



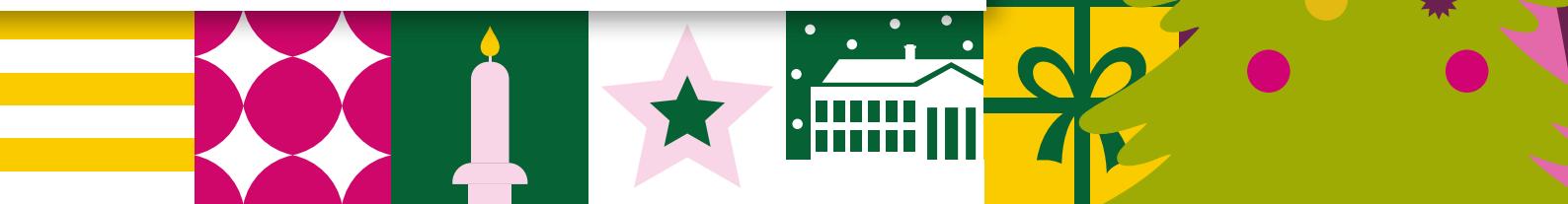
# CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY GUIDE 2025

INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY ISAT



## CHRISTMAS 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 the very special time of year.





# ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

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

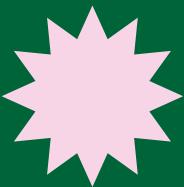
## Blenheim Palace

Many events are organised at Blenheim Palace for the Christmas season. If you missed out on our trip to the Illuminated Light Trail at Blenheim Palace, you can visit their website to see if you can plan your own trip. You'll find a great video of our tour guide Rob providing some useful information and history on Blenheim Palace on our '[Things to do in Oxford](#)' webpage.



## Oxford Christmas Market

Oxford Christmas Market - 22 November - 31 December. Located on Broad Street, the Oxford Christmas Market is the perfect place to find gifts, enjoy some seasonal food and drink and enjoy the Christmas spirit!



## London Winter Wonderland

21 November - 5 January. If you missed out on our trip to Winter Wonderland you may like to arrange your own trip! Located in Hyde Park, in the heart of London, Winter Wonderland offers a variety of attractions and entertainment. Closed on Christmas Day. Booking is essential. You can get the Oxford Tube Bus straight from Headington Campus to Marble Arch.



## Socialising

Make sure you keep in touch with family and friends during the holiday season. If you want to connect with others in Oxford over the festive period, here are some good options.



**ISAT Christmas Buddies:** ISAT can help you connect with other students staying in Oxford over the Christmas period. All you need to do is [complete this form](#) and we can put you in touch with a group of students also spending the holiday season in Oxford. More info on our '[Trips and Social events](#)' webpage.



## **[Friends International](#)**

host a variety of events. Download the "[Friends International](#)" app and follow them on Instagram [@friendsinternationaloxford](#)

## Oxford Park Run

Every Saturday, 9am. A great way to stay healthy throughout the festive period. The Park Run is a free, community event where you can walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate. Takes place at the following locations: Cutteslowe Park, University Parks, Harcourt Hill Campus, Sunnymead and Horspath Sports Ground. Sometimes these events even run on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. You can find out more on the [Park Run webpage](#).



## **Winter Walks**

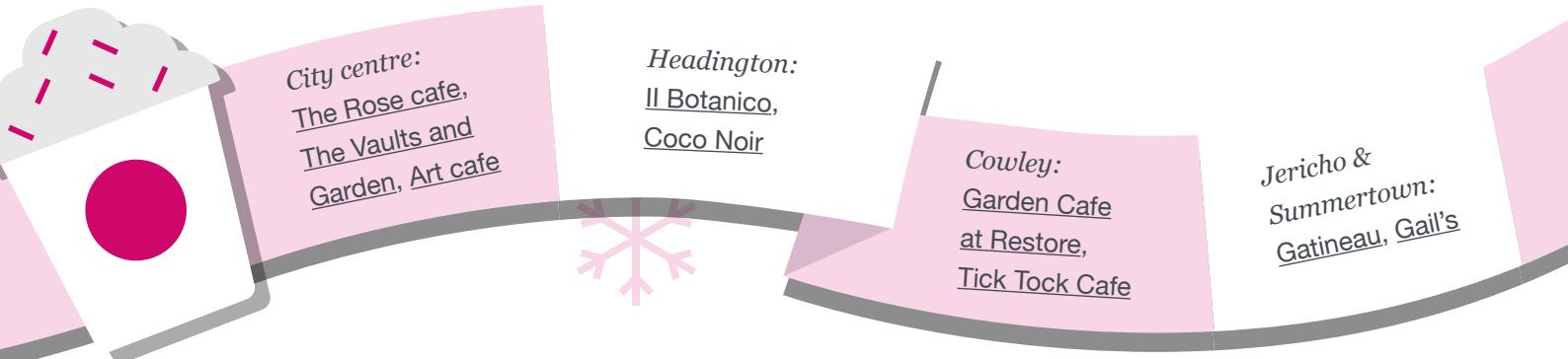
Oxford is a city with lots of different walks to explore! The [Oxford Walks](#) website gives some route suggestions. We recommend you don't walk through the east side of Port Meadow in winter as it is often flooded.





