

## RELAXNOMIKS December 25, 2024

Our gift to you

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Christmas Edition

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Note from the Publisher

Dear Reader,

The countdown to 2025 has begun, less than 10 days before the new year starts. As the holiday season unfolds, familiar patterns in Nigeria take center stage. From the naira's typical December appreciation to the vibrant festive hustle and bustle, these enduring trends define the Nigerian Christmas we all know and love.

True to its seasonal pattern, the naira has appreciated by 6.6% (parallel market) in December, strengthening to as high as ₦1,620/\$ from ₦1,727/\$ in November. However, unlike the previous December, this year's gains are not primarily driven by the usual surge in diaspora remittances. Instead, the recent introduction of the Electronic Foreign Exchange Matching System (EFEMS) and sales of foreign exchange (\$25,000 weekly) to BDCs by the CBN have played a pivotal role in stabilizing the currency.

Perhaps the most remarkable change this year is the absence of the dreaded fuel queues. With increased domestic oil production and improved supply from the Dangote and Port Harcourt refineries, fuel scarcity—a familiar feature in past years—has been largely averted. In November 2024, Nigeria's oil output rose by 12%, reaching 1.49 million barrels per day compared to 1.33 million barrels per day in October.

While these developments are a welcomed relief, they have yet to significantly impact the soaring cost of living. The latest inflation numbers for November 2024 (34.6%) reflect FDC's projection of heightened inflationary pressures, driven by rising food prices. The average cost of cooking a pot of jollof rice increased by 5.1% to ₩21,300 in September 2024, compared to ₩20,274 in June.

As we come together with family and friends during this festive season, let's set aside the economic challenges and focus on the joy of the season. Celebrate the little things—being surrounded by loved ones, creating new memories, and cherishing the moments that matter most. Looking for a way to start creating new memories with your loved ones this Christmas? The puzzle section in this edition of the Relaxnomiks is one of the best ways to start.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Digmarch J. Repane

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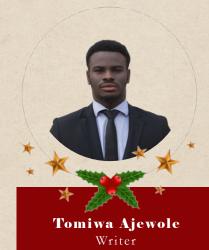


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A Nostalgic Christmas



The Christmas season is a time of nostalgia, as millions around the world partake in traditions that stir memories of the past. With each passing year, excitement grows as these cultural rituals are lovingly repeated, symbolizing a cherished way of life.

Christmas then was characterized by elaborate feasts and communal gatherings that often stretched over several days. These celebrations fostered a deep sense of unity and joy among participants, creating lasting bonds.<sup>1</sup> Christmas today is primarily focused family gatherings and personal on celebrations, rather than communal festivities. It has also become heavily commercialized, with extensive marketing campaigns centered around gift-giving.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the tradition of shopping for presents has taken center stage, often overshadowing the holiday's original religious significance.

Christmas, as we know it is rich with memories, and imbued with a unique sense of stillness, as if the world slows down. The magic of Christmas and its accompanying warmth are so profound that it feels as though everyone becomes part of the celebration. This sense of the season is always intertwined with the anticipation of a holiday break, indulgent meals, dance performances, Santa visits, plays, parties, and the joy of spending time with loved ones, whether through visits or receiving guests. It is a time when shared experiences unite us, creating a sense of belonging and connection that lasts well beyond the season itself.

1. The History of Christmas Traditions - News - University of Liverpool https://news. liverpool.ac.uk/2023/12/21/the-history-of-christmas-traditions/

2. How Christmas has evolved over centuries - https://www.nationalgeographic. com/history/article/how-christmas-has-evolved-over-centuries



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Classical Christmas Music

It's that time of the year again—when Christmas decorations fill the streets, children eagerly await Santa Claus to bring gifts, and we spend cherished moments with our loved ones while sharing generously with those in need.

It's a season to unwind, laugh, and enjoy the magic of Christmas carols that keep the holiday spirit alive in our hearts.

Here are four timeless classical Christmas pieces to brighten your holiday season:

Hallelujah by George Frideric Handel: From Handel's famous oratorio Messiah (1741), the "Hallelujah Chorus" is a powerful, uplifting piece celebrating Christ's reign. It's often performed during Christmas and Easter, with its iconic "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" refrain. The music is grand, with soaring harmonies and orchestral brilliance, symbolizing joy and divine majesty.



