

8 AUGUST 2026

The Grocer Guide to...

The
Grocer

Christmas



LOOK ON THE LIGHT SIDE
CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

Festive launches for 2026

DETAILS

Mars Wrigley UK
3D Dundee Road,
Slough
SL1 4LG
t: 01753 550055

KEY CONTACTS

Steve Waters
Seasonal Senior
Brand Manager

KEY BRANDS

BOUNTY®
CELEBRATIONS®
EXTRA®
GALAXY®
M&M's®
MARS®
MALTESERS®
SKITTLES®
SNICKERS®
STARBURST®
TWIX®

Christmas 2025 was a cautious season. Total confectionery value grew just 0.6%, units fell, and a third of shoppers planned to spend less, though penetration held at 87%, so shoppers were still there, just choosier¹. Mars Wrigley was the only manufacturer to grow both value (4.2%) and volume (0.9%)². That growth came through advent calendars, chocolate boxed gifts and tins and tubs, alongside continued innovation in singles and small sharing³.

Mars Wrigley builds on this for Christmas 2026 with three seasonal launches, each aimed at a shopper the category wasn't quite reaching. "Shoppers are still willing to invest in Christmas; they just need a reason to," says Steve Waters, seasonal senior brand manager at Mars Wrigley. "Each of this year's launches is built around an opportunity we see in the category."

Mars Wrigley was already the fastest-growing manufacturer in singles and small sharing in 2025, the formats that open the season; August to October alone is worth £381m, ahead of November⁴. This year Crispy M&M's Mini Santas extends 2025's Crispy M&M's Santa into a small sharing bag of crispy, creamy Santa-shaped pieces alongside the self-eat option, built for that early window. It is an affordable way for cautious shoppers to keep the ritual going before the bigger gifting formats take over.

Selection boxes skew toward female shoppers, and Mars Wrigley says male gifters are underrepresented in



“Shoppers are still willing to invest in Christmas, they just need a reason to”

the format⁴. The Snickers & Friends Selection Box, built around Snickers, Twix, Mars and Snickers Creamy Duo bars, is its only Snickers gifting proposition, aimed at recruiting male consumers into the format rather than competing with its existing selection boxes.

White chocolate draws a different shopper, over-indexing with under-35s⁵. Maltesers Box is already the No.1 everyday boxed brand; Maltesers White Box gives Mars Wrigley a second entry point into that same format, built for the shopper white chocolate reaches, and the standard box doesn't.

Together, the three launches broaden Mars Wrigley's appeal to existing category consumers by giving early Christmas shoppers, the male demographic and those seeking white chocolate formats more reasons to choose Mars Wrigley.

"None of it works if shoppers can't find it," adds Waters. "We're backing all three with dedicated display from early in the season, not just the final fortnight, because a shopper we've built a launch around still has to see it on shelf to buy it."



Source

¹ NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel Out of Home (WPO), Total S&G Confectionery, 24 weeks to w/e 27.12.25

²⁻⁴ See 1

⁵ Kantar Demographic Analysis of White variants to 2020; NielsenIQ Retail Measurement Service, Total Coverage, Choc Boxed NPD Analysis

Celebrations®



**Stock up on
festive favourites
from the No.1
Twistwrap brand***



*Source - Nielsen IQ Scantrack Data: MAT w/e 11.01.22

© 2026 Mars or Affiliates.

Analysis

With the cost of eating out still high, shoppers are bringing the celebration home and reshaping the festive calendar. From grazing boards to a golden quarter that now begins in late summer, suppliers tell The Grocer how affordable indulgence, provenance and a sense of theatre will define Christmas 2026

Mindful indulgence

Christmas 2026 arrives with a familiar tension. Food inflation has eased but remains elevated, consumer confidence is fragile, and geopolitical uncertainty still feeds through to key ingredient costs. Yet suppliers across food and drink agree on one point: people's Christmas traditions, and their desire to celebrate, are absolute. Shoppers may be more considered about how and when they spend, but they are protecting the occasion, not abandoning it.

"Christmas is emotionally non-negotiable, but shoppers will still seek value within the occasion," says Jo Harwood, chief sales and trade marketing officer at FBC UK. The pattern recurs across categories: shoppers are economising and indulging at once, cutting back on costlier gifts while spending a little

the year. The first is a longer calendar, as Christmas increasingly begins in late summer rather than December. The second is how people celebrate: in a more secular market, and among younger shoppers especially, the set-piece lunch is giving way to a scatter of smaller, informal occasions. The third, and most influential, is economic: with the cost of dining out still high, entertaining has moved back into the home. The familiar drivers of gifting, sharing and treating remain, but run through smaller formats, affordable trade-ups and more intimate moments.

Market overview

The headline figures describe a category holding its nerve. Confectionery had a considered Christmas 2025: total value sales rose 0.6%, unit sales slipped, and around

one in three shoppers planned to spend less¹, according to Steve Waters, seasonal senior brand manager at Mars Wrigley. Penetration held firm at 87%². "Rather than choosing between value and premium, consumers balanced the two," says Waters. "They looked to save where possible but were still willing to invest in products that made key festive moments feel special."

That rewarded businesses that read it correctly. Mars Wrigley says it grew both value and units last Christmas – rare in a flat category – on the back of advent calendars, boxed gifts, tins, and sharing lines³. "Trusted brands combined with relevant NPD can drive incremental growth," says Waters.

