



DECORATE YOUR DINING AREA

THINKING ABOUT SPRUCING UP YOUR DINING AREA THIS CHRISTMAS?

ICE SKATING RINKS
AROUND THE UK WINTER
WONDERLANDS ARE FORMING

12 DAYS OF FITNESS
GET ON BOARDS WITH 12
DAYS OF FITNESS THIS YEAR

MULLED WINE
TRY OUT A DIFFERENT WINE
RECIPE THIS CHRISTMAS

ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX
THE FINAL RACE OF THE
FORMULA ONE SEASON

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December encourages several reasons for optimism in the housing sector

While the UK property market faces economic challenges, there are reasons for optimism as 2024 ends. Lower interest rates, rising demand for energy-efficient homes, a strong rental sector, supportive government programs, robust new construction, and economic resilience all contribute to a positive outlook. Buyers, sellers, and investors should be cautious but aware of abundant opportunities.

BOE RATE CUT WILL STIMULATE THE MARKET

The Bank of England's base rate was reduced to 4.75% on 7th November, the second cut this year. This rate reduction may also boost buyer confidence by lowering monthly outgoings, making property investment more appealing. Furthermore, it may generate upward momentum in property values, as increased demand from a larger pool of buyers typically supports price growth.

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION!

It's Chriiiiiistmaaaaaaaas! OK, well, in a few weeks' time at least. But getting into the festive mood can no longer be frowned upon since we are now officially in the glorious month of December.

In the vein of Christmas, pages 4&5 explore all the best ice skate rinks and Christmas markets to visit around the country this month, while on pages 6&7 we look at designing the best festive decorations for the front garden as well as transforming your dining room into a Christmas haven.

Speaking of dining, pages 12&13 will whet appetites with turkey alternatives for Christmas dinner along with some unique and exciting mulled wine recipes.

On the lead up to indulging in

such treats, you may want to think about your fitness, and on pages 8&9 we provide tips and guidance as to how best to combine the Christmas spirit with your fitness goals.

Pages 2&3 explore the abundance of positive news surrounding the property industry this month, while on pages 10&11 we preview the best TV shows and movies coming to the screen within the next four weeks. More previews, but in the form of sport, feature on pages 14&15 including the darts world championships.

So, take a sip of your hot buttered rum or eggnog, take a spot next to the fireplace, and enjoy this month's magazine!

Daniel Evans
Editor

PROPERTY MARKET IN DECEMBER

INCREASED DEMAND FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES

As winter approaches, energy-efficient homes are in high demand. With energy costs a top concern, buyers are prioritising properties with better insulation, modern heating systems, and higher EPC ratings. Sellers investing in energy-efficient upgrades can boost property values, while developers are incorporating green technologies into new builds, making them more attractive, particularly in urban areas.

POSITIVE RENTAL MARKET TRENDS

The rental sector remains strong, driven by rising interest rates and economic uncertainty, which have made renting more appealing than buying. Landlords benefit from higher rental yields, especially in cities like London,

Birmingham, and Manchester. Properties with modern amenities and energy-efficient features are in high demand, providing opportunities for landlords to charge higher rents and maintain strong occupancy rates.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS

First-time buyers have faced significant challenges in recent years due to high house prices and rising mortgage

rates. However, government programs designed to help them are providing some relief and reigniting interest in property ownership. For example, the Help to Buy scheme, Lifetime ISAs, and shared ownership options continue to provide viable opportunities for first-time buyers to enter the property market with a low deposit or shared equity arrangements. With these government initiatives still in place, first-time buyers have the opportunity to enter the market with more financial support and, potentially, negotiate better deals with sellers eager to close before the end of the year.

A ROBUST MARKET FOR NEW BUILDS

New builds remain a significant opportunity in the market, often offering energy-efficient features that appeal to both buyers and renters. Developers are keen to complete projects by year-end, offering competitive pricing, buyer incentives, and reduced maintenance costs. Many new developments also incorporate affordable housing, attracting first-time buyers and investors.

STABLE EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Despite global uncertainty, the UK's employment rate remains strong, boosting buyer confidence. December typically sees stable hiring in sectors like healthcare, tech, and finance, supporting a base of financially secure buyers. Additionally, hybrid work arrangements have increased demand for properties in suburban and rural areas, boosting regional markets and helping balance demand.





CHRISTMAS ICE-SKATING RINKS AND MARKETS IN THE UK

As the Christmas season approaches, the UK transforms into a magical winter wonderland, with towns and cities coming alive with Christmas markets, dazzling lights, and ice skating rinks.

Whether you want to glide gracefully on the ice, drink mulled wine, or find unique gifts, this guide will show you some of the best Christmas markets and ice skating rinks in the UK to make your Christmas period truly unforgettable.

WINTER WONDERLAND IN HYDE PARK, LONDON

Why Visit? Winter Wonderland is London's largest and most extravagant holiday event. It is a must-see for its massive Christmas market, circus shows, fairground rides, and numerous food stalls. Winter Wonderland's ice skating rink is the largest open-air rink in the UK, centred on a Victorian bandstand adorned with lights and music.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** Over 200 chalet-style stalls offering crafts, ornaments, and artisanal foods.
- **Skating Details:** Open 10am–10pm daily; sessions last 50 minutes.
- **Tickets:** Rink tickets range from £10–£20; market entry is free, but peak times may require a pre-booked entry pass.
- **Best For:** Families, couples, and groups of friends looking for a full festive day out.

EDINBURGH CHRISTMAS MARKET AND ST ANDREW SQUARE ICE RINK, EDINBURGH

Why Visit? Edinburgh's Christmas market in East Princes Street Gardens combines Scottish charm and European

flair. Edinburgh's festive offerings, which include impressive light displays, attractions, and the iconic St Andrew Square ice rink, attract visitors from all over.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** A traditional market featuring local Scottish delicacies, handmade goods, and, of course, whisky stalls.
- **Skating Details:** The St Andrew Square rink is unique, winding around the Melville Monument for an enchanting experience. Sessions run daily, lasting 45 minutes.
- **Tickets:** Ice rink tickets start from £10.
- **Best For:** Those seeking a mix of Scottish tradition and modern festivities with a dramatic city backdrop.