**Silent Night by Franz Xaver Gruber:** Composed in 1818, this beloved carol captures the peace and serenity of Christmas night. Originally written for guitar and choir, it conveys the gentle beauty of the Nativity scene. Its simple melody and touching lyrics make it a timeless favorite worldwide.

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing by Felix Mendelssohn:** In 1855, William H. Cummings adapted Mendelssohn's melody to fit Charles Wesley's lyrics. The song celebrates the angelic announcement of Christ's birth, combining theological depth with a majestic and jubilant tune that embodies the Christmas spirit.

Holy Night by Adolphe Adam: First composed in 1847, this song is a dramatic and emotional tribute to the birth of Christ. Its powerful crescendos and heartfelt lyrics make it a favorite for solo performances. The song reflects themes of faith, hope, and redemption with a melody that captivates listeners.

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A Tale as Ald as Time: The Heart of Christmas Traditions

Much like the spirit of Christmas, some traditions have been passed down through generations, illuminating hearts and homes across the globe. As we gather around twinkling lights and decorated trees, it's essential to understand the origins and meanings behind these cherished customs.

#### Caroling: songs of joy and reflection

Christmas caroling originated in pre-Christian winter solstice celebrations when people sang songs to welcome longer days. As Christianity spread, these songs were adapted into hymns celebrating Christ's birth. Caroling became a means for communities to unite during the festive season and spread joy through music. Today, carolers can be heard singing traditional songs door-to-door or at community events, embodying the spirit of unity and celebration that defines Christmas.

#### Gift-Giving: a tradition rooted in generosity

The act of gift-giving during Christmas is steeped in various historical practices. Initially tied to pagan winter solstice celebrations, it later became associated with Christian narratives—most notably the gifts presented by the Magi to the infant Jesus. The commercialization of Christmas has amplified this tradition, transforming it into a hallmark of holiday celebrations worldwide. In many cultures today, children eagerly anticipate exchanging gifts to celebrate joy and kindness. This tradition serves as a reminder that, at its heart, Christmas is about sharing love and compassion with others.

#### Santa Claus: from Saint Nicholas to global icon

Santa Claus, perhaps the most recognizable figure of Christmas, has a rich history rooted in generosity and kindness. His origins can be traced back to Saint Nicholas, a 4th-century bishop known for his secret gift-giving and compassion for the poor. Over centuries, stories of Saint Nicholas evolved, merging with various cultural influences to create the jolly figure we know today (Santa Claus). The modern image of Santa Claus was popularized in the 19th century through literature and illustrations, notably Clement Clarke Moore's poem "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" and Thomas Nast's drawings.

Christmas Lymbols and Their Meanings

It's that time of year again—Christmas. Homes, schools, offices, churches, and public spaces are beautifully decorated with trees adorned with ornaments. While many of these ornaments hold biblical symbolism, some carry other meanings.

**Stars:** The stars represent the bright star that illuminated Bethlehem on the night of Jesus' birth, guiding the three wisemen to His birthplace.

Here are some of the ornaments and what they symbolize.



**Tree:** The green tree, thriving amid winter's barrenness, symbolizes hope, new life, and the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ.





Holly: This is a small greenish flower, adorned with thorns and berries, and incorporated into wreaths. It symbolizes protection and good fortune.

**Ribbons:** These symbols represent unity, binding brethren in love and brotherhood, following Christ's example of mutual care and support.



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**Candy cane:** Resembling a shepherd's staff, it symbolizes the shepherds who sought Jesus after His birth and reflects Jesus Himself, known as the Good Shepherd.



**Gifts:** Exchanging gifts at Christmas symbolizes the gold, frankincense, and myrrh offered by the three wise men to Jesus at His birth, reflecting love and generosity among loved ones.



Wreath: The wreath, often hung on doors, symbolizes the crown of thorns worn by Jesus during His crucifixion and represents the promise of eternal life. It represents the crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head during His crucifixion.

**Stockings:** The tradition of hanging stockings originates from Saint Nicholas Claus, who helped a poor man by secretly placing bags of gold in his daughters' stockings, enabling them to marry. Since then, children hang stockings on Christmas Eve, hoping Santa will give them gifts.



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Janta's Evolution: Jrom Jaint Nick to Coca-Cola's Jolly Jcon

Christmas wouldn't be the same without Santa Claus, the jolly figure who spreads joy and gifts to children worldwide. But how did a 4th-century bishop transform into the modern icon of holiday cheer? Long before the red suit and sleigh, Saint Nicholas, a bishop in Myra (modern-day Turkey), was renowned for his generosity and secret giftgiving. In the Middle Ages, Saint Nicholas' feast day on December 6th became a time for gift-giving. His depictions ranged from a tall, somber figure with a book of accounts to a more disciplinary character on horseback.

