

## Tips for reducing **STRESS** this Christmas

Are you expecting this Christmas to be stressful, either for you or someone you know?

**M**ore than half of all New Zealanders – 51 percent – feel added financial and social stresses during the festive season. For some of us, the pressure is on to create a magical day for our tamariki and whānau. For others, the Kirihimete period can increase loneliness and hardship, with limited access to kai, transport and other services.

Try to keep in mind that the true gift of the season is our presence, not our presents.

Giving our time, our words and our presence makes others feel great, but it also lifts our own mood and makes us feel our lives have more meaning. It's one of our Five Ways to Wellbeing – simple things we can all do to feel great.

### Some cost-friendly ways we can give during the Kirihimete season are:

- Taking friends or whānau to look at Christmas lights. There were 232 lit-up houses in Aotearoa last year!
- Spending quality time with whānau doing things you all enjoy
- Heading along to listen to Christmas carols.
- Making Christmas arts and crafts. Bake seasonal treats to give away

**Who is never hungry at Christmas?**

The turkey—he's always stuffed.

as presents, create decorations or reduce your card costs! Crafts are a great way to get tamariki involved in the festive spirit.

● Visiting people/whānau in your community who may be a little lonely over the festive season. Rest homes and animal shelters value companionship and Christmas cheer.

### Some ways to reduce stress for you, whānau and others around you, are:

● Spending time in nature. Over summer the pōhutukawa blossom, the sun shines more, and the days are longer. Taking a walk through the ngahere (bush), throwing the ball around with your tamariki, going to the beach or planting vegetable seeds are some great ways to connect with taiao (the environment).

● Buying food on special ahead of season, when prices are lower. We find buying kai early can also help manage our Christmas budgets.

● Finding time to recharge. Thousands of Kiwis celebrated this year's Mental Health Awareness Week by being active, learning, giving, connecting and taking notice. Our Facebook, and Instagram pages are full of tips for recharging and finding calm!

Christmas can be stressful – but it doesn't have to be.

If you ever feel Christmas pressure is affecting you or someone else's mental health, you don't need to keep it to yourself – call or text 1737. Their trained counsellors are always on hand to help.

Arohanui to you and your whānau, The Mental Health Foundation team.

Source: [www.mentalheath.org.nz](http://www.mentalheath.org.nz)

**What did the gingerbread man put on his bed?**

A cookie sheet!

## Summer Mulled Wine

**T**raditionally served piping hot in the colder northern hemisphere, this Christmas drink oozes festive cheer. For a cooler variation in our sunnier climes, try it chilled with an extra ice cube or two. It's easy to make in advance and is set to be a Christmas party success.

**COOK:** 2 minutes preparation (plus chill for 2 hours at least)  
**SERVES:** 4 - 6

### INGREDIENTS

100g light muscovado sugar

1 star anise

1 cinnamon stick

4 cloves

150ml water

1 lemon

2 mandarins

150ml Cointreau

750ml bottle light red wine (try Beaujolais)

Twist of orange zest and a star anise, to serve

### METHOD

Put 100g light muscovado sugar in a pan with 1 star anise, 1 cinnamon stick, 4 cloves and 150ml water. Bring slowly to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar.

Simmer for 2 mins, then pour into a large jug and leave to cool. Add 1 lemon and 2 mandarins, both thinly sliced, to the jug along with 150ml Cointreau and a 750ml bottle light red wine, such as a Beaujolais. Stir well, then cover and chill for at least 2 hours or overnight if you can.



# MARY BERRY'S PAVLOVA

## FOR THE PAVLOVA

6 large free-range egg whites  
350g/12oz caster sugar  
1 tsp white wine vinegar  
1 tsp cornflour

## FOR THE FILLING

600ml/20fl oz double cream  
1 tsp vanilla bean paste  
50g/1¾oz icing sugar, sifted  
200g/7oz strawberries, hulled and quartered  
300g/10½oz raspberries  
200g/7oz blueberries  
50g/1¾oz pomegranate seeds  
a few mint leaves, to decorate (optional)  
icing sugar, for dusting

Preheat the oven to 160C/140C Fan/Gas 3. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment and draw a 30cm/12in circle in the middle of the paper. Draw a 15cm/6in circle in the centre of the larger circle to make a ring.

Put the egg whites in a clean mixing bowl and whisk with an electric whisk until soft peaks form when the whisk is removed. Gradually add the sugar a little at a time, whisking on maximum speed until they are stiff and glossy. Mix the vinegar and cornflour in a cup until smooth, then stir into the egg whites.

Spoon the meringue onto the ring drawn on the baking parchment. Using a large spoon make a shallow trench in the

What's the absolute best Christmas present?

A broken drum — you can't beat it!



meringue for the cream and fruit to sit in.

Transfer to the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 140C/120C Fan/Gas 1. Bake for 1 hour–1 hour 15 minutes, until the outside is hard but still white. Turn the oven off and leave the pavlova inside for an hour or overnight to cool and dry.

To assemble, whip the cream, vanilla paste and icing sugar until stiff peaks form when the whisk is removed. Spoon the cream into the trench in the meringue. Arrange the

strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and pomegranate on top and decorate with a few mint leaves, if using. To serve, dust with icing sugar and cut into wedges.

**Recipe tips** – The pavlova can be made up to 1 month ahead and stored: wrap it in cling wrap and then tin foil and store in a cool place.

What do grapes sing at Christmas?

'Tis the season to be jolly

## Office Closure

We want to wish you some well-deserved time off to indulge in the festive spirit. Whether it's over eating, watching terrible movies, playing board games or spending quality times with family and friends – have an amazing holiday. See you in the New Year!

Our last day in the office will be 21st December 2023, finishing at 12:30pm and we reopen 10th January 2024 at 8:15am. Should you anticipate requiring assistance over this period, please check with your regular contact about their availability.

## Top Christmas family friendly games according to country living

- Christmas Movie Bingo
- Christmas Guess Who
- Naughty or Nice Christmas Game
- Christmas Songs Pictionary
- White Elephant
- Snowman Bingo
- Lump of Coal Christmas Plastic Wrap Game
- Snowman Bowling
  - Christmas Family Feud
  - Face the Gingerbread Man

[www.countryliving.com/life/g23477105/family-christmas-games](http://www.countryliving.com/life/g23477105/family-christmas-games)



What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite