

Cairns Post
Wednesday 10/12/2008

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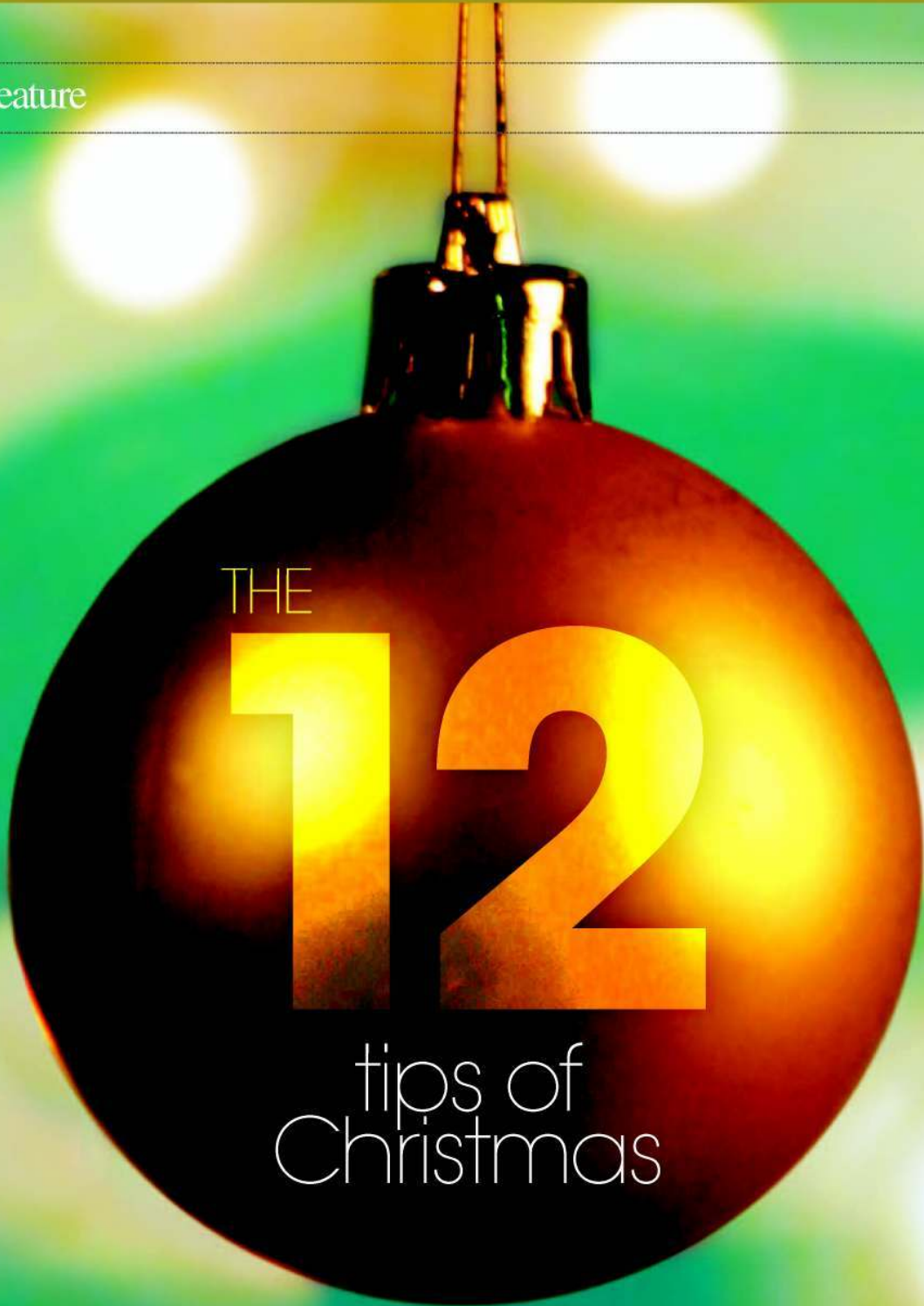


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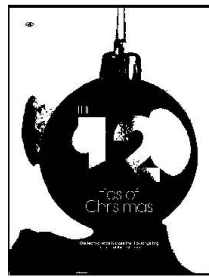
THE
12

tips of
Christmas

Our team of experts share their tips for getting
the most out of this festive season

Photography // Chris Hyde

12 cairns eye DECEMBER 10 - 16, 2008



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1 Kris Kringle // We have a co-ordinator (as we all live in different parts of the country) who draws the name of one couple who then buys for another couple. We spend \$30 each for all the adults.