Santa's look wasn't always consistent. As his legend grew, so did its variations. Over centuries, it merged with other traditions like the Dutch Sinterklaas and the British Father Christmas. It culminated in the plump, jolly figure who traveled on a magical sleigh, delivering gifts to children described in the 1823 poem 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. In the 1930s, Coca-Cola commissioned artist Haddon Sundblom to create a fresh depiction of Santa for their Christmas advertising. Inspired by Moore's poem, Sundblom crafted a warm, friendly Santa dressed in red and white—a color scheme coincidentally matching Coca-Cola's branding. Sundblom's Santa, with its rosy cheeks, twinkling eyes, and hearty laughter, resonated deeply with audiences and became the definitive image of Santa Claus worldwide.

While Coca-Cola did not invent Santa Claus, they undeniably solidified his modern image, turning him into an enduring symbol of Christmas. Today, Santa's iconic presence spans cultures, appearing on cards, in films, and at global holiday events. His evolution reflects the enduring spirit of Christmas—a time for generosity, joy, and togetherness. Whether traced back to a kind bishop or celebrated through a jolly, red-suited figure, Santa Claus embodies the magic and wonder of the holiday season.



Events to Go to This Christmas in Lagos

Christmas is here again, the season to show love, joy, care, kindness, and togetherness, marked by various traditions and customs through gift exchanges, season greetings, music and carols, decorations, feasting, and picnics. In Nigeria, Lagos is one place where you can enjoy your Christmas. Here are a few things to try as you tour Lagos this Christmas. Remember, beware of traffic!







**Visit parks:** Lagos has numerous parks, such as Jakande Park in Ikeja, Muri Okunola Park in Victoria Island, Ndubisi Kanu Park in Oregun, and Lufasi Park in Lekki, where you can have fun with family and friends. These parks have many activities to enjoy, such as Christmas lights-up, beautiful, well-decorated trees, and a stage for live performances.

**Rufus and Bee:** This is situated in Lekki around the neighborhood of Okunde Bluewater. It is a place for gaming and other fun activities like bowling, shooting, and dancing.

**Attend a Christmas Concert/Carol:** Enjoy music and performances at various concerts and carols. Lekki Leisure offers holiday-themed events, a Christmas market, caroling, and a visit from Santa Claus.

**Visit the Beach:** Spend time at beaches like Bar Beach and Takwa Bay Beach on Victoria Island, as well as activities like horse riding, water sports (like swimming and sunbathing), and picnics.

**Muson Centre:** It's a world-class concert hall and music museum with festive events and activities situated in Onikan, Victoria Island.

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**Enjoy a boat cruise on the Lagos Lagoon:** Go on a boat ride adventure and explore the local water.

**Lekki Conservation Centre:** A top spot for nature lovers and bird enthusiasts, perfect for a nature walk or picnic. This place has a long bridge and many opportunities to see a variety of pants and animals.



**Eko Hotel:** Offers stunning views, elegant rooms, awardwinning restaurants, and festive activities.

**Upbeat Center:** Features the largest trampoline center in West Africa. It is located in Lekki.

Visit the Cinema to See a Movie: Take a break and watch Christmas specials at the cinema.

So, if you are seeking some festive excitement this Christmas, make sure you explore the places listed above and have a fantastic time.<sup>3,4</sup>

3. Mary Afolarin .2022. "Top 10 Places to Celebrate Christmas in Lagos". https://rnn.ng/places-to-celebrate-christmas-inlagos/

4. Precious Mpamugo .2024. "Christmas in Lagos: 10 Interesting Things to Do". https://blog.vectatravels.com/christmasin-lagos-10-interesting-things-to-do/

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5 Places to Spend Christmas Around the World

The story of Christmas reminds us of journeys and new connections. The wise men and shepherds left their homes to meet strangers, discovering joy and meaning along the way. This Christmas, why not embrace that spirit of adventure? Whether you travel alone or with others, exploring new destinations can offer unexpected moments of connection and wonder, reminding us that the magic of Christmas extends beyond familiar walls.