## Get a hot drink and slice of cake

Treat yourself! Get a nice drink to warm yourself up! There are lots of lovely cafes to explore in Oxford. Here's some ideas:



## 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



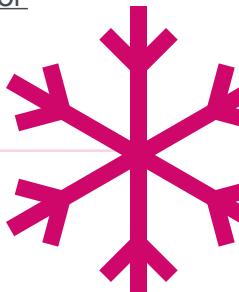
The best places to find affordable art and craft supplies are [Hobbycraft](#), [The Works](#) and [WH Smith \(TG Jones\)](#).



[Make a Gingerbread house](#) by following this step-by-step recipe from BBC Good Food. For a dairy-free and gluten-free gingerbread recipe, [check out this 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](#).

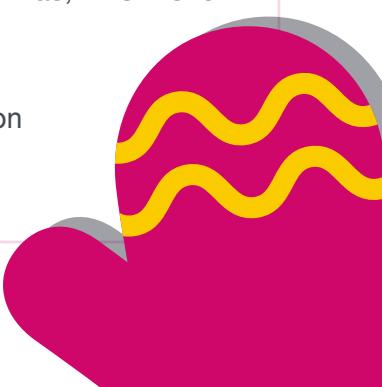


## A very British Christmas

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

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

Another British tradition is to watch the King's Speech on BBC or ITV at 3.00pm on Christmas Day (25 December).

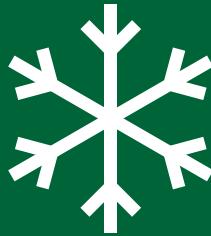




## Pantomime

Definitely not to everybody's taste, pantomimes are nevertheless a British 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 *Dick Whittington*.



## Volunteer this Christmas

There are many charities in Oxford who provide services for those in need over the festive period. Often these charities will look for volunteers to help on Christmas Day to provide Christmas Dinner to people who may be homeless, or in need of support. Below is some information on charities seeking volunteers for Christmas activities:

Oxford Christmas Lunch - 'Attendees include refugees from war, the elderly, those in food poverty or simply those who'd rather not celebrate Christmas alone.' Details on how to volunteer can be found on their [facebook page here](#).

Crisis (Oxford) - 'Every Christmas, local volunteers come together to provide warmth, companionship and vital services to our members (people experiencing homelessness) at one of the toughest times of the year.' You can sign up to volunteer via the '[Crisis Oxford](#)' website [here](#).

The Careers team have put together this list of [Christmas volunteering opportunities](#). Included in the list are volunteering to help the British Heart Foundation, Sobell House Hospice, The Salvation Army, Oxford Winter Night Shelter and more!



# FESTIVE INFORMATION

### 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.

### Christmas Day: 25 December

This is a public holiday in the UK. Most shops, restaurants and places of entertainment will be closed on Christmas Day.

### Boxing Day: 26 December

This is a public holiday in the UK. Most transport services are usually running, but they often have a reduced service and may start later in the day than normal. Retail shops are usually open on Boxing Day and begin their 'Boxing Day sales' where lots of products and items will be heavily discounted.



## Christmas Carols

It is often tradition to attend a Christmas Carol Service or Concert in the UK. Carol services are usually held in a church and everyone sings Christmas Carols (you can choose if you want to join in with the singing or not!). There are lots of concerts or church services across Oxford throughout December and all are welcome to attend. Christ Church in Oxford city centre has a number of Christmas events that you might be interested in. You'll find more information on the [Church webpage here](#). You can also 'Google' Christmas carols in Oxford to find alternative services in Oxford.



## USEFUL CONTACTS

*Brookes Security:* 01865 60 3060

*Medical Enquiries:* 111

*Emergencies:* 999

### If you are feeling down or need a chat:

*Samaritans:* 116123 or

[www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/)

*Student Space:* [studentspace.org.uk/support-services](http://studentspace.org.uk/support-services)

*Safe Haven:* 01865 903037 or more info at

[www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/support-for-you/safe-haven/](http://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/support-for-you/safe-haven/)

## 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, pull crackers and eat a big Christmas dinner with some or all of the following: roast turkey, roast potatoes, root vegetables, brussel sprouts, bread sauce and 'pigs in blankets'. After this, the evening is spent playing board games or watching Christmas shows on the television.

*Source:* [UKCISA](http://UKCISA)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Brookes

- ✿ *Campus:* Access to buildings changes and the Brookes website has [information about campus access and opening times over the festive period](#).
- ✿ *University libraries:* The library will be closed from 25 December 2025 to 5 January 2026. They will close early on 24 December. [You can find further details here](#).
- ✿ *Brookes Sport:* Headington and Harcourt Sport Centres will be closed from 24 December to 27 December and again from 31 December to 2 January 2026.
- ✿ *Catering outlets:* Many of the catering outlets across all campuses will have varied opening hours over the vacation period. [The Catering webpage has full details](#).
- ✿ *Brookes Security:* If you need immediate assistance on or around campus, please contact Oxford Brookes Security Services via its new number of 01865 60 3060. This number is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with [further information available on the Security webpages](#).

### Other Services

- ✿ Brookes Medical Centre will be closed during the holiday. If you need medical assistance you should call 111 for advice or 999 in an emergency.
- ✿ Most supermarkets are likely to be operating on reduced hours on Public Holidays, some may even close. Make sure you plan your grocery shopping in advance. If you want to order food online, [check out Shopping page](#) for tips and advice on where to order from.