2 Gift challenge // We have a strict limit of \$15 per child for all the nieces and nephews. It is amazing how clever you can get by buying throughout the year.

3 Get creative // Homemade decorations and wrapping are nice but if you don't have the time use kindy or school artwork to make wrapping paper and cards.

4 Rest // Encourage children to rest and have quiet times leading up to Christmas Day so they won't be over tired.

5 Sharing is caring // Present-giving time can be difficult for dealing with sharing issues, especially for little ones. Consider giving similar, if not identical, items to each child so that everyone feels equal.

6 Entertainment // Have a special DVD for the kids in the afternoon on Christmas Day. Make popcorn, drag out the pillows

and transform the lounge into a big movie theatre. This also gives you some down time.

7 Easy meals // Prepare meals for the freezer such as spaghetti bolognaise, sausage rolls and egg and bacon quiches.

8 Bring a plate // Ask people to contribute with food if you're hosting a party.

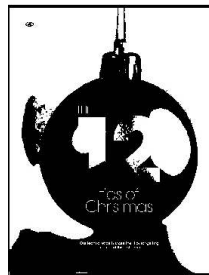
9 Snack time // Make up a fruit platter with some mini muffins and other healthy foods and let the kids graze while they play.

10 Kids first // Often children don't want to sit through a formal lunch or dinner. Feed them first or give them a lunch box with assorted treats and let them picnic together.

11 Family tradition // Create your own special traditions such as a special Christmas tree decoration for each member of the family, a pancake feast on Christmas morning or nightly Christmas lights drives.

12 Me time // Once Christmas Day has passed, book a babysitter and do something for yourself.





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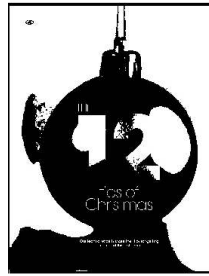
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SHOPPING
Pip Miller // Public relations consultant and professional shopper, Pip Miller PR

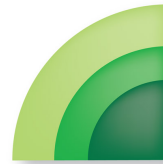
- 1 Avoid shopping centre car parks** // Why drive around in circles and risk denting the car when you can park out front and pay for the pleasure?
- 2 Beat the budget** // Plan, plan, plan. Write your list and work out a ball-park figure for each person on your Christmas list.
- 3 Shop around** // Use the web, the phone or good old-fashioned browsing. If you can buy something now, why trek across town for a \$10 saving?
- 4 Ask for a bargain** // Don't be afraid to ask a retailer for their best price, you will be surprised how many are willing to drop their price to secure a sale.
- 5 Creativity counts** // The longer you give yourself to Christmas shop, the more time you have to find the perfect gift. Throughout the year listen for hints, write them down or really think about the person in question. What would "they" like?
- 6 Make it personal** // When all else fails, a personalised gift is a great fallback, be it a framed photograph, album or canvas, T-shirt, cushion or jigsaw puzzle. Gift boxes of assorted goodies also have great wow factor.
- 7 Department store loyalty cards** // Shop and earn points, enjoy added discounts and recognition. Think Myer One, it is free to join and offers a plethora of great savings, value-adds, exclusive shopping nights and you even get a free mag.
- 8 Exercise your body and mind** // Shopping can be great exercise for the mind and body. Wear flat shoes and walk briskly between shops.
- 9 Fashionistas** // Dress down, the secret to a good shopping mission is cool, comfortable clothing.
- 10 Gift giving** // Giving gifts is one of life's greatest rewards so enjoy the process. Don't do it all at once and don't leave it until last minute. Start with a coffee, end with a glass of wine.
- 11 Think with your head and your heart** // If you see something you like for a special person and Christmas is nowhere in sight, buy it there and then. If something else comes along in the meantime you are covered. Also, don't forget to check out the store's refund policy if you are unsure. Keep all your receipts and don't leave them in the bag. I always put them in my wallet at the time of purchase.
- 12 Internet, Interflora** // Don't miss the world wide web when it comes to shopping. eBay is a great place to start if hunting for a bargain. But refund policies and postage can be traps if you don't fully inform yourself before you buy. For the overseas rellies, buying something on the net and having it delivered is a godsend, try amazon.com, ebay.com, interflora.com.au etc.

