

Ah, Christmas! - the time of year when your bank account shrinks, your social calendar explodes, and your family dynamics resemble a poorly scripted soap opera. As we navigate this festive minefield of shopping, social gatherings, and feasting, it's common to feel a little frazzled.

In fact, research has found that the holiday season is one of the six most stressful life events we go through, in the same category as moving house and divorce.ⁱ

But it does not have to be - before you let the silly season get the better of you, here are some ways to not just survive, but thrive, to make it through the festive chaos and bring in 2025 feeling energised and on track to reaching your goals.

Get organised

Let's face it, the silly season is a whirlwind. Between work parties, family catch-ups, and obligatory gatherings with distant relatives you only see once a year, it's enough to make anyone want to retreat to a deserted island.

However, rather than running off to Bora Bora, if you want to survive the silly season relatively unscathed, planning ahead is a must. With the social calendar filling up quicker than you can say cheers, it becomes easy to overcommit and leave yourself feeling a little stretched. Rather than maintaining a constant schedule of parties and social engagements, why not learn the power of saying 'no'. Choose the events you really want to attend and think about each invitation before you send that RSVP. Remember to allow for some guilt-free 'down time' amongst all the festivities.

Shopping shenanigans

Shopping during the silly season can be akin to a scene from an action movie—chaotic, frenzied, and with a distinct chance of an all-in brawl.

Channel your inner Santa Claus and make a list. And yes, check it twice! A good list keeps you focused and reduces the chances of impulse buys—like that life-sized inflatable Santa that seemed like a good idea at the time. (Spoiler alert: it wasn't.)

Consider shopping online, too. You can sip your coffee in your pyjamas while avoiding the chaos of the shops. Just remember: the delivery cut-off dates are real! Don't be the person frantically searching for gifts at 9 PM on Christmas Eve.

The present predicament

Let's talk presents. It's lovely to give and receive gifts, but when did we all agree that every adult needs a new mug or another pair of socks?

To combat the gift-giving madness, consider doing a Secret Santa among adults. Set a reasonable budget and unleash your creativity. Who doesn't want a mysterious gift that could range from a novelty toilet brush to a box of chocolates?

Navigating the family dynamics

Family gatherings can be a delightful mix of love, laughter, and the occasional argument that would make for great reality TV. You know the drill—everyone has an opinion, and even the Christmas ham can become a hot topic of debate.

Before the big day, set some ground rules. No politics, no discussing that relative's questionable life choices, and absolutely no karaoke unless everyone is fully prepared to participate. If tensions start to rise, a little humour can go a long way. Embrace the absurdity of it all. If Uncle Bob starts arguing about the best way to cook prawns, counter with a story about how Auntie Sheila once tried to deep-fry a turkey—because that's a Christmas classic in its own right.

Don't try to do it all

If you're hosting this year, congratulations! You're officially in charge of managing the chaos. But you don't have to shoulder the entire load.

Encourage those who are coming to bring their 'special' dish. Not only does it lighten your load, but it also allows everyone to show off their culinary skills (or lack thereof). Plus, you might discover that Aunt Margaret's "special" potato salad is actually a hidden gem—just don't ask what's in it.

Survive and thrive

At the end of the day embrace the chaos, lean into the hilarity of when things don't go to plan, don't take it all too seriously and be prepared to step back a little when you need a break from all the festivities.

Here's to a joyful festive season filled with laughter and the wonderful chaos that is Christmas. We'll catch you on the other side. Cheers!

i [Christmas stress | Relationships Australia](#)