Biscuits followed the same pattern. FBC UK grew seasonal volumes 17.5% year on year, its seasonal and assortments segment up 3.5% to



£181m⁴. “What stood out was that shoppers did two things at once,” says Harwood, “trading down from big-ticket gifts, while trading up within biscuits into premium lines and £3-plus assortments that offer affordable indulgence.” Fox’s Classic Assortment was the number one branded assortment for a fourth year running, up 11.3% to £18m⁵.

Mondelez International reports the same duality. “Shoppers were looking for value and accessible treats, but we also saw them trading up where products offered a clear reason to do so,” says Susan Nash, trade communications manager at the company. Confectionery “remains highly linked to gifting, sharing and seasonal rituals, so offering choice across price points and occasions is key.”

Beer and cider remains one of the

season’s biggest trading periods. Christmas week 2025 was worth £185m, of which grocery took £150m⁶, while the month-long run-up delivered more than £481m in grocery sales⁷, says Sarah Duncan, category and commercial strategy director at Heineken UK. World lagers spike – Birra Moretti took 3.8% of total beer and cider in the month before Christmas⁸ – but core brands remain the backbone. “Shoppers will still be looking for quality as well as accessible pricing,” says Duncan, “so stocking a mix of mainstream and premium will help stores cater for this demand.”

The premium end holds up across the festive weeks. At 5.4% of the category, premium cider⁹, which is increasingly aimed at drawing younger drinkers to trade-up, is notably gaining ground.

A growing appetite for provenance-led food and drink runs alongside

Contents

Mars Wrigley 2

Broadening appeal with three distinctive launches for every Christmas shopper

Bel UK 10

Elevating seasonal entertaining with indulgent flavours, new formats and limited-edition packaging

European Union 12

Inspiring festive sharing with artisan breads, premium charcuterie and PDO-sourced grazing boards

Fox’s Burton’s Companies 14

Driving Christmas sales with affordable indulgence, nostalgic favourites and new seasonal flavours

Heineken UK 16

Helping retailers celebrate with premium world lagers, trusted favourites and low- and no- options

Mondelēz International 18

Building on best-loved partnerships with innovative chocolate and biscuit launches

This supplement to The Grocer was published by:
William Reed Ltd, Broadfield Park, Crawley, West
Sussex RH11 9RT
TEL: 01293 613400
EDITOR: Katrina Conaglen
DESIGNER: Nick Figgins
PRINTERS: St Ives

© William Reed Ltd, 2026

Analysis

this, as shoppers look to bring a restaurant-quality spread to their own table. “Christmas remains one of the few occasions when shoppers are genuinely willing to trade up,” says Neil McAndrew, wine expert and advisor to the EU’s More Than Only Food & Drink campaign, “but they increasingly want to understand why a product deserves that premium.” The dominant force, he says, is “selective premiumisation”: shoppers still want to indulge, but are choosier about what to spend extra on.

Suppliers are optimistic but clear about the conditions: value must be visible, novelty must justify itself, and trading up must feel like sound judgement. “While shoppers are expected to remain mindful of their spending, Christmas remains a calendar highlight for many,” says Waters at Mars Wrigley, “and they’re willing to invest in creating memorable occasions.”

A longer festive season

The festive season now starts well before December. “For many shoppers, Christmas starts much earlier than they might think,” says Mars Wrigley’s Waters. Seasonal confectionery appears from August, with singles and small sharing lines building early momentum: August to October now accounts for £381m of seasonal confectionery sales, before December peaks at £527m¹⁰.

Filling this longer runway is a growing set of festive activities, shaped by younger, more secular shoppers. Traditions are evolving, not disappearing. “While younger shoppers may celebrate differently, they’re creating rituals of their own, from festive movie nights and baking occasions to hosting friends at home,” he adds. “This creates opportunities for brands to move beyond traditional treating and become part of the activities that bring people together over Christmas.”

Mars Wrigley is responding with lines made to be baked into treats or used to decorate cakes, taking confectionery beyond its own aisle. “Whether baking with children, decorating festive treats or hosting friends, consumers are looking for fun, affordable ways to add a festive touch,” notes Waters.

Gifting is fragmenting too. “Thanks to social media, gifting is no longer limited to Christmas Day,” says FBC



UK’s Harwood. “Younger shoppers are getting creative with hand-picked gifts throughout Advent, and preparing Christmas Eve boxes for partners and close family that typically feature less expensive treats, like food and drink.” For FBC, that makes range flexibility and trend responsiveness, not a fixed range, central to festive planning.

One consequence: Advent, once a dependable early seller, is now bought later. “Shoppers will be more strategic about when they buy, particularly

within Advent, where purchases are shifting later into the season,” says Mars Wrigley’s Waters. “As a result, brands and retailers will need to work harder to inspire purchase,” particularly through strong in-store execution and early awareness.