WINTER WONDERLAND, CARDIFF

Why Visit? Cardiff's Winter Wonderland is a vibrant and bustling holiday destination spread across two locations: City Hall Lawns and Cardiff Castle. The ice rink here is known for its clear roof, which provides a covered but open view experience, allowing you to skate rain or shine.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** A smaller, boutique-style market on St John Street, featuring local crafts, Welsh food stalls, and cosy wooden cabins.
- **Skating Details:** The rink on City Hall Lawns is open from morning till evening, offering 50-minute sessions.
- **Tickets:** Starting at £11, with options for a family ticket.
- **Best For:** Families and couples looking for a more laid-back festive experience with plenty of Welsh charm.

ICE VILLAGE MANCHESTER

Why Visit? Manchester's Ice Village is famous for its impressive ice sculptures, which are set in Cathedral Gardens. This year's addition, the festive 'Ice Cavern', will feature life-sized sculptures and themed displays, offering something unique to the UK. Manchester is one of the most popular festive destinations, thanks to its Christmas market, which spans several city centre locations.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** Traditional Bavarian stalls, local crafts, and international food stalls spread across Piccadilly Gardens, Exchange Square, and beyond.
- **Skating Details:** The rink is open daily with 45-minute sessions.
- **Tickets:** Ice rink tickets from £10, with combined entry options for the Ice Cavern.
- **Best For:** Adventurers wanting to try something different, families, and fans of ice art.

YORK CHRISTMAS MARKET AND ICE TRAIL

Why Visit? York's St Nicholas Fair is well-known for its historical charm, with festive huts lining Parliament Street and St Sampson's Square. York also hosts an annual Ice Trail, with ice sculptures displayed throughout the city. This year, a pop-up skating rink will be installed on the beautiful grounds of the York Museum Gardens.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** Traditional wooden stalls selling handmade goods, mulled wine, and Yorkshire treats.
- **Skating Details:** York Museum Gardens' pop-up rink is open for 45-minute sessions.
- **Tickets:** Rink tickets start at £9 for adults, and family passes are available.
- **Best For:** History lovers and families looking for a unique, picturesque holiday experience.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS MARKET AND ICE RINK

Why Visit? This Christmas market, located in the shadow of Winchester Cathedral, is one of the most picturesque in the country. Winchester's ice rink is completely covered and located on the market grounds, making it ideal for an all-weather festive experience.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** Over 100 chalets featuring unique gifts, German-inspired food stalls, and mulled wine.
- **Skating Details:** The rink is open daily for 1-hour sessions, including options for evening skating.
- **Tickets:** Tickets start at £12, with family packages available.
- **Best For:** Couples and families looking for a quaint, festive atmosphere in a stunning location.

NOTTINGHAM WINTER WONDERLAND

Why Visit? Nottingham Winter Wonderland, located in the heart of the city at Old Market Square, is famous for its giant ice rink and Ice Bar experience. This year's event will include an Après Ski-style bar, ideal for winding down after a skate.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** Local crafts, festive food, and one of the UK's largest walk-through Christmas trees.
- **Skating Details:** Sessions are available throughout the day, with evening slots offering a more festive ambiance.
- **Tickets:** Ice rink tickets start from £10; entry to the market is free.
- **Best For:** Groups and friends looking to combine a night out with festive fun.

BIRMINGHAM'S FRANKFURT CHRISTMAS MARKET AND ICE RINK

Why Visit? Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market is the largest authentic German market outside of Germany and Austria. With a variety of food, drink, and gift stalls, this is a true treat for anyone looking for a German-inspired festive experience. The nearby ice rink in Centenary Square adds to the winter fun.

- **Christmas Market Highlights:** German treats like bratwurst, pretzels, and mulled wine.
- **Skating Details:** Sessions last 45 minutes, with an adjacent big wheel offering stunning views over Birmingham.
- **Tickets:** Ice rink tickets from £11.
- **Best For:** Foodies and fans of traditional German markets.



DESIGN THE BEST CHRISTMAS

DECORATIONS WITH THE KIDS

Engaging children in designing Christmas decorations for the front garden can be a fun and creative way to make the festive season more exciting



Involving children in the decorating process not only brightens the garden, but also fosters their creativity and teamwork abilities.

BRAINSTORM TOGETHER

Begin by gathering the family for a brainstorming session. Ask your children what they enjoy most about Christmas and what decorations they have in mind for the garden. Encourage them to consider themes, colours, and specific decorations, whether it is a traditional winter wonderland or a lively, colourful display.

CRAFT HOMEMADE DECORATIONS

Organise craft sessions in which children can create their own decorations. Create ornaments, snowflakes, or festive signs out of cardboard, paper, and recycled materials. Painting or decorating these items can help them express their personalities.

INCORPORATE NATURAL ELEMENTS

Get outside for some fresh air and inspiration. Gather pine cones, branches, and holly to make natural decorations. Children can help paint or decorate these items and place them in the garden. This not only boosts their festive spirit but also teaches them about the environment.

CREATE A CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

Create a countdown to Christmas using a large poster or chalkboard. Every day, the children can add a new decoration or drawing that reflects their excitement for the holiday. This will enhance the interactive and visually appealing nature of the Christmas season.

LIGHTING DISPLAYS

Involve children in deciding where to place lights and what colours to use. Allow them to assist in the installation of safe outdoor

fairy lights or solar-powered decorations if they are of legal age. This hands-on activity will allow them to feel more involved in the garden's transformation.

HOST A DECORATION DAY

Finally, schedule a day for the entire family to work together in the garden. Play holiday music, enjoy some seasonal treats, and have fun decorating as a group. This bonding experience will leave lasting memories while also ensuring that your garden reflects everyone's holiday spirit.

Ask your children what they enjoy most about Christmas and what decorations they have in mind for the garden.



Transforming your dining room for the Christmas season can create a warm and inviting atmosphere, ideal for festive gatherings

GIVING YOUR DINING ROOM A FESTIVE MAKEOVER



Implementing these ideas will allow you to create a festive dining room that is not only visually appealing, but also inviting and comfortable for family and friends to enjoy.

FESTIVE TABLE SETTINGS

Begin by updating your table settings. Use a festive tablecloth or runner that goes with your colour scheme, whether it is traditional red and green or a more modern metallic theme. Layer your plates, using charger plates for added elegance, and think about using decorative napkins with seasonal designs. Personalised place settings can add a unique touch to make each guest feel welcome.



LIGHTING EFFECTS

Set the mood with soft lighting. Replace bright overhead lights with warm, ambient lighting such as fairy lights or candles. You could use tealights in decorative holders or cluster larger candles of varying heights to create a more dramatic effect. String lights along the windows or drape them over furniture for a magical effect.

SEASONAL DECOR

Place Christmas decorations throughout the dining room. Hang holiday garlands or wreaths on doors and walls, and consider displaying small decorative items such as nutcrackers or snow globes on side tables or shelves. A seasonal runner or decorative bowl filled with seasonal fruits or ornaments can add character to the space.

COMFORT AND WARMTH

Add soft furnishings to increase comfort. Consider placing cushions on dining chairs or drape a plush throw over a nearby armchair. A cosy atmosphere encourages guests to stay and enjoy each other's company.



CENTREPIECE CREATIONS

Create a stunning centerpiece that will become the focal point of your dining table. Combine natural elements like pinecones, candles, and seasonal flowers. For a traditional touch, consider a simple holly arrangement or a small Christmas tree. Alternatively, a large glass vase filled with baubles can add a splash of colour to the table.

SCENT THE ROOM

Finally, never underestimate the power of scent. To capture the Christmas spirit, use scented candles or potpourri with festive fragrances such as cinnamon, pine, or vanilla. This sensory touch will heighten the festive atmosphere, making your dining room ideal for Christmas gatherings.

Begin by updating your table settings. Use a festive tablecloth or runner that goes with your colour scheme

COMBINE THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT WITH YOUR FITNESS

The 12 Days of Christmas Fitness Challenge and Yoga or Pilates are two fantastic ways to stay festive and in shape this Christmas season

Festive-themed yoga or Pilates combines the relaxing benefits of traditional practice with a fun, holiday-inspired twist. It is a great way to stay active during the Christmas season while also getting into the holiday spirit. These sessions are usually designed to

be more light-hearted and joyful, making them ideal for helping you relax and unwind during the holiday season.

WHAT MAKES IT FESTIVE?

Festive-themed yoga or Pilates classes typically include elements that evoke the warmth and joy of Christmas. This could indicate:

Christmas Music:

Gentle holiday music, such as soft carols or instrumental versions of popular festive songs, is frequently used to create a soothing yet uplifting atmosphere during sessions.

Holiday-Themed

Poses: Yoga instructors may rename

classic poses to fit the festive theme.

For example, "Tree Pose" could become "Christmas Tree Pose," and "Star Pose" could incorporate holiday decorations. Pilates routines may include names like "Reindeer Run" for a dynamic leg exercise or "Elf Core Crunches" to add a seasonal flair.

Props and Decorations: Small decorations such as fairy lights, candles or even Christmas ornaments can be used to set a festive tone in the practice space, creating a cosy, welcoming atmosphere.

Themed Flow: Yoga practices may emphasise mindfulness and gratitude, which correspond to the Christmas themes of giving and reflection. Pilates core and balance exercises may be designed to mimic holiday movements such as "reaching for presents" or "hanging ornaments."

BENEFITS OF FESTIVE-THEMED YOGA OR PILATES

Stress Relief: Christmas can be a stressful time, but yoga or Pilates can help you relax and stay focused.

Flexibility and Strength: Even with a fun theme, these sessions maintain the core benefits of traditional yoga and Pilates, such as increased strength, flexibility, and posture.

Fun for All: Festive-themed sessions are accessible to people of all fitness levels, making it an inclusive way to stay active over the holidays, whether at home or in a group class.

It's a perfect balance of staying active and enjoying the seasonal cheer, keeping both body and mind engaged.



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

The 12 Days of Christmas Challenge is a holiday fitness routine based on the popular Christmas carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas". It is intended to keep you active over the holiday season by gradually increasing the intensity of your workouts over 12 days. Each day, a new exercise or set of repetitions is added, culminating in a full workout on the twelfth day. This progressive approach makes it enjoyable, festive, and suitable for all fitness levels.

HOW IT WORKS:

The challenge functions similarly to how the carol builds on each verse. On day one, you do one exercise or set of repetitions. On day two, you repeat the first exercise, then a second, and so on, until you have completed a 12-exercise routine by the final day. The exercises vary depending on your fitness goals and the equipment available, but they typically include a combination of bodyweight exercises for a full-body workout.

EXAMPLE:

Day 1: 1 Burpee

Day 2: 2 Squats + 1 Burpee

Day 3: 3 Press-Ups + 2 Squats + 1 Burpee

Day 4: 4 Lunges + 3 Press-Ups + 2 Squats + 1 Burpee

Continue building until day 12.

By the twelfth day, you will have completed all 12 exercises, which may include mountain climbers, plank holds, jumping jacks, or high knees. You can tailor the exercises to your fitness level by increasing or decreasing reps or choosing exercises that are appropriate for your abilities.

BENEFITS:

Progressive Intensity: The challenge becomes more difficult as you progress, which keeps things interesting and challenging.

Time Efficient: It begins with a small-time commitment, making it easy to fit into a busy holiday schedule. By the last day, you will have completed a more intense full-body workout.

Holiday Motivation: The festive theme adds enjoyment to your fitness routine, keeping you motivated during the indulgent holiday season.

No Equipment Needed: The majority of versions of the challenge involve bodyweight exercises, making it easy to complete anywhere, including at home or while travelling.

The 12 Days of Christmas Challenge is an excellent way to stay active while enjoying the holidays, ensuring that you end the season feeling fit and energised.



BEST TV SERIES TO STREAM THIS DECEMBER

December promises to be another thrilling month for home streaming, with the newest TV series being released for home streaming

THE CROWN, SERIES SIX PART TWO

The six final episodes of the hugely popular series about Queen Elizabeth II and her family have arrived. The first four episodes of this season, which focused on Princess Diana's funeral, received largely negative feedback from critics, failing to improve on the previous season's shortcomings. The series has remained at the top of Netflix's most-watched list, and the upcoming episodes, whether good or bad, are expected to follow suit. This time, William (Ed McVey) meets Kate (Meg Bellamy) at university, and Charles (Dominic West) and Camilla (Olivia Williams) get married. The Crown's story concludes in 2005, but the show's creator, Peter Morgan, has stated that after the Queen died last year, he needed to find a way to honour her memory. Claire Foy and Olivia Colman, who played Elizabeth at different ages, are said to return in flashback scenes, alongside Imelda Staunton as the older Queen, and Viola Prettejohn as a younger Princess Elizabeth. It sounds like a tearful goodbye to the real Elizabeth, her majestic fictional counterparts, and the series.

The Crown Season 6 part 2 premieres 14th December on Netflix

NO GOOD DEED

No Good Deed is an anticipated dark comedy series. Created by Liz Feldman (of Dead to Me fame), the sitcom follows Lydia and Paul Morgan, played by Lisa Kudrow and Ray Romano, as they try to sell their 1920s Spanish-style mansion in Los Angeles. Several families compete for the home, each believing it will solve their issues. However, the Morgans' home contains terrible secrets, pushing them to confront their history. The series delves into issues of ambition, secrecy, and how far we go to protect our loved ones.

No Good Deed premieres 12th December on Netflix

WHAT IF...? SERIES 3

This animated alternate history returns with new Sliding Doors-style possibilities for some of the Marvel Cinematic Universe's most well-known characters. Jeffrey Wright voices the narrator, The Watcher, who introduces the stories in each half-hour episode. Some of the voices differ from those in the films, such as Lake Bell (rather than Scarlett Johansson) as Natasha Romanoff, aka Black Widow, but many of them are the same, including Benedict Cumberbatch as Doctor Strange, Josh Brolin as Thanos, and Hayley Atwell as Peggy Carter, also known as Captain Carter, a version of Captain America. The season also introduces an original MCU character, a Mohawk woman named Kahhori, in an episode spoken in Mohawk. In a holiday programming stunt, the nine episodes will be released on nine consecutive days.

What If...? premieres 22nd December on Disney+

THE BEST MOVIES TO SEE AT THE CINEMA THIS MONTH

Several incredible films will be released in December that are ideal for any audience

RUMOURS (DARK COMEDY)

Rumours is a tense psychological thriller that explores the dark impact of whispers and secrets in a small coastal town. When a young woman mysteriously disappears, rumours circulate, instilling fear and suspicion among friends and family. As hidden truths emerge, loyalties are tested, and everyone is considered a potential suspect. With trust shattered and paranoia rising, the townspeople face the dangers of lies—and the chilling possibility that someone among them knows more than they are saying.

In UK cinemas from 6th December

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE WAR OF THE ROHIRRIM (ADVENTURE, EPIC)

The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim explores Middle-earth's rich history, focussing on the legendary King Helm Hammerhand and the epic battles that shaped Rohan. Set centuries before The Lord of the Rings, the film follows Helm's fierce resistance to Dunlending invaders and the construction of Helm's Deep, Rohan's future stronghold. With stirring battles, themes of honour and sacrifice, and Tolkien's lore, this prequel adds new depth to the world of Rohan and its heroic heritage.

In UK cinemas from 13th December

KRAVEN THE HUNTER (SUPERHERO ACTION)

Kraven the Hunter follows Sergei Kravinoff, a ferocious Russian-born hunter who becomes one of Spider-Man's most ruthless adversaries. Kraven, motivated by a twisted sense of justice and a desire to prove himself the world's greatest predator, embarks on a mission to eliminate those he considers unworthy. Along the way, he faces family secrets and rivals from his past. Kraven the Hunter, with its dark, gritty action and complex antihero, delves into the psyche of a man shaped by revenge and survival.

In UK cinemas from 13th December

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3 (ANIMATION, ADVENTURE)

Sonic, Tails, and Knuckles face their most serious threat yet in Sonic the Hedgehog 3, as Dr. Robotnik returns wielding a powerful, ancient force. Robotnik, determined to conquer the world, teams up with the mysterious Shadow the Hedgehog, a new adversary with Sonic-level speed and abilities. The team races across dimensions, uncovering hidden secrets about their origins while fighting to save Earth. Bonds will be tested as allies and adversaries collide in this epic adventure.

In UK cinemas from 21st December



PERFECT CHRISTMAS ALTERNATIVES TO TURKEY

Here are some great alternatives to turkey and traditional mulled wine that you may not have considered before, each adding a unique twist to your Christmas feast.

STUFFED CROWN ROAST OF PORK

A crown roast of pork is a unique option. This impressive dish consists of a rib rack of pork shaped into a crown and stuffed with a savoury mixture that typically includes breadcrumbs, nuts, and herbs. The end result is a tender, juicy roast that is beautifully presented. To add a seasonal touch, serve with apple sauce and roasted root vegetables.

VEGETARIAN NUT ROAST

A nut roast can be a filling and hearty meal for vegetarian guests. This dish, which contains nuts, seeds, lentils, and vegetables, is both nutritious and tasty. Herbs and spices can be added to the dish, which is served with a rich vegetarian gravy and traditional trimmings such as roast potatoes and Brussels sprouts. This dish can be as festive as any meat-based alternative.

DUCK

Duck is another excellent option, with a rich flavour and tender meat. A whole roasted duck, glazed with honey or orange, can make an impressive centrepiece. Duck pairs well with fruity sauces like cherry or plum, adding a festive touch to your meal. For a more sophisticated meal, serve it with seasonal vegetables and potato gratin.

SALMON OR SEAFOOD PLATTER

For a lighter option, try a beautifully presented seafood platter. Salmon, smoked mackerel, and prawns can be served on a platter with lemon

wedges, capers, and a choice of dips. This can also be used as a refreshing starter before the main course. Alternatively, a whole roasted salmon seasoned with herbs and citrus can be a tasty and healthy substitute for traditional meats.