#### 1. Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland

Considered the "Official Hometown of Santa Claus," Rovaniemi in Lapland is where Christmas dreams come alive. Nestled above the Arctic Circle, it offers snow-covered landscapes, cozy cabins, and enchanting sleigh rides. Visit Santa Claus Village, meet Santa in person, and indulge in Finnish Christmas traditions. The auroras dancing across the sky here are nothing short of magical, adding an ethereal touch to your yuletide adventure.

#### 2. Atlixco, Mexico

A hidden gem in Mexico, Atlixco transforms into a radiant wonderland during Christmas with its "Villa Iluminada" festival. The town's cobblestone streets are adorned with millions of lights, creating mesmerizing pathways. With its lively atmosphere, delicious Mexican Christmas dishes, and traditional Posada processions, Atlixco is perfect for those seeking a vibrant yet heartwarming holiday experience.

#### 3. Reykjavik, Iceland

Reykjavik offers a unique Christmas experience steeped in Icelandic folklore. Visit geothermal spas, enjoy festive buffets featuring local seafood and lamb, and participate in traditional Yule celebrations. The wintry landscapes and quirky traditions, like the 13 Yule Lads, make Reykjavik an adventurous yet culturally rich destination.

#### 4. Nuremberg, Germany

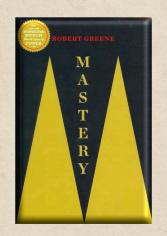
Nuremberg's Christkindlesmarkt is one of the most famous Christmas markets in the world, offering handmade ornaments, lebkuchen (gingerbread), and glühwein (mulled wine). Set against the historic backdrop of medieval architecture, the market's charm is unmatched, offering visitors an authentic and atmospheric Christmas experience.

#### 5. Strasbourg, France

Known as the "Capital of Christmas," Strasbourg boasts one of Europe's oldest Christmas markets, dating back to 1570. Stroll through timber-framed houses adorned with twinkling lights, savor Alsatian delicacies, and shop for handmade crafts. Strasbourg's blend of French and German cultures makes it a unique and enchanting holiday destination.

fight Reads as You Ease into 2025

Focusing on the future with a positive mindset is key. Despite recent economic challenges, having a plan—whether perfect or imperfect—is better than having no plan at all. If you love to read, learn, and grow, here are three books that will prepare you for the adventures of 2025.



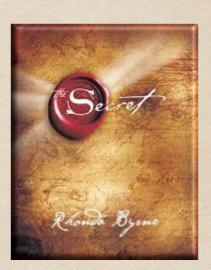
#### **Mastery by Robert Greene**

Many people struggle to believe they are unique in a world of 8.2 billion people. But the truth is, no one else has experienced life like you. These experiences shape your unique knowledge, which is central to the success of history's greatest individuals who brought novel ideas to life. Mastery outlines how to become an expert by committing to deliberate practice and lifelong learning. Greene uses historical figures to show that mastery is earned, not innate. It's ideal for anyone looking to level up their skills and unlock their full potential.

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#### The Secret by Rhonda Byrne

A wise person once said, "Your attitude to life is all you need to live a great life." The reason this rings true is that evidence shows that when you feel good, problems seem more solvable. The brain is naturally more receptive to critical and creative thinking under the right conditions. It's no wonder that geniuses often have their "eureka" moments when simply living. The Secret emphasizes the power of positive thinking and the Law of Attraction, showing how focusing on positive thoughts can improve mental health, increase motivation, and build resilience. It encourages a mindset shift toward solutions rather than problems. A powerful read for anyone seeking motivation to manifest their dreams.



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#### Zero to One by Peter Thiel

Our value in life is often linked to the service we provide to others. Each of us contributes to the well-being of another human in whatever work we do. Cultivating and building our skills to solve human problems is a foolproof way to increase our value and experience in life, tangibly and intangibly. Zero to One explores how to create groundbreaking businesses that go beyond competition, focusing on building something unique and valuable. Thiel encourages thinking contrarily and shaping the future through innovation. Perfect for entrepreneurs and anyone passionate about transformative ideas.

#### Looking Ahead to 2025

2025 is a year full of potential, and the future can only get brighter with the innovation and growth we each contribute. Here's to living life fully—this holiday season and beyond.