The rise of picky bits

The season is also becoming less formal. With the cost of eating and drinking out still high – nearly 38% of diners now say they eat out less than they did a year ago¹¹ – entertaining has moved back into the home, and the grazing board, or ‘picky bits’ spread, has become a defining format of the festive table. The traditional lunch remains, but it is increasingly joined by a run of smaller, relaxed gatherings, each built around something to share. “Sharing continues to shape Christmas entertaining,” says Gaynor Stokes, meat advisor to the EU’s More Than Only Food & Drink campaign. “The traditional Christmas lunch remains

“ Younger shoppers are creating rituals of their own, from festive movie nights and baking occasions to hosting friends. These create opportunities to move beyond the traditional”



The golden quarter calendar

Christmas is no longer a single shopping moment but a sequence of missions that now runs from late summer to the new year. Suppliers are unanimous: the biggest lever retailers hold over festive performance is not which lines they stock but when they stock them. Get the range in the right order – novelty and small formats first, assortments next, tins and gifting last – and the golden quarter does the heavy lifting. Get the phasing wrong, and much of the early trade-up and impulse opportunity is gone before the season has properly begun. Here's how the quarter breaks down.

● Late summer to October: plant the seed

The season opens far earlier than many shoppers realise. Singles and small sharing lines start signalling Christmas from August, and the early weeks are now a serious sales window in their own right: August to October accounts for £381m of seasonal confectionery sales¹⁷, outstripping November. This is the moment for accessible, low-commitment treating – novelty flavours, festive twists on everyday favourites and sub-£3 packet lines that let shoppers dip a toe without a big outlay. It shows in the basket: in September and October, 41% of sweet biscuit packs sold were priced under £3¹⁸. Early-season lines are doing real work, with the seasonal and assortments segment up 11.7% year on year in October¹⁹. Lead with excitement and price, not premium.

● November: build the range

As the countdown begins in earnest, shopping missions shift towards ritual and preparation. Advent calendars drive the month, assortments start to build, and shoppers begin trading up in earnest. This is the window to widen the premium and seasonal fixture, phase in £3-plus assortments and gift-ready formats, and let in-store theatre start doing its job.

Sensory cues, seasonal scents and well-timed cross-category displays now pull shoppers into the festive mindset. It is also when the more considered gifting missions kick in, from hand-picked treats bought through Advent to the growing ritual of the Christmas Eve box.

● December: convert the occasion

December is the crescendo, and the biggest month for seasonal confectionery at £527m in sales²⁰. Gifting, entertaining and sharing take over: tins, boxed chocolates, selection boxes and larger sharing formats come into their own, alongside the grazing and 'picky bits' spreads driving so many at-home gatherings. The price mix flips completely – in November and December, 75% of sweet biscuit packs sold were priced above £3²¹. Last-minute gifting peaks in the final days, so tins and premium assortments need to be full and front of store.

● The golden rule

Phase the range across the whole quarter and stock for the occasion – under-stock and you lose sales at the peak; over-stock and you're discounting in January. Right range, right time, right brands: evolve the fixture with the season, and the golden quarter rewards the retailers who move with it.

important, but shoppers are creating more occasions where grazing boards and sharing platters take centre stage." Small, high-quality plates of European charcuterie, olives, and artisan breads can recreate restaurant-style entertaining at home.

Cheese is central. "Rather than elaborate meals, people are creating grazing tables and sharing boards at home," says Patrick McGuigan, cheese advisor to the same campaign, noting the trend "has grown exponentially this year as people have been eating out less." Ready-to-serve platters do much of the work, from Manchego to marinated mozzarella, geared to large groups across the run-up to Christmas, Boxing Day and New Year.

The branded fixture is growing fast alongside the deli counter. Boursin, the UK's No.1 indulgent cheese brand, reports almost 30% of annual indulgent cheese sales now land in the final eight weeks before Christmas¹² – "the single biggest opportunity for both brands

Analysis

and retailers,” says Oliver Richmond, marketing manager for Boursin UK. The category increasingly hinges on versatility, he adds: shoppers “want products that work across multiple occasions, from grazing boards and canapés to Christmas dinner and Boxing Day leftovers.”

The format also suits convenience. Both Mars Wrigley and FBC UK report sharing and “me-moment” formats among their strongest performers. “Assortments are perfect for those sharing occasions,” says FBC’s Harwood, as shoppers move between a shared board and a solo night in. Mondelez shows similar patterns: its Oreo Yard had its best year yet in 2025, up 23%¹³, in what Nash calls “clear shopper appetite for larger, shareable, festive formats”.

Drinks are drawn in too, with larger sharing formats and pairings adding a sense of event. Heineken makes the case for stout: Murphy’s malty, toasty profile is, says Duncan at Heineken, “perfectly matched with cheese or winter desserts, making the perfect festive serve whilst still providing shoppers with strong value for money”.

For retailers, the reward is a fuller basket. Grazing is inherently incremental – a board is never a single SKU – and draws shoppers across cheese, charcuterie, bakery and drinks, turning a night in into an occasion at a fraction of the cost of eating out.

Flavours and textures

Amid the annual focus on new flavours, the 2026 consensus is elevated familiarity rather than reinvention. “While social media continues to influence food trends, Christmas remains rooted in familiarity and tradition,” says Simon Atkins, bakery advisor to the EU campaign. “We’re seeing classic European festive flavours elevated through premium ingredients, richer textures and subtle twists rather than complete reinvention.”

In practice that means warm spices – cinnamon, clove, ginger – alongside caramel, citrus and rich fruit, with pistachio and premium chocolate adding a luxurious feel.