VEGETABLE WELLINGTON

If you want to maintain the elegance of a Wellington while catering to vegetarians, a vegetable Wellington is an excellent choice. Wrap a mix of mushrooms, spinach, and other seasonal vegetables in puff pastry. For a delicious twist on the classic, serve with rich vegetarian gravy or tangy cranberry sauce.

GAME BIRDS

For a truly festive meal, serve game birds like pheasant, partridge, or guinea fowl. These meats have a distinct flavour and can be roasted whole or cooked in a casserole. They are often less expensive than turkey and make an excellent choice for those looking to try something new. Seasonal accompaniments such as wild mushrooms, redcurrant jelly, and roasted root vegetables complement game well.

QUINOA AND VEGETABLE STUFFED SQUASH

For a healthy and colourful option, stuff acorn or butternut squash with quinoa, nuts, dried fruits, and spices. This dish is not only visually appealing, but also full of flavour and nutrients. The roasted squash's sweetness complements the savoury filling, making it a satisfying main course for vegetarians and meat eaters alike.

While turkey is a traditional staple for Christmas dinner, it's not the only option, and what better paring than a warming-unique mulled wine?

TRADITIONAL MULLED WINE

Mulled wine is a popular Christmas drink, but it can be elevated with unique twists. Here are a few creative recipes to try this Christmas.

SPICED POMEGRANATE MULLED WINE

In a pot, combine 750ml red wine, 250ml pomegranate juice, and 100g sugar. Add one cinnamon stick, three star anise, and orange zest. Heat gently, stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Simmer for 20 minutes, then garnish with pomegranate seeds and orange slices.

APPLE AND CINNAMON MULLED WINE

Mix 750ml red wine and 250ml apple juice. Add three cinnamon sticks, two cloves, and the zest and juice of one lemon. Heat gently to allow the spices to infuse. Serve warm with sliced apples and a sprinkle of nutmeg for a festive twist.

CHOCOLATE MULLED WINE

In a saucepan, combine 750ml of red wine, 100ml of orange juice, and 50g of chopped dark chocolate. Add 2 cinnamon sticks, 4 cloves, and the zest of an orange. Stir over low heat until the chocolate has melted. Finish with a twist of orange peel for a luxurious touch.



ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX

The 2024 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the thrilling finale of the F1 season, is scheduled for 5-8 December at Yas Marina Circuit, a track renowned for its picturesque harbour views and competitive track layout

As the season's final race, it will be critical in determining both driver and constructor championships, especially as the drivers navigate the 5.28 km circuit, which features a mix of tight corners and high-speed straights. Fans can expect a battle of strategy and skill, with Yas Marina's turns 5, 6, and 7 serving as key overtaking points, and the longer straights ideal for DRS boosts, which could shape the podium.

Off the track, Abu Dhabi will be alive with entertainment. The Yasalam After-Race Concert series will light up the weekend with performances from top global acts such as Maroon 5 and Muse, providing fans on Yas Island with a complete entertainment experience. The event will also host the season finales for the Formula 2 and F1 Academy support series, providing even more racing action over the weekend.

This year's competition has been characterised by fierce rivalries, with teams such as Mercedes and Ferrari vying for a strong finish against the dominant Red Bull, whose drivers, led by Max Verstappen, are hoping to cap off a record-breaking season. Verstappen, whose outstanding performance this season has set him apart, will be one to watch as he seeks another victory and sets the tone for the 2025 season.

The race will be broadcast on major channels, including Sky Sports F1 in the UK, with practice sessions beginning Thursday, December 5. The main race will be broadcast live in the UK on Sunday, December 8 at 1:00 p.m., bringing an end to what promises to be an exciting F1 season. Yas Marina Circuit provides attendees with a variety of viewing options, including grandstands and exclusive hospitality suites, ensuring a memorable experience for all who attend.



PDC DARTS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2024

The 2024 PDC World Darts Championship is set to be an unforgettable event, showcasing elite darts talent at the iconic Alexandra Palace in London

This year's tournament, which runs from December 15, 2023 to January 3, 2024, promises intense competition, an electric atmosphere, and an impressive £2.5 million prize pool, with the winner receiving £500,000.

Reigning champion Michael Smith will be eager to defend his title after winning his first PDC World Championship last year. Smith, known for his powerful scoring and deadly accuracy on doubles, is a formidable opponent who will almost certainly be a fan favourite. However, he faces stiff competition from former champions such as Michael van Gerwen, Gerwyn Price, and Peter Wright, all of whom have the experience and skill to go the distance. Van Gerwen, a three-time champion, will look to reclaim his throne after losing in the semi-finals last year, proving that he is still one of the sport's best.

Meanwhile, Gerwyn Price, the 2021 champion, will seek redemption for his recent struggles, hoping to turn his high averages into a second world title. Price, known for his intense style, will need both composure and precision to overcome a star-studded field. Peter Wright, a two-time champion and fan favourite, will look to rediscover his form and creativity in order to add another title to his resume.

Aside from these veterans, emerging talents such as Luke Humphries and Josh Rock bring an unpredictable element to the mix. Humphries, in particular, has impressed this year, rising through the rankings and demonstrating his ability to compete with the best in the world. The tournament will also feature debutants and lesser-known players from global qualifiers, all looking to make a name for themselves on the biggest stage.

Fans can expect thrilling encounters, upsets, and memorable moments under the bright lights of Ally Pally. With its unique festive atmosphere and dedicated fan base, the 2024 PDC World Darts Championship promises to be a spectacular end to the darts year.



Back Lane, Castle Acre

£600,000



Extremely well presented detached four bedroom house situated in the sought after historic Norfolk village of Castle Acre. This superb property boasts lounge with multi-fuel burning stove and study area, modern conservatory with glass roof and en-suite shower room. Viewing highly recommended

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Swaffham - 01760 721389

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Furlong Road, Stoke Ferry

£595,000



House & Annexe!