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What's on Your Plate? Christmas Jood Trends for 2024

If there's one thing Nigerians know how to do, it's celebrating with delicious food. Christmas in Nigeria isn't just about the gifts under the tree or the decorations that light up the streets. It's about the flavours that fill the air, the clinking of plates, and the shared moments of joy over delicious meals. This is the season when kitchens buzz with activity, pots brim with fragrant jollof rice, and grills sizzle with suya and asun. Food, undeniably, is the ultimate love language of Christmas in Nigeria, uniting families, friends, and even neighbors around hearty feasts. In the spirit of this festive togetherness, we bring food options embodying the season's spirit.



**Buffet extravaganza:** Buffets are the goto for large Nigerian Christmas gatherings, offering something for everyone. It's the perfect way to keep the festive energy alive. The 2024 trend is all about blending tradition with innovation. Classic dishes like smoky jollof rice, fried rice, peppered goat meat, and spicy grilled chicken take center stage, complemented by assorted soups like egusi, ogbono, and vegetable soup served with pounded yam or semo. A buffet satisfies palates and encourages mingling as everyone moves around to build their perfect plate.

Themed platters: Platters are perfect for intimate family dinners or as starters in larger parties. Nothing wows guests like a beautifully arranged grazing board. Some themed platters ideas include:

**Small chops:** Featuring a mix of puff-puff, samosas, spring rolls, and spicy chicken wings.

**Grilled treats:** Suya kebabs (beef, chicken, or fish) and boli (grilled plantain) topped with spicy pepper sauce.

**Seafood assortments:** Prawns, crab legs, and peppered snails, all arranged with colorful garnishes.

For an extra touch, combine kebabs, roasted plantain, fried yam sticks, cubes, and spicy dipping sauce on a large tray, creating an edible centerpiece that's as delightful to the eyes as it is to the palate. CHRISTMAS

What's on Your Plate? Christmas Jood Trends for 2024

**Potluck of love:** Potluck is all about sharing and caring. Why stress over hosting solo? Invite friends and family to bring their signature dish to the feast while you provide the space and a few key staples like rice or drinks. Auntie's smoky jollof, cousin's signature grilled turkey, grandma with her secret-of-the-ages stew and that neighbor's legendary small chops— everyone brings a piece of their kitchen! This not only cuts costs but also brings a variety of dishes to your table without extra effort. Togetherness has never tasted so good.

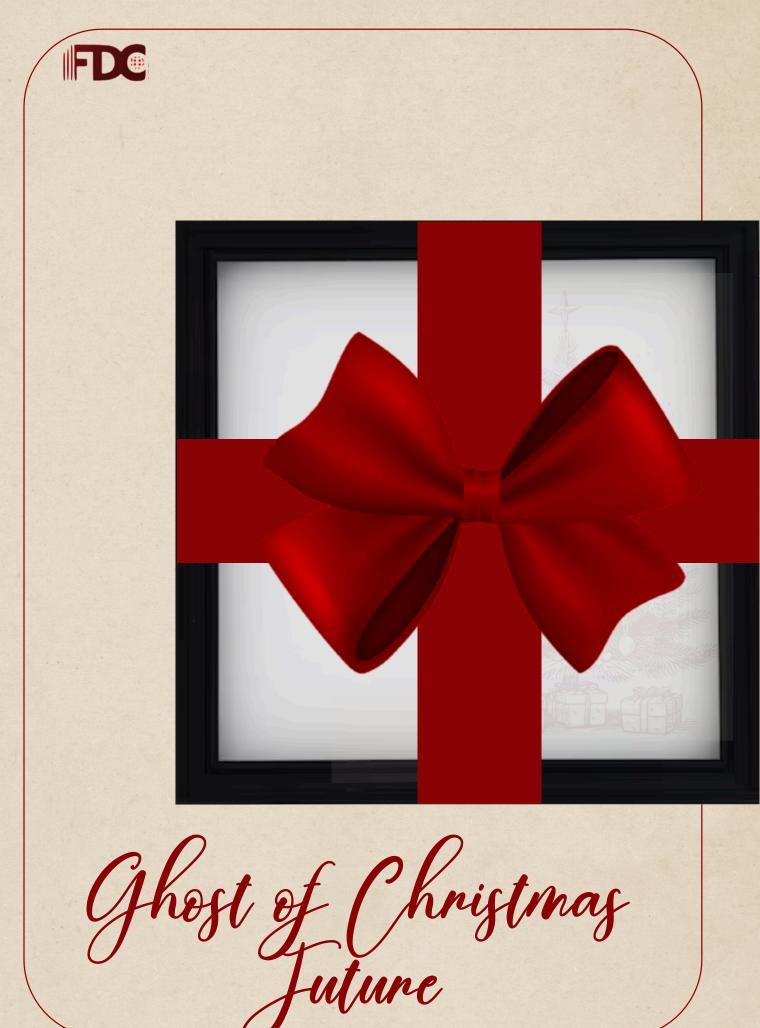
**Fruit juice bar:** Whether you're catching up on the latest gist or toasting to health and happiness, the fruit juice bar sets the tone for meaningful conversations and festive vibes. Kickstart your Christmas brunch with a colorful lineup of refreshing