Texture is increasingly central: Atkins points to “crisp laminated pastries with smooth, creamy fillings... layered chocolates, crunchy nut inclusions and artisan breads.” Heritage bakes with genuine



provenance – Italian panettone, German Dresdner Stollen PGI, French pain d’épices – carry that balance of tradition and craft, with protected-origin status read as a mark of quality.

Confectionery is reading the same shift. Shoppers “will continue looking for familiar festive flavours, but with added excitement through texture, fillings and multisensory formats,” says Mondelez’s Nash, such as sweet-heat, layered coatings or unexpected fillings.

“ Social media influences food trends, but Christmas remains rooted in familiarity and tradition. Festive flavours are elevated by premium ingredients, richer textures and subtle twists, rather than reinvention”

Social media has become a discovery engine feeding the fixture. “Social media is now a major driver of festive discovery, with over one in five gift buyers saying they get their inspiration there,”¹⁴ says FBC’s Harwood – viral flavours increasingly crossing from feed to shelf as brands chase trend-led NPD.

Nostalgia is the most dependable cue. Shortbread and butter cookies remain staples: over half of all shortbread sales occur at Christmas, with Paterson’s the number one shortbread brand of 2025¹⁵.

That said, festive twists on trusted brands also perform, with Mars Wrigley pointing to white chocolate’s strong appeal among under-35s¹⁶ as trading shoppers up within familiar names.

Cheese has become a spectacle in its own right. “We’re seeing shoppers looking for cheeses that bring theatre to the table,” says the campaign’s McGuigan – flower-coated and pepper-crusted wheels “immediately become talking points”, while pistachio, black garlic and chilli also draw attention.



Sources

¹ NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Sugar & Gum Confectionery, 24 w/e 27 December 2025. — 0.6% value / units slipped / one in three planning to spend less

² NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Sugar & Gum Confectionery, 24 w/e 27 December 2025. — penetration held firm at 87%

³ NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Sugar & Gum Confectionery, 24 w/e 27 December 2025 — Mars Wrigley grew both value and units

⁴ FBC UK (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — seasonal & assortments up 3.5% to £181m

⁵ Circana (UK) Ltd, All Outlets, value sales, 18 w/e 27 Dec 2025

⁶ NielsenIQ, value sales, 1 w/e

28 December 2025 — £481m month-long run-up

⁷ NielsenIQ, value sales, 4 w/e 3 January 2026

⁸ NielsenIQ, data to 3 January 2026 — Birra Moretti 3.8%

⁹ NielsenIQ, value sales, 4 w/e 30.01.26 — premium cider 5.4%

¹⁰ NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Christmas Confectionery, 24 w/e 27.12.25 — December peaks at £527m

¹¹ YouGov, GB Dining Out Report 2025 — nearly 38% eating out less

¹² Boursin/Bel UK (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — ~30% of indulgent cheese sales in final eight weeks — new

¹³ Mondelēz International (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — Oreo Yard up 23% — new

¹⁴ Mintel, Consumer Gifting Behaviour and Seasonal Retail Trends, 2025 — one in five gift buyers inspired by social media

¹⁵ FBC UK (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — seasonal & assortments up 3.5% to £181m

¹⁶ Numerator, spend share by demographic, 52 weeks to 22.02.26, Total Market — no/low over-indexing with younger shoppers

The golden quarter calendar

¹⁷ NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Christmas Confectionery, 24 w/e 27.12.25 — £381m Aug–Oct

¹⁸ FBC UK (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — 41% of packs under £3

¹⁹ FBC UK (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — seasonal & assortments up 11.7% in October

²⁰ NielsenIQ Scantrack & Kantar Worldpanel, Total Christmas Confectionery, 24 w/e 27.12.25 — £527m December

²¹ FBC UK (supplier-provided figure; no external data source specified) — 75% of packs above £3

hosting.” Value and premium, he adds, “are no longer competing priorities ... shoppers increasingly expect both”.

For wine and speciality food, “shoppers are looking for products that justify a higher price through quality, provenance and craftsmanship rather than simply premium packaging,” says McAndrew, citing demand for regional identity and larger bottle formats for entertaining. He also notes sustainability counts, “particularly where it’s linked to responsible production and lighter packaging.”

Mindful consumption is the other side. Moderation, wellness and inclusivity should be “at the forefront of category resets in the lead-up to the festivities,” says Heineken’s Duncan, with the growing no- and low-alcohol segment, which over-indexes with younger shoppers¹⁶, helping to build excitement around 0.0% options.

What retailers need to know

The clearest priority is phasing the range across the quarter. “Right range, right time, right brands,” says FBC’s Harwood. “Evolve the range across the golden quarter, leading with novelty flavours and smaller pack formats early in the season, then build assortments through November, and move to tins for last-minute December gifting.” She advises retailers to buy for the occasion, to avoid both selling out at the peak and discounting leftover stock in January.

In-store theatre is the second priority. Sensory cues, seasonal displays and cross-category execution help shoppers into a festive mood. FBC is supporting retailers with POS built around its Fox’s biscuit wreath, while Heineken

highlights themed displays near the front of store to drive impulse. Gift-with-purchase works, too: in 2025, Birra Moretti paired limited-edition packaging with a bespoke Ape bauble, “creating excitement for shoppers and giving them another reason to buy into the beer category”, says Duncan.