Four/five bedroom house with two/three reception rooms and garage AND a separate spacious two bedroom annexe. With lots on offer, this sale offers flexible accommodation, a multitude of options, and is ideal for multi-generational living. Viewing highly recommended!

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Saddlebow Road, Kings Lynn

£190,000



CHAIN FREE! Well presented three/four bedroom character cottage situated within easy reach of Kings Lynn town centre. This charming property offers two reception rooms, gardens, gas central heating, multi fuel stove & UPVC double glazing. The ideal first time buy or investment property! Viewing Advised!

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Chantry Lane, Necton

OIRO £595,000



WOW! Stunning, detached four/three bedroom character cottage, situated in the sought after village of Necton. This superb property has undergone a recent extensive refurbishment. The property boasts a triple garage and a double garage, kitchen/family room, two reception rooms, and so much more....

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Newton Road, Sporle

£230,000



Very well presented, semi-detached two bedroom house situated in a semi-rural location on the outskirts of the popular village of Sporle. This fantastic property offers modern conservatory with glass roof, modern kitchen, cloakroom with WC, air conditioning to lounge, gardens....

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Richmond Road, Saham Toney

£350,000



Well presented, detached three bedroom bungalow, situated in the popular village of Saham Toney. The property has much to offer, including garage, utility room, garden room, garden office/studio, gardens, parking and UPVC double glazing. Viewing highly recommended.

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Nelson Court, Watton

£325,000



Very well presented, detached, three bedroom bungalow conveniently situated on a popular development within easy reach of Watton town centre. This fantastic property offers conservatory, cloakroom with WC, shower/wet room, gardens, garage, parking, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Lonsdale Crescent, Hingham

£650,000



Spacious, very well presented, detached three bedroom bungalow situated in an exclusive development of five properties within the sought after Norfolk village of Hingham. This superb property offers two reception rooms, utility room, tandem style garage, en-suite shower room, parking and gardens.

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Heron Way, Watton,

OIRO £400,000



Very well presented spacious, detached three bedroom bungalow situated on a sought after development in Watton. This fantastic property offers double garage, en-suite shower room, utility room, ample parking with secure parking for caravan/motorhome, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing.

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Watton - 01953 883474

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Dereham Road, Watton

£725,000



Absolutely stunning! Individual, spacious, detached five bedroom chalet-style house situated just on the outskirts of Watton. This superb property has been finished to a high standard throughout and has plenty to offer including two en-suites, vaulted ceilings, double garage and much much more!

WATTON - 01953 883474 - info@longsons.co.uk

Swaffham | Watton

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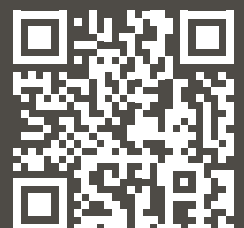
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HOW MUCH
IS MY
PROPERTY
WORTH?



Present your house for sale by de-cluttering...

Maximise your home's potential and create spacious rooms enticing potential buyers – simply by de-cluttering!

“ De-cluttering allows you to... maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important ”

If you are looking to sell your house, or have had your home on the market for a while now, then you probably want to get the maximum sale price in the quickest time. There are a few things you can't control – but the one thing that is in your control, is the look and feel of the interior and exterior.

While it's worth spending time fixing and cleaning your house before potential buyers come and view, it's also important to de-clutter. This creates spacious rooms and also allows you to decrease and organise your personal items before you move yourself. Of course it's understandable that you don't want to spend money, time and energy on a home you are about to leave, however, a lot of people are looking for a house in which they can move straight into. Maintaining your

property might even save you thousands of pounds; it could even reduce added expenses of living in your home whilst waiting for a sale. And it might even help avoid possible reductions in the asking price.

The main reason in which people move house tends to be because they lack space in their current home. They want a home that is spacious and in which they can grow into. If a potential viewer comes to your home and sees that there is lack of space, then this will turn them away.

De-cluttering allows you to remove any unnecessary items in an untidy or overcrowded place. It will help maximise your space, emotionally prepare you to move, and will allow you to focus your buyers on what is important.



SO WHERE SHOULD YOU START?

You need to create a great first impression and focus on the rooms themselves. You will notice that the first things you see in each room are personal items. Where possible you want to create the look of a

them into things you want to keep and things you want to get rid of. You may even find that you have collected a cupboard full of paper work. Get yourself organised! Don't just throw it all away, but file it and go through it thoroughly. This will also make it easier when you move.

De-personalising can also be a great way to de-clutter. Too many personal effects can be distracting to buyers. They want to see a house in which they can make their own memories rather than seeing yours. Again, personal items can be stored away. Remember

“ Where possible you want to create the look of a lifestyle that the potential buyers want ”

lifestyle that the potential buyer want. This usually has a 'show home' feel, rather than a 'lived in' feel. Minimising your things is the quickest way to do this: you want to ensure that potential buyers can do simple things, like, open any doors easily, ensuring that there are no obstacles.

So, what do we mean by clutter? There are two types: genuine clutter, and items that you want to keep but don't work for the sale of your property.

GENUINE CLUTTER:

You need to go through the space and sort out each item, categorising

You also want to focus on little things like DVDs, books and trinkets. These items may have some small value so sell them or donate them to charity. Get rid of any old shoes and coats that are lying about in your porch or hallway. You might want to hide away the coats and shoes you do currently wear. Store them in your wardrobe while you have viewings.

ITEMS THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP BUT DON'T WORK FOR THE SALE OF YOUR PROPERTY:

You may want to consider putting some items in storage while you sell your home. Sometimes items are too large or even too small for some spaces and can make the room look odd. If you want to keep these particular items, then store them until you move into your new home.

that this is only a temporary way of living and hopefully it won't be for long! If you find you are keeping more things than you are throwing out, then think about whether or not it's in the right room or do you even need it now?

As previously mentioned, you can attempt to sell some of the things you have acquired over the years. Use sites like eBay, Gumtree and social networking sites to try and sell items. You may want to even hold a house sale for the remaining items that you can't sell. Failing that, why not donate to charity.

The end goal is still the same and it's important to help potential buyers envision your house as theirs. So remember, de-cluttering will make your home more spacious and entice potential buyers!