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GET ORGANISED

Roz Howland // Professional
organiser, InOrder Professional
Organising Service



1 Prioritise // Clarify what this season means to you. Know what is important and ensure you spend time doing it, not just what is important to everyone else.

2 Create lists // The human brain recalls only seven major ideas at once, so get that pen out. Make a list for presents, food, beverages, ice, table settings, decorations, cards, phone calls, visits, menus, clothes and other jobs. Use one master list for each topic and house it where it can be easily seen and added to.

3 Keep one diary only // Use either paper or electronic to avoid embarrassment, disappointment and double booking.

4 Gift wrapping // Take advantage of gift-wrapping services to save time.

5 Parking // Avoid car park rage by parking down the street and collecting all your goodies via parcel pick-up.

6 Power up // Charge all batteries for digital cameras, video recorders and any other gadgets you'll be using to enjoy the day.

7 Back-ups // Know what batteries are needed for toys and other presents on the day. Have plenty in supply, even for the most annoying toys.

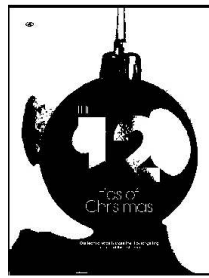
8 Pay the bills // Pay December and January bills in advance if possible, particularly if you are going away.

9 Avoid tangled decorations // Treat yourself to a fibre-optic Christmas tree. These are available in many colours with in-built decorations which not only avoid the tangle but saves on storage space.

10 Clothing // Prepare all clothes a few days beforehand. Make sure all clothes are clean, ironed and ready to wear. This includes swimmers and other accessories you may need on the day.

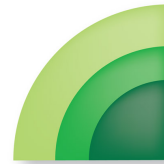
11 Clean the pool // Also service the filter in plenty of time to address any issues. The last thing you want is a green pool on a hot Christmas Day.

12 Relax // Breathe and have fun. After all, you will have to wait another 365 days to do it all again.



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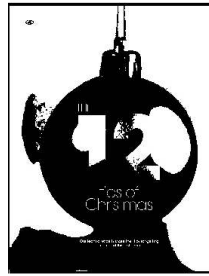
FOOD

Brian Down // Tropical
North Queensland TAFE
senior cookery teacher



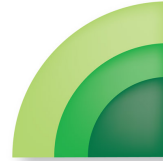
- 1 Keep it simple** // Have good-quality food cooked or prepared in a simple fashion.
- 2 Keep it cool** // Christmas in the tropical north is always hot. So serve your food ice cold.
- 3 Serve it safely** // To avoid nasty bugs or food poisoning, make sure your food is cooked and then chilled quickly and stored safely.
- 4 Pre-prepare** // Keep your cooking to a minimum on Christmas Day. If you want turkey, cook it the day before and serve with salad and a nice chutney.
- 5 Go local** // Buy local seafood. Put ice on a tray, cover with cooked and cooled seafood such as prawns and oysters then add fresh lemon quarters.
- 6 Refreshing drop** // Have lots of cold drinks. Try a soda with fresh lime or a cider with a dash of ginger.
- 7 To market** // Try Rusty's, Mareeba or Yungaburra markets. Serve lots of fruit such as local watermelon, Tableland peaches and mangoes on ice.
- 8 Fan it** // Use a pedestal fan to keep the Christmas table cool.
- 9 Ice** // Buy a few bags in advance for food and drinks
- 10 Snacks** // Try our great local cheeses and serve with crusty bread or crackers.
- 11 Delicious dessert** // Mix pudding with ice cream, shape and re-freeze. Serve with local mango liqueur.
- 12 Eat out** // Booking in to a local restaurant saves all the stress.