Cross-merchandising is where baskets grow. “There is still an opportunity to move beyond individual products and merchandise complete festive experiences,” says the EU campaign’s McAndrew. “Increasingly, shoppers are buying stories as much as products.” Grouping sparkling wines, regional cheeses, charcuterie, speciality bakery and accompaniments prompts shoppers to build a whole occasion rather than single items. Signposting matters as much as range. Christmas is a series of missions — from early gift-planning to last-minute top-ups — and retailers who guide shoppers, making trading up easy, capture the most value.

Asked for a single message, the suppliers agree. For Duncan at Heineken, it is “a choice for all occasions... underpinned with brand credibility and value for money”. For McAndrew, it is authenticity over volume: “Products with a strong regional identity, protected origin, traditional production methods and an authentic story will resonate far more than products relying solely on festive packaging or promotional pricing.” And for Harwood at FBC, it is lifting the whole category: giving premium and seasonal ranges the space, timing and theatre to turn a cautious shopper into a generous one. Get that right, and Christmas 2026 still has plenty to give.

Little luxuries, mindful moments

Underpinning every category is the same balance: shoppers want to indulge but need it to feel justified. “Affordable indulgence and premiumisation continue to define the season,” says Harwood at FBC. “Shoppers are avoiding big-ticket gifting but indulging with a trade-up into little luxuries.” Smaller, keenly priced formats have become an effective entry point, letting shoppers buy into Christmas without a significant outlay: as true of a £2.50 mini tin of Royal Dansk as of a standard advent or a single festive bar. With wider commodity costs still well above historic norms, and retail prices stagnant, keeping indulgence accessible is predominantly done through pack size and format, not price.

“Affordable luxury continues to drive purchasing decisions,” agrees Bel UK’s Richmond, with shoppers seeking “simple ways to elevate entertaining without increasing the overall cost of

Bel UK

e: beluk@groupe.co.uk
w: bel-uk.co.uk

Unwrap golden sales

DETAILS

Bel UK Ltd
Quinton Court
98 London Road
Sevenoaks
TN13 1BA
e: beluk@groupe-bel.com
w: bel-uk.co.uk

KEY CONTACTS

Oliver Richmond
Marketing manager,
Boursin

KEY BRANDS

Boursin®
Babybel®
Port Salut®

 Boursin is helping retailers unwrap golden seasonal sales this Christmas with irresistible festive flavours, exciting new formats and striking limited-edition packaging across its seasonal range, all backed by significant marketing investment designed to put Boursin firmly on shoppers' Christmas lists.

As the UK's number one indulgent cheese brand, Boursin is the category's biggest value and volume contributor year to date, growing 12.3% in value and 14.6% in volume¹. And with 30% of all indulgent cheese sales taking place in the final eight weeks of the year², Boursin is essential for retailers looking to maximise one of the category's biggest sales opportunities.

Festive favourites

Boursin's seasonal range has received a premium makeover, with limited-edition outer packaging creating standout at shelf, while new gold foil inside transforms every puck into the centrepiece of the festive cheeseboard.

Continuing its focus on flavour-led innovation, Boursin is expanding its range with the launch of limited-edition Hot Honey alongside the new Trio Gourmand. Bringing together Boursin's iconic Garlic & Herbs with Cranberry Pepper and Truffle, Trio Gourmand offers shoppers a new way to elevate festive entertaining, building on the success of last year's Trio, which generated more than £1m in Christmas sales. Hot Honey taps into one of the UK's fastest-growing flavour trends, helping retailers drive incremental sales.

Completing the range is the new 250g Big Festive Pack, designed for larger gatherings, festive recipes and sharing occasions, encouraging shoppers to trade up. The wider portfolio offers further inspiration, including Boursin Truffle, Black Pepper, Blue and Plant-Based.

Beyond the cheeseboard

Christmas remains one of the year's biggest premium food occasions, with IGD highlighting



“Boursin is expanding its range with the launch of Hot Honey alongside the new Trio Gourmand, which brings together its iconic Garlic & Herbs with Cranberry Pepper and Truffle”

that retailers who balance value with premium experiences are best placed to win, as shoppers continue to invest in products that make celebrations feel special³.

Boursin's versatility extends far beyond the cheeseboard. From canapés, elevated roasties, vegetable gratins to Boxing Day toasties and even gravy, Boursin helps add effortless flavour and a premium, festive twist.

Combining convenience with restaurant-quality taste, Boursin enables hosts to create impressive dishes with minimal preparation, making it the perfect ingredient for everything from festive drinks and picky bits to Christmas dinner and Boxing Day leftovers.

Boursin on every Christmas list

Boursin's new products and limited-edition packs are backed by a significant marketing investment of over £1m, to maximise awareness over the crucial Christmas period.

Activity includes a brand-new equity campaign, PR and shopper partnerships, and the return of famed maître d' Fred Sirieix, whose entertaining expertise and French flair perfectly capture Boursin's role at the heart of festive hosting.



Source

- ¹ Circana, YTD to 11.07.26
² Circana, Pre-Packed Cheese, L52w to 27.12.25
³ IGD Retail Analysis, What to Expect in Christmas 2026

Boursin®

**Stock Up
on the #1
Indulgent Cheese* Brand
this Christmas!**



LIMITED EDITION GOLDEN FOIL



LIMITED
EDITION FOR
CHRISTMAS



LIMITED
EDITION
FLAVOUR



AVAILABLE IN LIMITED EDITION FORMATS AND FLAVOURS!

