Saving for Christmas

Christmas is a time for family and celebrating - it should be the "most wonderful time of the year", but. it can also be the most challenging time of the year financially and potentially lead to a less pleasant New Year when the Bills '"blues" it in January. Without being a "bah humbug" it is prudent to be realistic and sensible around what is affordable.

We perhaps do not want to talk about the "C" word while the summer holidays are just past, and many will be of the view and campaign keep Christmas till December but there is a reason why it is important to start thinking about saving ASAP for the big day. It still leaves several months for you to prepare and save from your wages rather than having to deal with 'debts" in the dark "dreich" winter months after the big event.

Whilst we are reading that the rate of increase in costs has diminished prices still remain at high levels. Many of the toys are imported from China and shipping costs/delays may have a significant impact on delivery. Reading certain retailers' websites the must have predicted toys for 2025 range from: The super soft 'Squishmallows' , Gabby's doll-house, Nostalgic throwbacks such as Polly Pockets & Tamogatchi's and of course the classics Barbie, Lego and the famous Monopoly - this price range is estimated from £14.99 up to £250 and are available now.

Here are some thoughts/tips:

The first consideration for all savings objectives is planning and budgeting. use the budget planner on the DAM community hub to help with this. This will allow you to establish what additional savings you could make from your disposable income each month.

- Spreading the cost of any expenditure over months (ideally 12 months) - make consideration for preparing for Christmas 2026 - in January 2026 - look at the sales offerings after the big day for the following year - now that is being organised. Saving money especially while interest rates remain relatively high will help.

- Transferring to a new provider and/or account can lead to financial bonus from certain banks/building societies. If you are employed - check out to see if your employer offers retail discount/voucher packages that you can use. Employers may offer end of year bonuses. If you are fortunate to be in line for this, consider this in your planning.

- Start looking for presents and bargains now before the retailers raise their prices in the run up to the Christmas period. Spreading the cost of Christmas over several months is easier than leaving it to the December wage. Try to avoid putting on credit card debt unless you know you can pay off fully the following month as APR% rates can be punitive.

- Be sensible with the food and drink offering. Many of us over purchase and end up binning unused food. Try your hand at cooking/baking or making your own decorations. Build up loyalty points/vouchers with your preferred supermarket now so you can use the accumulated points to reduce expenditure.

- Agree on price limits/expenditure on presents among the family.

- Consider taking out a TV subscription for movies/sports for December (assuming the provider allows 1-month free subscription) but make sure you cancel the subscription after the month has elapsed. If you plan to be travelling within UK or overseas for the holidays - book early for the travel, flights, rail or car hire.

- Maximise cash-back offerings - Christmas is one of the highest spending periods. Access cash-back offerings from websites or any savings accounts that offer cash-back.

- Charity giving can be a useful consideration - for those who you struggle to buy for as they appear to have "everything" - we may find Christmas stressful both emotionally and financially but there are many individuals throughout the world who are in a worse position. You could argue this epitomises the true meaning and spirit of Christmas.

Hopefully this article has provided some early thoughts around how we can ensure we all have a Merry Christmas and more importantly, from a financial perspective, a Happy 'relatively debt-free" New Year!

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