good old-fashioned way

PIGS IN BLANKETS

Fought over at many a Christmas dinner, pigs in blankets are an absolute must. Based in Somerset, Coombe Farm Organic make theirs using gluten-free chipolatas, each wrapped in a whole rasher of nitrate-free bacon. The farm’s pigs (a cross of traditional, native breeds) are reared slowly to produce pork with fantastic flavour and texture.

Launched five years ago, the company has sustainable, ethical farming at its heart and with “a nose-to-tail philosophy”, aiming to use the whole of the animal, minimal waste has been their focus. Originally set up to produce award-winning organic dairy beef (deeply flavoured

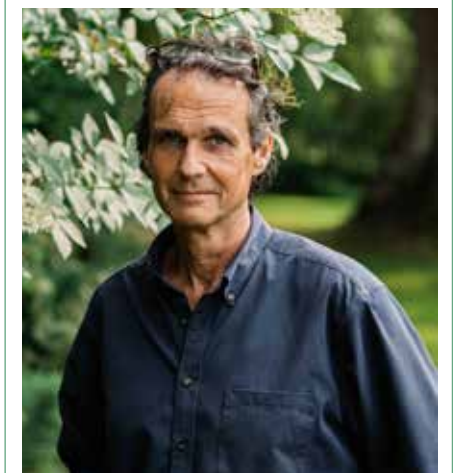


Coombe Farm Organic founder, Ben White

cuts from retired dairy cows), you’ll also find a range of charcuterie in the online shop from South African style biltong to Tuscan inspired salami.

“As a team we look forward to Christmas knowing that our organic and sustainable approach to farming plays such a big part in the festive feasts that our customers will be cooking and sharing,” founder Ben White says.

£6.95 per 6 x 70g sausages. Serves 4.
coombefarmorganic.co.uk/products/1982-organic-pigs-in-blankets



MARVELLOUS MIXERS

It might be the season for mulled wine, but soft drinks are no afterthought thanks to Luscombe’s elegantly quaffable selection which they’ve been crafting since 1975. Founder Gabriel David is behind the refined range of organic fruit juices, crushes, bubblys, sparkling waters, tonic waters and mixers. Our pick is their Hot Ginger Beer which packs a spicy, fiery punch, whilst their Damascene Rose Bubbly fizzes into life with its mix of Muscat grapes, Sicilian lemon juice and a heady aroma of Damascene rose petals.

Based in the Valley of Dartmoor in South Devon, all of Luscombe’s drinks are produced onsite using a blend of organic fruits and Dartmoor spring water. They’ve won a staggering collection of 78 Great Taste Awards, and you won’t find concentrates or additives in sight.

Luscombe Hot Ginger Beer: £20.28 per box of 12 x 270ml bottles. Luscombe Damascene Rose Bubbly: £20.28 per box of 12 x 270ml bottles.
luscombe.co.uk/shop

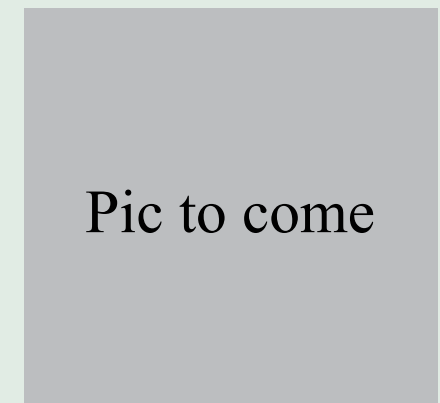


Luscombe are leaders in alcohol-free fizz

FRUITY CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Tiptree have been making jams and preserves since 1885 on their fruit-filled estate in Essex, but they’re also known for their outstanding Christmas puds. It’s a secret ingredient of Tiptree’s Tawny Orange Marmalade which sets the puddings apart and the way they start making them in April just as marmalade season comes to a close. This early start gives their glorious puds enough time to mature before they reach shelves across the UK and overseas.

The Tiptree pudding room is where it all happens. First, vine fruits are steeped in brandy and cider overnight, before the cooks



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hand fill each basin, and cover and cook the puddings. The next day, each pudding is tapped out and placed into a new china basin, covered with a cloth and packed into a bright red box. Take a peek inside the box and you’ll see the initials of the cook who packed it. Based on an old Wilkin family recipe, Tiptree’s Christmas puddings are palm oil and nut free and suitable for vegetarians.
Tiptree Traditional Christmas Pudding: £9.99/454g, £14.99/908g, £2.19/112g. Tiptree Organic Christmas Pudding: £11.99/454g. Tiptree Gluten Free Christmas Pudding: £7.99/454g.
tiptree.com



Matt Austin

Three wise men - the Dart brothers Michael, James and Paul

LUXURY CHRISTMAS HAMPER

The Dart brothers, Michael, James and Paul, run Darts Farm which overlooks the Clyst Valley in Devon. Their father Ronald Dart set up one of Britain’s first pick-your-own businesses in the 1970s. When he passed away in 1982, the newspapers declared it the “Death of a pioneer”, and it was then that the brothers’ idea was born of selling direct to their customers from their farm as a way of continuing their father’s work.

Darts’ award-winning farm shop is stuffed full of tempting produce from their fields and other local producers. Their Christmas Indulgence Hamper features Darts Farm mince pies and honey, along with other artisan luxuries including Georgie Porgie Christmas pudding, House of Dorchester chocolates and Churchill’s Late Bottle Vintage Port.

Festive Indulgence Hamper, £85.
dartsfarm.co.uk