*In Indulgence category, NIQ penetration & IRI value sales CYTD 11.07.2026

European elevated feasting

DETAILS

European Union

To find out more about the campaign, contact: morethanfood_UK@agripromotion.eu

KEY CONTACTS

Gaynor Stokes

Meat Advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign

Patrick McGuigan

Cheese Advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign

KEY BRANDS

Jamón de Teruel PDO

Chorizo Riojano PGI

Prosciutto di Parma PDO

Kraški Pršut PGI

Dalmatinski Pršut PGI

Manchego PDO

Comté PDO

Brillat-Savarin PGI

Langres PDO

Manchego PDO

Queso de Murcia al vino PGI

Mothais sur feuille PDO

Saint-Marcellin PGI

Noix de Grenoble PDO

Ossau-Iraty PDO

Parmigiano Reggiano PDO

Jambon d'Ardenne PGI

While the traditional Christmas lunch remains firmly at the heart of the festive season, the occasions surrounding it are becoming increasingly important.

Three-quarters of consumers enjoyed an additional celebratory meal last Christmas¹, while 65% "spent freely" on food and drink despite cost concerns². For retailers, that presents an opportunity to inspire shoppers beyond the festive roast with ingredients that help recreate restaurant-quality experiences for festive drinks, Boxing Day buffets and relaxed family get-togethers.

Sharing takes centre stage

"The 'picky bits' trend we've seen growing throughout the summer will evolve into more informal occasions around the festive lunch, from festive drinks to Boxing Day buffets. Charcuterie is perfectly suited for this," explains Gaynor Stokes, meat advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign. "The biggest opportunity this Christmas is the continued growth in sharing," she notes.

Retailers can inspire shoppers with complete grazing solutions: long-fermented sourdoughs, rye breads and artisan crackers, complemented by Prosciutto di Parma (Protected Designation of Origin, PDO) from Italy, Jamón de Teruel PDO and Chorizo Riojano PGI from Spain, and the lesser-known Jambon d'Ardenne PGI from Belgium. "Paired with olives, roasted peppers and artisan preserves, these products help shoppers to recreate restaurant-style sharing occasions.

"Premiumisation will also continue to be key, as shoppers seek confidence in sourcing and welfare, with PDO and



“Retailers can inspire shoppers with complete grazing solutions”

PGI status giving retailers compelling stories around craftsmanship,” says Stokes.

Elevated christmas cheeseboards

"Alongside classics such as Comté PDO from France, celebrated for its rich, nutty flavour and long maturation, and Manchego PDO from Spain, which pairs naturally with membrillo and premium charcuterie, retailers should be looking to introduce more adventurous regional cheeses: the indulgent Brillat-Savarin PGI and washed-rind Langres PDO from France," explains Patrick McGuigan, cheese expert and advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign. "This year truffle cheeses will continue to be popular, especially combined with brie, Pecorino and Gouda. I'm also starting to see brie and Manchego PDO with fillings such as wild garlic, pesto, pistachios, black garlic and different types of chilli and pepper. Display alongside artisan breads, quince paste, crackers and preserves," he concludes.



Source

¹ AHDB, Christmas predictions 2025: A potential cracker for red meat and dairy, 01.12.25

² IGD, Report reveals Christmas confidence boost, 22.01.26

MORE THAN ONLY FOOD & DRINK

Blending
Innovation &
Quality



Discover the exceptional world of EU food and drink this Christmas. Where tradition, craftsmanship and quality come together to create unforgettable festive flavours.



EUROPEAN UNION

ENJOY
IT'S FROM
EUROPE



Festive firsts at fair prices

DETAILS

Fox's Burton's Companies
St Paul's House
8-12 Warwick Lane
London
EC4M 7BP
t: 0800 591 886

KEY CONTACTS

Jo Harwood
Chief Sales and Trade
Marketing Officer

KEY BRANDS

Fox's Classic Assortments
Paterson's Shortbread
Maryland

➔ Fox's Burton's Companies (FBC) enters the festive season with a line-up of new products designed to drive incremental sales.

Heading up the range is Maryland S'wich Terry's Chocolate Orange, which bakes Terry's orange oil into Maryland's signature crunchy cookie sandwich. As the first flavour extension of Maryland S'wich – which has delivered 51% category incrementality since its 2025 debut¹ – it marks the first time Terry's has appeared in sweet biscuits.

Royal Dansk's iconic Danish Butter Biscuits return this Christmas with a new refreshed design, celebrating the brand's 60th anniversary.

"Shoppers are keeping a close eye on household spending, but they aren't willing to compromise on the moments that make Christmas special," says Jo Harwood, chief sales and trade marketing officer at FBC. "They're becoming more selective – pulling back on bigger-ticket buys while making room for premium treats that elevate the everyday. That's why affordable indulgence remains a major focus, and sweet biscuits with festive flavours are well placed to capitalise."

Affordability is reshaping gifting too, as shoppers seek presents that pair generosity and quality at an accessible price. Fox's seasonal range answers this, led by the Fox's Classic Assortment – the UK's number one branded sweet biscuit assortment at Christmas².