Top Tips!



If you are throwing away paperwork, shred anything that is confidential



De-clutter before agents come and take photos of your property. This will help attract more potential viewers online and get that first good impression



Don't spend too long on certain items and don't get distracted. Keep yourself motivated and race against the clock!



Make it fun! Play some music or watch TV while you de-clutter





Your step-by-step guide to the conveyancing process

Once a sale has been agreed and is in the hands of your solicitor, it will go through the following stages. Sometimes additional work will be needed – for example, if the property is leasehold or is yet to be registered with the Land Registry. It is also important for buyers to discuss the availability of their deposit with their solicitor early in the transaction, and we strongly recommend that you contact your solicitor regularly so that they can keep you fully up-to-date with the progress and the latest timescales.

Seller's solicitor's steps

- Obtain a copy of the Title Deeds (or office copies if the title is registered)
- Obtain a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) (if applicable)
- The seller(s) will return a completed Property Information Form and a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form to the solicitors
- Copies of the above documents, plus a draft contract – this is known as an 'Information Pack' – will be sent to the buyer's solicitor
- Answer the buyer's solicitor's additional enquiries (for example, specific questions about fixtures and fittings) and obtain copies of any planning consent documents
- Agree the contract and arrange for the sellers to sign it in readiness of the exchange (below)
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Obtain redemption figures from the mortgage lender and reply to requisitions on title
- Approve the transfer and arrange for the seller(s) and buyer(s) to sign
- Receive the agent's fee account and seek the seller's consent to settle this out of completion funds

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Receive completion funds and (only when this has been completed) instruct your estate agent to release the keys to buyers. Redeem mortgage and forward the financial statement. Forward any surplus funds (unless these are being used to fund an onward purchase). Ensure all outstanding bills are paid
- Forward transfer documents and deeds to the buyer's solicitors
- Forward evidence of 'discharge of mortgage' to the buyer's solicitors

Buyer's solicitor's steps

- Obtain the Information Pack, including a copy of the EPC (if applicable) from the sellers' solicitor and raise any additional queries
- Initiate any specialist searches (for example: a coal search). Submit local, environmental and water searches and a chancel check. This takes about 10 working days in total, and enquiries are then usually raised from the results
- Approve the contract when all enquiries are satisfactory and complete. (At this stage, a mortgage transfer deed will need to be signed and witnessed)
- Receive a mortgage offer and instructions from the lender and deal with any conditions set out by them. Make sure that life cover and buildings insurance is being arranged
- Request the deposit, report back to the buyer, and arrange for the contract to be signed. Place buildings insurance and life cover in force
- All parties agree completion dates and the contracts are exchanged

Between exchange and completion

- Raise 'requisitions on title' and prepare the draft transfer deed
- Report on title to mortgage lender and obtain funds for completion, including Stamp Duty (if appropriate)
- Prepare accounts, obtain signature to mortgage deed and undertake final Land Registry and Land Charges searches

Completion date

This is the date the ownership of the property passes from the seller to the buyer, and it follows the successful transfer of funds. It's the date that the whole process works towards.

Upon completion

- Forward to the seller's solicitors the balance of funds – it is only then that they can authorise the release of the keys. Receive from the seller's solicitors, the transfer document deeds
- Stamp the Transfer Deed, register the buyer's ownership with the Land Registry and forward the deeds to the lender or client (where appropriate)

Contract - The agreement that sets out the main terms that have been agreed – for example: price, address, names, etc. Two copies are drawn up, and each party signs one in readiness for the exchange of contracts.

Deposit - The part of the purchase price (usually 10%) which the buyer pays on exchange of contracts.

Exchange of contracts - The swapping of signed contracts by the solicitors (together with the buyer's deposit). After this, the contract is binding.

Energy Performance Certificate - This contains information on energy use, energy performance, carbon dioxide emissions, and fuel bills.

Land Registry - The Government department that records who owns what land, and under what conditions.

Local Authority Search - A list of questions that are specific to the property and intended, for example, to discover if there have been any planning applications on the property, if the road to the house is maintained by the council, etc.

Mortgage Redemption Figure - The amount required to repay the outstanding capital/ interest of a mortgage.

Property information form/fixtures, fittings and contents form - Standard forms about the property that the seller answers for their solicitor (for example: what will be left behind, details of guarantees, etc.)

Title Deeds - Legal documents that prove ownership of land/buildings, and the terms on which they are owned.

Transfer of Title - The document that passes the ownership from the seller to the buyer.

Stamp Duty for buy to let investors and second home owners - An additional tax, paid by the buyer purchasing an additional property that is not their main residence. It includes buy to let landlords and those buying second homes and holiday homes. The higher rates will be 3 percentage points above the current rates of duty shown below.

Requisition on title - An enquiry relating to the completion arrangements.

Seller's Pack - This comprises a Property Information Form, a Fixtures, Fittings and Contents Form, a copy of the title deeds and the draft contract.

Stamp Duty – Currently, the Stamp Duty threshold for residential properties is £250,000. For first-time buyers you can claim a discount and won't pay Stamp Duty up to £425,000 on the purchase price and after that you will pay only 5% between £425,001 to £625,000.

However, how much you pay is also dependent on whether you already own another property or if you're a non-UK resident.



Moving house?

From meter readings to removal companies, there's so much to remember when moving house. Here's our checklist of what to do and when

First of all, congratulations on your new home! The excitement has probably now kicked in but moving home can also be one of the most stressful and emotionally draining things you can do. However, careful organisation and planning can help decrease the stress and anxiety of moving. This comprehensive and essential checklist will help you do just that.

Eight weeks - Research

Ideally, you want to start packing away any non-essential items as early as possible. This includes any items stored away in the loft, garage and shed. If you are not using it, pack it. Looking into your new area is also important, try to do this around eight weeks before you move. You might need to think about transferring your children to different schools and ordering new uniforms too. At this point, ensure you are also documenting all your important information away: that includes contact details, dates, contracts and information regarding your solicitor.

Six weeks - Removal companies or do it yourself?

