The Honest Christmas Checklist

Eleven weeks, from Monday 12 October to Christmas Eve. Printable. Mildly sarcastic. Written for people who would like Christmas to go well and have noticed it has other plans.

Print it. Ignore half of it.
Keep the margin notes.

October and early November

Week 1 · from Mon 12 Oct

Look at the situation

- [ ] Write the gift list. Names, not vibes.
- [ ] Set one total budget.
  Pick the number you'd tell a friend, not the one you tell yourself.
- [ ] Ask who's hosting. Out loud.
  If nobody says who's hosting, you end up cooking for 14.

Week 2 · from Mon 19 Oct

Ideas, not purchases

- [ ] One gift idea per person, however vague.
- [ ] Ask the people who like being asked.
  "Surprise me" usually means "don't get it wrong".
- [ ] Jot down anything anyone has mentioned since June.
  Clocks go back in the UK and EU on Sun 25 Oct. Spend the extra hour here.

Week 3 · from Mon 26 Oct

Dates and journeys

- [ ] Book any travel.
  Prices rise. Tempers rise with them.
- [ ] Confirm who's coming and who isn't.
- [ ] Decide where everyone sleeps.
  Someone will say "the sofa is fine". Check that it is.

Week 4 · from Mon 2 Nov

Start buying

- [ ] Buy the easy ones first.
- [ ] Order anything that's made to order or shipped from far away.
- [ ] Write down what you spend as you spend it.
  Better to know now than in January.

Week 5 · from Mon 9 Nov

Cards and the awkward list

- [ ] Decide who gets a card.
  You're allowed to stop sending one to the dentist.
- [ ] Write them in batches. Tea helps.
- [ ] Settle the office, teacher and neighbour gifts.
  Small, kind, done.

Week 6 · from Mon 16 Nov

The food plan

- [ ] Draft the menu. Ask about dietary needs.
  "Vegetarian since March" is information, not an attack.
- [ ] Order anything that needs ordering.
- [ ] Decide what you are NOT making.
  This is the most important line on the page.

Week 7 · from Mon 23 Nov

The bulk of the gifts

- [ ] Finish most of the gift shopping.
- [ ] Wrap one present, to see how you feel.
  If you hate wrapping, you've learned something early.
- [ ] Check what's still missing against your list.

Week 8 · from Mon 30 Nov

Lights and decorations

- [ ] Find the lights. Test the lights.
  They worked when you packed them. They never do in December.
- [ ] Decide how much tree.
- [ ] Clear space in the fridge.
  Future you will say thank you.

December

Week 9 · from Mon 7 Dec

Posting and parties

- [ ] Post anything travelling far.
  Check your postal service's last posting dates; they vary.
- [ ] Choose which events you're actually going to.
  Declining isn't failing. It's editing.
- [ ] Write a who-does-what for the big day.

Week 10 · from Mon 14 Dec

Wrap and book

- [ ] Wrap a little each evening.
  Wrapping twelve gifts in one night is no fun.
- [ ] Book grocery or delivery slots.
- [ ] Check the plan with the people on it.
  Better today than on the 24th.

Week 11 · from Mon 21 Dec

The last mile

- [ ] Final food shop. Take a list. Eat first.
- [ ] Prep whatever can be prepped on the 23rd.
- [ ] Thu 24 Dec: eat a proper lunch.
  The cook's lunch is always the first thing to go.
- [ ] Thu 24 Dec, evening: sit down.
  That's the whole instruction.

On the day

It won't go to plan. It rarely does, and nobody remembers the gravy. They remember who was there.

(The gravy was fine. It was always fine.)

Prefer your phone? The same kind of list lives in the app: gifts, budget, guests and tasks. merryandsorted.com