"Nostalgia is another consistent driver, so stocking trusted brands that have played a part in family traditions for years is important for retailers," adds Harwood.

She cites Paterson's, the most chosen shortbread brand at Christmas³,



“Shoppers aren't willing to compromise on the moments that make Christmas special”

as delivering on that – the Classic Shortbread Fingers and 1kg Scottish Cream Shortbread Selection her 'must-stock' through the season and into Hogmanay for Scottish retailers.

On merchandising, Harwood's advice is to plan early. "Assortments drive the most value across the entire period, but they ramp up through November and December, reaching their peak in the week before Christmas as shoppers stock up on at-home sharing products and last-minute gifts," she says. "As Christmas Day approaches, we also see sales of biscuit tins increase."

Her recommendation is to build seasonal displays from October, expanding premium lines as shopper missions shift from everyday treats to gifting. Cross-category theatre near confectionery, hot drinks and alcohol can help capture larger baskets, while FBC's new in-store dials up generosity with its Fox's biscuit wreath design.



Source

- ¹ Worldpanel by Numerator, Total Market, Maryland S'wich, L52w to 14.6.26 vs YA
- ² Circana (UK) Ltd, All Outlets GB, Sweet Biscuits Fox's Classic Assortment, Value Sales, Christmas 2025 (w/e 06.09.25 – w/e 27.12.25)
- ³ Circana (UK) Ltd, All Outlets GB, Total Shortbread, Unit Sales, 52 w/e 27.12.25

NO.1

BRANDED SEASONAL
ASSORTMENT
2025*

**MUST
STOCK
FOR SHARING
& GIFTING**

GENEROSITY THAT DRIVES SALES

SINCE 1853
FOX'S

CLASSIC
BISCUIT SELECTION



HOW FABULOUS. HOW **FOX'S**

*Fox's Classic Assortment was the No.1 Seasonal Assortment in Christmas 2025. Source: Circana (UK) Ltd, All Outlets GB, Fox's Classic, Value Sales, 18 w/e 27, Dec 2025.

HEINEKEN UK

e: heinenofftrade@fleetstreetagency.com

w: heineken.co.uk

Make Christmas a cracker

DETAILS

HEINEKEN UK
45 Mortimer Street
London
W1W 8HJ
t: 0131 528 1000

KEY CONTACTS

Sarah Duncan
Category & Commercial
Strategy Director

KEY BRANDS

Birra Moretti
Cruzcampo
Foster's
Strongbow
Old Mout
Inch's
Heineken®
Murphy's

Christmas and New Year continues to be one of the biggest trading periods for the beer and cider category, with the week itself worth a whopping £185m¹ – and in the grocery channel alone it's worth £150m².

"This represents a huge opportunity for retailers during and in the lead-up to the festivities, and Heineken UK's unrivalled portfolio of iconic beers and ciders is here to support retailers in making the most of this," notes Sarah Duncan, category & commercial strategy director at Heineken UK. "Offering a wider range of choice is key, from core favourites and flavourful choices, to varying pack sizes and no- and low-alcohol options."

Driving premium demand

The festive season is a time when shoppers are looking to celebrate and entertain family and friends, and as a result are willing to trade up and spend a little extra. "World lager in particular sees a spike in demand at Christmas, with Birra Moretti worth 3.8%³ of total beer and cider sales in the month leading up to it," explains Duncan. Last year, Birra Moretti celebrated through limited-edition festive packaging to deliver a standout moment on-shelf, as well as offering a gift-with-purchase mechanic – a bespoke Birra Moretti Ape Bauble – to drive purchase.

Don't forget the core favourites

While premium lager and world lager allow customers to raise the bar at home, core should still remain a priority during the season as shoppers look for their favourites, with Foster's



“It’s important to cater to those looking to moderate or abstain from alcohol whilst delivering experience, as 46% of total UK consumers moderate?”

18x440ml a bestselling SKU worth £9.1m⁴, and Strongbow Original 18x440ml seeing a sales peak of £4.2m⁵ at Christmas.

Seasonal indulgence

Interesting flavour profiles lend themselves well to the festive period, as consumers tend to indulge more, particularly stout's malty flavour profile. Last year was the first Christmas the new Murphy's 4x440ml and 10x440ml multipacks were introduced into the off-trade, and Murphy's saw its biggest week of the year as its value tripled in the final week⁶.

Capitalising on no- and low-alcohol

While many consumers will be looking to indulge throughout the Christmas period, it's important to cater to those looking to moderate or abstain from alcohol whilst still delivering on taste and experience, as 46% of total UK adults moderate⁷. Launched earlier this year, Heineken 0.0 Lemon & Elderflower and Nectarine & Juniper add a credible and trusted option to the booming no- and low-alcohol market, allowing retailers to create excitement about low-ABV and 0.0% options and encourage flavour exploration as we approach the festive season.