Now would be the perfect time to decide on a local removal company. Or if you don't have too much to move, you may want to do it yourself. You could even look into different van hire companies. At this point you've probably started packing away some bits, but if there is anything you decide not to take, then look into selling these items or donating them to charity. This will also give you an idea on the volume of items you have to move.

Four weeks - Notify utility companies

This would be a good time for you to notify utility companies and inform them about your move to switch over. This includes gas and electricity, council tax, internet, phone rental and TV. You should also consider changing any car insurance, tax, memberships, phone contracts and inform your bank about the move. Now's the time to also arrange a date to have your new house cleaned before you move



“ It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! ”

in, and start ordering any new furnishings for your new property. Start packing away more items, that being, out of season clothes, books, DVDs and even bulky items, like TVs that aren't used often.

Two weeks - Confirm all details

Confirm your move with your removal company or van hire, estate agents and schools. If possible, try to organise someone to look after your pets and children for the day of your move, as this can also be a stressful time for them too. If your removal company doesn't disassemble any furniture or sort out the un-plumbing for the washing machine, then now would be the ideal time to organise these. Remember to also cancel any local services you receive: this could be window cleaners, gardeners and newspaper deliveries. You should now also think about re-registering to vote and getting your post re-directed after your moving date. Continue packing away more furnishings, kitchen appliances and crockery that you won't be using for the next couple of weeks.

24 hours - Final check and walk round

You now have only 24 hours before you move, so double check that everything is packed away and ready for transit. It will be worth packing a night bag each to help everyone settle in, which means you won't have to rummage through everything to find your toothbrush! You may want to create an inventory of your boxes and

furniture to help you keep track of what you have and to help you ensure it doesn't go missing.

Moving day

Today is the day! You need to be ready for when your removal company comes. Ensure that you let them know if there are any fragile boxes that need extra care when handling. If you're moving yourself, then pack up your car or van and work out how many trips it may take. Before you leave, also take note of your final meter readings and send these off to your provider. Don't forget to leave your keys for the new owners!

You have arrived at your new home!

Give your removal company instructions of which boxes go in which rooms and make sure you are happy with everything that has arrived. Ensure you check for any damage before the movers leave. Read your new utility meters and send your readings off to your supplier. Taking photos of them will also ensure you have the correct reading if you need them again in the future. Unpack your essentials such as bed linen and clean towels. Don't worry about the rest, it isn't going anywhere! Order a takeaway, have a cup of tea and enjoy your first night with your family.

Right, so now you're all moved in, it's time to settle down, unpack and enjoy your new place. Remember, planning is essential to ensure your move runs stress free.

Checklist

Eight weeks

- Pack non-essential items
- Research your new area (transfer schools and order new uniform)
- Keep all important documents

Six weeks

- Decide on a local removal company
- Clear out any unwanted items
- Keep packing

Four weeks

- Notify utility companies
- Start preparation for your new house
- Keep packing

Two weeks

- Finalise all details
- Organise pet and child care
- Cancel local services
- Keep packing

24 hours

- Check every room and ensure everything is packed
- Pack a night bag so everything is to hand
- Collect your new keys
- Make sure your phone is fully charged so you can get in touch with the estate agents or removal company

Moving in

- Prepare for the arrival of the removal company and give them directions/ your contact details
- Ensure everything is ready to move
- Record meter readings

On arrival

- Give removal company instructions of what goes where
- Check for any damage before they leave
- Read your new utility meters and send them off to your supplier
- Check if the previous owners have left anything behind
- Unpack essentials
- Order a takeaway and sit back and relax!



Want to treat yourself to a proper removal company for your next move or are you prepared to do it yourself?

Removal company or brave it yourself?

You're excited about your new home and location but the process of packing, organising and actually moving all of your items is something no one really ever looks forward to. Not only that but you also have to contact utility companies, maintain a job, keep your children happy and clean your entire house. You do have super powers, right?

Removal companies

Unless you live in a small property or flat, it could be worth hiring a professional removal company to help relieve some of the stress on the day. They have many skills and experience and some of the services they can provide include packing and

unpacking, dismantling and assembling furniture, loading your belongings quickly and securely, including those fragile and specialist items. They can even supply you with packing materials.

Hiring a removal company will also allow you the time to collect the keys to your new home. You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth. Some services are great if you don't have much time to plan and get these done yourself; however these do often come at a premium and may not be suitable for those on a budget. When choosing a removal company

You also won't have to worry about the exhausting physical side of things, that being carrying boxes back and forth



it's key to look at those which have good recommendations and reviews, as you need a company you can rely on. You can use comparison sites, such as comparemymove.com and reallymoving.com, to help find you the best deals.

Getting quotes

You should aim to get at least three quotes from removal companies, preferably from firms which will come out to your property rather than those who just estimate the cost over the phone, as you don't want any nasty charges later on. Plus it will give the company an accurate idea of any restricted areas in your home, if they can park a van or lorry, and how many

items you have. You should also ask for the price to be broken down so you can see just how much you are paying for when it comes to certain aspects like insurance, packing, an hourly rate, mileage and any storage costs.

Once you have found a removal company, it can be useful to send them a briefing sheet that includes information about any items which need to be specially packed, any difficult or large items, plus any carpets and curtains which need moving. Finally, it can also be helpful to send them a floor plan of the new property so they can unload efficiently.

Top tips for packing

When packing, ensure you don't overload your boxes with heavy items, as these will be difficult to lift and could cause a back injury.

Fill any empty gaps using old newspaper, clothing, socks or even tea towels. This will help secure any items when they are being moved.

Create an inventory and label all your boxes and write the contents on each box with a marker. That way you will know which room each box is to go in. And if you are super organised, you could even colour code each room!

Pack heavier boxes on the bottom. This might seem like common sense but it will ensure that any of your fragile items won't break.

Pack a survival box. These are the things that you will need first and should include paper towels, bin bags, cutlery, the kettle, some mugs, tea, coffee, milk, sugar and finally, some toilet paper!



FIND YOUR WINTER WONDERLAND



**Embrace the season and find
the perfect property today.
Let us know how we can help you today.**

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