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juices. The options are endless, from zobo with pineapple infusions to watermelon coolers, citrus cocktails, smoothies, mocktails and milkshakes.

**Dessert corner for connections:** Desserts are a simple way to end a meal on a sweet note, offering a variety of flavors and textures to satisfy different preferences. Ice cream, cakes, and sugary snacks aren't just for kids. Adults, let's own this space for sweet bonding moments over cupcakes or sugar-dusted doughnuts. Explore other Nigerian options like chocolate-dipped kokoro and fried plantain chips.

This season is all about coming together, one delicious bite at a time and memories that linger long after the plates are empty.



New Year, New Style: efreshing Your Wardrobe Hithout Breaking the Bank

#### **Declutter Your Closet**

Start by removing everything from your closet and thoroughly assessing each piece. Ensure that the clothes fit well and are still wearable. Get rid of items that are left unworn and gather dust. Items in good condition can be donated, given to friends, sold, or recycled. If they're beyond repair, dispose of them responsibly.

#### Create a Wants and Needs List

Write down a list of clothing items you want and need. Focus on balancing timeless wardrobe staples with trendy pieces to create a versatile collection.

#### Set a Budget

Establish a budget before shopping. Knowing your spending limit helps you avoid overspending and stay financially mindful.

#### **Consider Thrifting**

Thrifting offers budget-friendly options without sacrificing quality. While shopping, pay attention to price tags, as thrift stores may price items based on brand value.

#### **Build a Capsule Wardrobe**

Typically, a capsule wardrobe features around 30 adaptable items that work well together for various looks. This approach simplifies your style choices, reduces decision fatigue, and ensures you always look polished.

#### Sell Unneeded Items

Sell items you no longer wear to stay within your budget. If the clothing is in excellent condition, reselling is a great way to recycle and declutter your wardrobe.

#### **Maintain Your Clothing**

Preserve the longevity of your wardrobe by giving your clothes the attention they need. Treat your accessories like purses with care, mend any damaged items such as hemming pants, and wash clothes in the correct settings. To preserve fabric quality, consider washing in cold water and airdrying whenever possible.<sup>5</sup>

5. Athena Lent. 2023. "11 ways to improve your wardrobe without breaking the bank". Nasdaq. https://www. nasdaq.com/articles/11-ways-to-improve-your-wardrobe-without-breaking-the-bank

4 Ways to Jinancially Recover from Post-Holiday Spending

Culled from Inbetween<sup>6</sup>

How much did you plan on spending this holiday season? How much did you actually spend?

**Set realistic financial goals.** I always say that budgeting and debt repayment is like a diet: if you're too restrictive, or set unrealistic financial goals, you're likely to fail. Establish SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) goals to make your plan more achievable, and bite-sized so it's not so overwhelming.

**Prioritize essential expenses and distinguish between essential and non-essential expenses.** Prioritize necessities like housing, utilities, groceries, gas, and debt repayments. See if there are other areas (such as eating out, online shopping or subscriptions) where you can cut back – even if the cutback is only temporary.

**Track your spending and be sure to do it regularly.** Monitor where exactly your money is coming from and where it's going to. This helps ensure that your spending habits are in line with your budget. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but just having a space to check in on your money is important.

**Review and adjust your budget as often as needed.** Life happens, and circumstances change, and so should your budget. Regularly review and adjust your budget to reflect changes in income, expenses, or financial goals. This helps you make sure you're on track. Don't be scared to adjust it as many times as it takes to make your finances work for you.

Essentially, take a break from spending. Consider a no-spending month for this first month or two. Also, reconsider your expenses to see if there is anything that you can cut back on or eliminate from your non-essentials. Most importantly, once you have a plan to regain financial freedom from your holiday overspending, do not deviate as this will only cause delays.

6. https://inbetween.ca/5-ways-to-financially-recover-from-post-holiday-spending/







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