Source

- ¹ Nielsen IQ: Value Sales 1 week to 28.12.25
- ² See 1
- ³ Nielsen data to 03.01.26
- ⁴ Nielsen IQ: Value Sales 4 weeks to 03.01.26
- ⁵ Nielsen IQ: Value Sales 4 weeks to 03.01.26
- ⁶ Nielsen data to 03.01.26
- ⁷ Worldpanel by Numerator, Alcovision Data to 30.06.25





Keep the festive cheers flowing



Please drink responsibly
be [drinkaware.co.uk](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

Festive classics, new twists

DETAILS

Mondelēz International
Uxbridge Business Park
Sanderson Road
Uxbridge UB8 1DH
t: 0870 600 0699

KEY CONTACTS

Susan Nash
Trade Communications
Manager

KEY BRANDS

Cadbury
Cadbury Bournville
Cadbury Dairy Milk
Green & Black's
Trebor
Maynards Bassetts
Halls
belVita
Cadbury Biscuits
Mikado
Toblerone
OREO
Ritz
Barry

 Mondelēz International, the No. 1 confectionery supplier¹, is unwrapping its 2026 festive range, a mix of new innovation and returning favourites set to drive seasonal sales.

Chocolate at Christmas

Building on the success of the Cadbury Dairy Milk and Lotus Biscoff partnership, the range expands this Christmas with new Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff Filled Centres, available in single and multipack formats.

There is also the new Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff Pouch, which combines classic Dairy Milk Chunks with Biscoff-filled chunks. The launches offer retailers new options across self-eat and sharing occasions for the festive season.

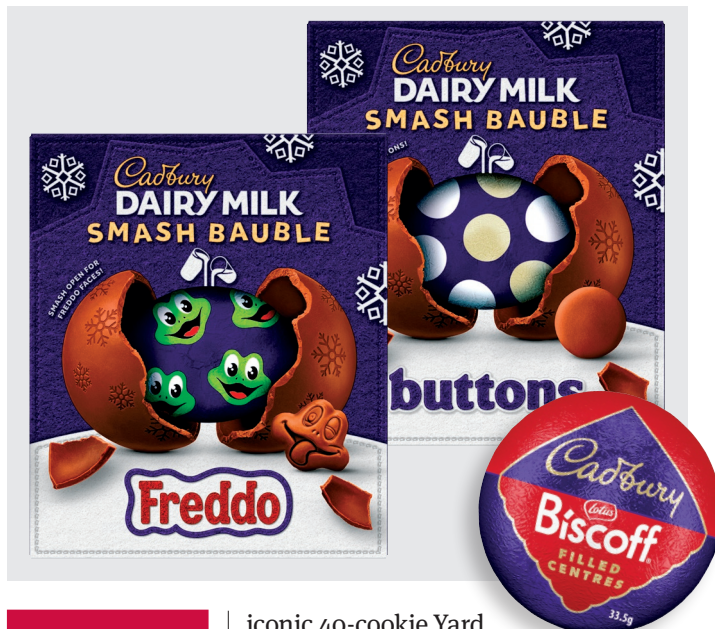
“Our Cadbury Dairy Milk and Lotus Biscoff partnership has been a huge success, and we’re excited to build on that this Christmas with two delicious new additions to the range, including a Cadbury Dairy Milk Biscoff Advent Calendar,” notes Susan Nash, Mondelēz International trade communications manager.

The new Cadbury Dairy Milk Smash Bauble is also expected to be a smashing success. A fun, interactive way to celebrate Christmas, shoppers are invited to smash open the Smash Bauble to reveal Buttons or Freddo faces inside. “Perfect as a gift, stocking filler or fun activity, they are set to shake up shelves this festive season,” notes Nash.

Toblerone is also expanding its range with new Toblerone Biscoff Diamond Truffles, a limited-edition Toblerone Crispy Caramel block. Also available is a Toblerone Advent Calendar, featuring an assortment of Toblerone Truffles and Tinies.

Celebrating with biscuits

Oreo, the world’s No.1 cookie², is again offering its



“We’re excited to bring two delicious new additions to the Cadbury Dairy Milk and Lotus Biscoff partnership”

iconic 40-cookie Yard of biscuits, following the packs’ most successful year to date, growing 23%³.

Oreo is also offering its successful limited-edition Oreo Gingerbread as well as Oreo Enrobed White, an indulgent twist on the classic Oreo with its coating of smooth white chocolate-flavoured cream, creating another layer of flavour for consumers to enjoy.

Returning festive favourites

Mondelēz International offers a portfolio of successful brands and festive favourites, including Cadbury Dairy Milk Advent Calendar, Cadbury Milk Tray and Cadbury Heroes – all of which hold the No.1 position in their respective sub-categories⁴ – alongside Christmas essentials such as Cadbury Dairy Milk coins, a popular, traditional Christmas

stocking filler.

“Also returning is Cadbury’s popular Secret Santa campaign, encouraging consumers to spread generosity and goodwill by sending free chocolate to friends and family,” notes Nash.



Sources

- ¹ Nielsen IQ, Total Confectionery, Value Sales, 52 w/e 19.07.25
- ² Int.l Ltd/Snacks 2026 ed – Sweet Biscuits Category definition, brand share 2025, Retail value sales
- ³ Nielsen IQ, Tot Cov, RSV value; Worldpanel TH Panel: 52w 28 Dec 2025, Total Oreo
- ⁴ NIQ Discover Total Coverage data from w/e 19.07.25 to w/e 27.12.25



NEW

OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS
**INDULGENCE
THIS CHRISTMAS**



Cadbury

Lotus
Biscoff®



NEW



NEW



NEW



WilliamReed.

William Reed LTD.

Broadfield Park, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9RT

Tel: 01293 613400 Fax: 01293 610380

www.thegrocer.co.uk