

# CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS 2021

INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY ISAT

## CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S EVE IN OXFORD

Christmas is nearly here and some of you may spend it in Oxford. Here's some information for you to make the most of this very special time of year.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

- Brookes Security: 01865 483060
- Medical queries: 111
- Emergency: 999

If you are feeling down or need a chat:

- Samaritans: 116123
- Student Space: <https://studentspace.org.uk/support-services>



## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Here are some ideas of activities to keep you busy during the holiday.

### Blenheim Palace

Many events are organised at [Blenheim Palace](#) for the Christmas season. The Illuminated Light Trail is a magical experience. There are still some tickets available, but they sell fast! Watch our Blenheim video on the [ISAT Events & Trips page](#): our tour guide Rob explains how to get there and tells you about the history of the palace.

### Oxford Christmas Market

9-19 December 2021. Located on Broad Street, the Oxford Christmas Market is the perfect place to find gifts, have some seasonal food & drinks and enjoy the Christmas spirit.

### \* London Winter Wonderland

Until 3 January 2022. Located in Hyde Park, in the heart of London, [Winter Wonderland](#) offers a variety of attractions and entertainment. Closed on Christmas Day. Booking essential.

### Socialising

Make sure that you keep in touch with family and friends during the holiday season. If you want to connect with new people in Oxford, here are some good options:

- ▶ **Christmas Buddies:** ISAT can help you connect with other international students staying in Oxford for Christmas. Find out more on our [ISAT Events page](#).
- ▶ **Friends' International** host a variety of events. Download the "Friends International" app and follow them on Instagram [@friendsinternationaloxford](#).

### \* Winter walks

Oxford is a city where you can easily go for a walk. The [Oxford Walks](#) website gives some route suggestions. We recommend you don't walk through the east side of Port Meadow in winter as it is often flooded.

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*ISAT wishes you a Merry Christmas  
and a happy new year!*

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## ☕ Get a hot drink and slice of cake

Treat yourself! Get a nice drink to warm yourself up. We recommend the following cafés:

- City centre: the Rose Café, the Vaults & Garden, the Art Cafe
- Headington: Il Botanico, Coco Noir
- Cowley: Halley Café, Za'atar Bake
- Jericho & Summertown: Gatineau, Gail's
- Iffley: Silvie

## ✉ Letter or parcel

Take the time to send something back home. You can create a photo card online, write a letter, or buy presents and send them to your family or friends in a parcel. Check out

[Royal Mail's international services](#).

## ✂ Creativity

► The best places to find affordable art and crafts supplies are [Hobbycraft](#), [The Works](#) and [WHSmith](#). You can visit their Oxford stores or order online.

► Make a **Gingerbread house** by following this step-by-step recipe from [BBC Good Food](#). For a dairy-free and gluten-free alternative, check out the [Gluten Free on a Shoestring](#) recipe. Find design inspiration on Google, Instagram or Pinterest.

► You can also make your very **own Christmas tree**. For fun and unusual ideas, head to [Cool Crafts](#).

## 🎁 A very British Christmas

► Immerse yourself in the Christmas spirit with **British books and films**. Here are a few suggestions:

- A Christmas Carol, C. Dickens (book & film)
- The Chronicles of Narnia, C.S. Lewis (book & film)
- Harry Potter (books & films)
- The Man Who Invented Christmas (film)
- The Holiday (film)
- Love Actually (film)
- Letters from Father Christmas, J.R.R. Tolkien (book)
- Hercule Poirot's Christmas, A. Christie (book)

► Another British tradition is to watch the **Queen's speech** on the [BBC](#) at 3.00pm on Christmas Day (25 December).



## 🎭 Pantomime

Definitely not to everybody's taste, pantomimes are nevertheless a British Christmas tradition! Pantomimes are theatre shows loosely based on a well-known fairy tale. They include lots of songs, jokes, exaggerated characters and audience participation. Before you buy a ticket, check what pantomimes are and whether you might enjoy seeing one. This year, the [Oxford Playhouse pantomime](#) is Robin Hood. If you are not able to go to a theatre, [Pantolive](#) offers some online shows.



## 💡 Other ideas

- Volunteer. The [Careers website](#) lists opportunities
- Go to a Board Game café with friends
- Decorate your room to make it cosier
- Do some physical exercise
- Buy yourself some presents
- Eat good food and take the time to cook things you enjoy
- Get enough sleep and look after yourself

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*For more resources and ideas of activities, go to the [ISAT Online Activities web page](#)*

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## FESTIVE INFORMATION

### **i** Christmas Eve: 24 December

Christmas Eve is not a public holiday in the UK, but usually people don't work a full day because they need to travel to their families. Public transport services may finish earlier than usual.

### **i** Christmas Day: 25 December

This is usually a public holiday in the UK but as the 25 December falls on a Saturday this year, **Monday 27 December** will be a bank holiday as a substitute. Most shops, restaurants and places of entertainment will be closed.

### **i** Boxing Day: 26 December

This is usually a public holiday in the UK but as the 26 December falls on a Sunday this year, **Tuesday 28 December** will be a bank holiday as a substitute. Most transport services are usually running, but they often have a reduced service & may start later in the day than normal.

### **i** What do people do on Christmas Day?

Lots of families celebrate Christmas with their own customs and traditions and many Christians start the day by going to church. Typically people exchange gifts, enjoy a festive drink, open crackers, and eat a big Christmas dinner with some or all of the following: roast turkey, roast potatoes, root vegetables, Brussels sprouts, bread sauce, and 'pigs in blankets'. After this, the evening is spent playing a board game or watching Christmas shows on the television. Source: [UKCISA](#).



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **B** Brookes

- **Campus:** campus closure details will be shared in Student News in December.
- **University libraries (all campuses):** reduced opening hours between 17-24 December and 3-16 January. Closed from 2.00pm on 24 December 2021 until 3 January 2022. Access to online electronic resources available throughout the period, see the [Library webpages](#).
- **Brookes Sport (Headington and Harcourt Hill):** limited opening, view full details on [Brookes Sport webpages](#).
- **Catering outlets (all campuses, incl. Co-Op shop in Headington):** closed Saturday 25 December to Sunday 3 January. Only a few outlets open between 17 December and 10 January. See [Food at Brookes](#) for details.
- **University Security:** on campus 24 hours a day when the University is closed. Emergencies: call 01865 483060.
- **BROOKESbus:** buses will be operating on the Vacation Timetable from Monday 20 December to Friday 14 January. See the [BROOKESbus website](#) for more information.

### **i** Health

- **Medical practice:** the on-campus medical centre is closed during the holiday. Go to the Brookes' [Medical Centre](#) webpage to find out about the opening times of the off-campus centre (St Bartholomew's Medical Center).
- **Dentist:** Studental Dental Practice is open 8.00am-6.00pm Monday to Friday apart from: Monday 27 December, Tuesday 28 December and Monday 3 January. More information on [Studental's website](#).

### **t** Supermarkets

Most supermarkets in Oxford are likely to be operating on reduced hours on Christmas Day, Christmas Eve, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (24, 25, 26, 27, 28 & 31 December, 1 January), some may even close. Make sure you plan your grocery shopping in advance. If you want to order food online, check our [Online Shopping page](#) for tips and advice.