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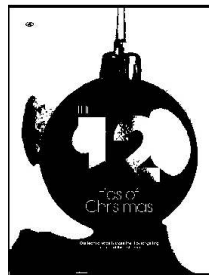


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HEALTH & NUTRITION
Tara Diversi // Dietician // Health Management

- 1 Just one day //** Although I agree that Christmas is a diet-free day, keep it to that, just one day.
- 2 No foodie gifts //** Tell your friends and family you would prefer not to receive food as gifts. This goes for giving as well. If you enjoy baking for others, try your hand at craft.
- 3 Variety //** The more variety you have the more you will eat. You usually feel full after a plate but when confronted with a smorgasbord, you can eat two or three plates. Have lots of salads and one or two varieties of meat/seafood and starches.
- 4 Walk or swim //** Start a new family tradition of going for a walk or swim as soon you get up. It's great for family time and exercise.
- 5 Fresh fruit //** Replace some of the lolly bowls with bowls of beautiful fresh fruit.
- 6 Keep track //** Make sure your wine, beer or soft drink glass is empty before refilling it to keep track of how much you're drinking.
- 7 Go small //** Eat off smaller plates. The bigger our plates, the more it takes to fill up.
- 8 See food and eat it //** Swap the meat for seafood and not fried. Seafood has less kilojoules than other meat.
- 9 Active day //** Enjoy a day out with barbecues and cricket at the beach or picnics and swimming.
- 10 Make a list //** Write a list when you go shopping. When we see more variety and new foods, it is amazing how much more we buy.
- 11 Move it //** If Santa has brought video games for the kids, try out some of the interactive games to get the whole family moving.
- 12 Rehydrate //** Regardless of where you are make sure there is always water with you.



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1 Reduce credit card debt // Your credit card is not the answer to financial Christmas freedom. It will take thousands of Australians many months to pay off amounts accrued over the Christmas period.

2 Reduce the cost of presents // Buying presents for extended family and friends is costly. Spend less on each present. Kris Kringle or Secret Santas are a great idea.

3 Edible gifts // You don't need to be a chef to melt chocolate, roll an apricot ball or use a cookie cutter. Show how much you care by making special tasty treats.

4 Service gift vouchers // How about a gift certificate entitling the bearer to a free service you can provide such as a haircut, massage or a night's babysitting?

5 Online gift shopping // If there is enough time for postage delivery, shop online with reputable providers and save a fortune.

6 Shop early // The last-minute shopping rush can pressure you into spending more than you anticipated. Keep your eye out for store sales and price-reduced gifts and non-perishable foods in the lead-up to Christmas.

7 Discounted Christmas stamps // The cost of posting Christmas cards marked card only is 5¢ less during the festive season.

8 Handmade decorations // Decorations are highly overpriced. Spend time with your children transforming bits and pieces into sentimental ornaments.

9 Go potluck // Reduce the cost of your grocery bill to your Christmas dinner by having guests bring a dish.

10 Holiday locally // Unless you need to travel for a specific reason consider saving in travelling costs by holidaying in North Queensland.

11 Be energy efficient // Turn the Christmas lights off when you are sleeping, use energy efficient light bulbs, set the airconditioner to 25C, unplug the second fridge, wash clothes in cold water and use the clothes line instead of the dryer.

12 Budget, budget, budget // Set your Christmas budget by estimating how much of your weekly wage you think you should allocate to the cost of Christmas and multiply that by 52 weeks. Then save that amount each week.