

Is it ever OK to charge family for Christmas lunch? (If so, how much?)

Hosting Christmas lunch for friends and family can be expensive, so could **charging** them for the meal be a way to cope?

Before you read the complete article, look at this vocabulary and find it in the text:

to charge: to demand a price for a service or a product

to shell out: to spend a lot of money

nibbles: small snacks, finger food

to cope: to be able to handle a lot of pressure

in keeping with: in accordance with, harmonious with

touchy: delicate, sensitive

staggered: very surprised, shocked

though: however

fizz: champagne (colloquial)

stuffing: the ingredients used to fill a turkey

This time of year can be pricy to say the least. There are presents to buy, Christmas outings and parties to **shell out** for, and on top of that, there's the traditional family meal.

The cost of festive **nibbles**, the turkey, pudding and alcohol all add up, and that's before you account for the stress and extra work involved in cooking such a large meal. So who should host Christmas lunch or dinner, and could charging guests for their meal be one way to **cope**?

When a user on an online forum said her mother-in-law had decided to charge her family £17-a-head to attend this year's Christmas dinner, it sparked a mixed response. Some thought it was fair enough given the cost, while others said it simply wasn't **in keeping with** the season's spirit of togetherness and generosity.

Asking friends or family to contribute financially at Christmas is a **touchy** topic. When the BBC asked people on social media what they thought of the idea, most were firmly opposed.

"**Staggered**", "the most absurd holiday thing I've ever heard of" and "a great way to reduce the number of people you have to cook for to zero" were some of the responses.

There's no doubt that some people do do it, **though**.

Kimberly says, "We always ask the host to do the shopping and let us know what the cost per head is. Given the spirit of Christmas I think it would be rather horrible of us to do anything other than share the cost out".

Myles says his mum charges the whole family £10-a-head and asks them to bring their own vegetables and **gravy**. "I personally don't mind paying because service includes washing up, but it's divided the family for many years."

Daniella, on the other hand was shocked when her mother-in-law charged £40-a-head a few years ago, but allowed her then nine-year-old son to eat for free.

"We did pay it, but we haven't been to theirs for dinner since and don't think we will," she says. Karen Barnes, editor of monthly food magazine Delicious, agrees, saying asking people to pay would "feel wrong somehow". She points out that the standard response when you're invited to any kind of gathering is to ask if there's anything you can bring. "That's the perfect opportunity to say yes," she says. "My suggestion would be to ask people if they'd be happy to bring something, like the **fizz** to start the meal or perhaps the **stuffing** and a pudding. "That's what we do in our family - everyone makes a practical (rather than a monetary) contribution and it works really well."

Adapted from www.bbc.com by ECP coach Alison Keable

Let's chat about that!

Write your opinions in an email and send them to your ECP coach!

- Do you celebrate Christmas with a family meal?
- When was the last time you cooked for a group of people?
- What do you think of this idea of asking family to pay?
- Have you ever shared the cost of a meal in this way?
- Why do some people find this idea so upsetting?
- How do you think family meals like these could be improved?

Seasons Greetings

from English Coaching Projects!

The last classes in 2018 will be on Friday 21st December and the first classes in 2019 will be on Monday 7th January.

Have a great Christmas and see you in the New Year!



Do you know what this object is? When do you use it? How do you use it? What is inside it? What do you do with what is inside? Ask your ECP coach if you don't know the answers!



LIVE!English presents:

COFFEE SATURDAYS!



Come and socialise in English!

Next meeting: January 12th

Time: 11:00 to 12:30
Place: Panadería Bertiz, C/Francia
Price: Just bring enough for a cup of coffee!
Friends welcome!
WhatsApp Alison for more details on:
608 42 64 92



CINEMA NIGHTS!

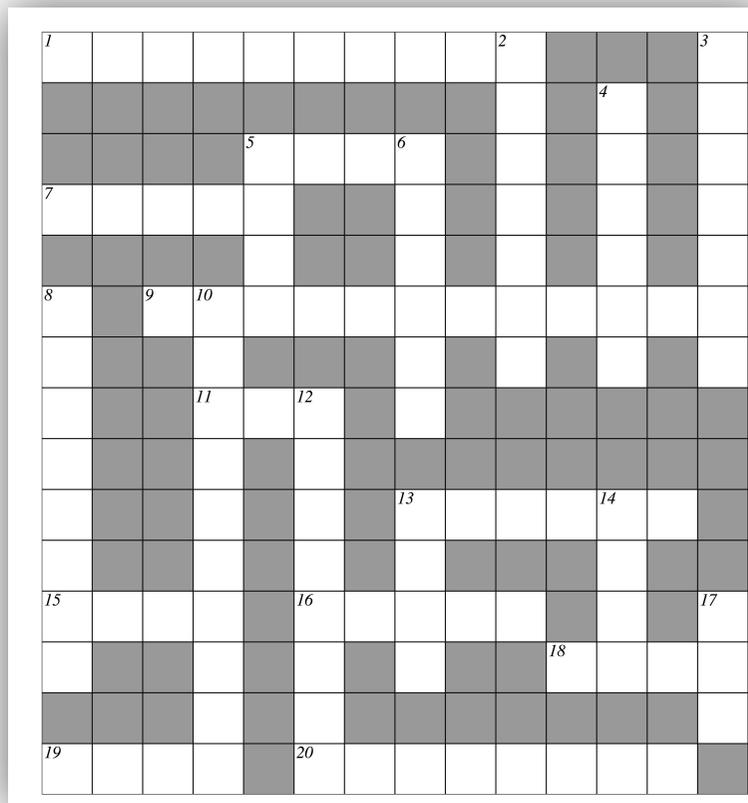
Come and socialise in English!

Next film: January 25th

Time: 19:30 to 21:30
Place: ECP Hub (C/San Ignacio de Loyola 15)
Price: Free! **Friends welcome!**
WhatsApp John for more details on:
657 73 13 54

Christmas Crossword

Can you complete it?



Across

1. He brings children their presents on Christmas Day.
5. It's cold and white.
7. A Christmas carol: Silent _____.
9. The day before Christmas Day
11. Santa Claus' favourite colour
13. Some people go there to pray and sing.
15. You put presents under it.
16. _____ Christmas!
18. You can ring this to make a sound.
19. Happy New _____!
20. What kind of animal is Rudolph?

Down

2. Something you make with snow.
3. Santa Claus enters a house through the _____.
4. Many people eat this bird on Christmas Day.
5. Some people put one at the top of the tree.
6. What season is Christmas in?
8. Children receive these on Christmas Day.
10. How often does Santa Claus work?
12. What month is Christmas in?
13. You might send one at Christmas.
14. One of many desserts.
17. Santa Claus isn't young. He's _____.

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