



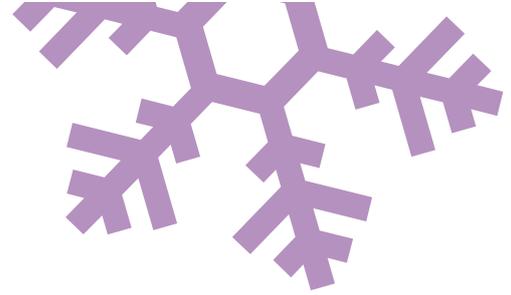
Money Tips from MYJAR: 'Christmas Edition'

A short guide to help you make your
money go further

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Introduction



Welcome to our first seasonal e-book. In each publication we will be covering topical issues, and a range of other subjects that we hope you will find to be of interest and most importantly help you save money.

Christmas is a time for celebration but we know it can also be challenging with worries about increased winter heating bills, the presents and extra food and drink. It really can mount up. For most people that is what every Christmas is like — a mix of excitement and nervousness about how it will all be paid for. We all know that the best strategy is to plan well ahead but if you are like most people, those plans that always seem to be such a good idea, never quite make it to reality.

There is a huge temptation each year to do Christmas bigger and better but the odd thing is, the Christmases we think of most fondly are often those from years ago when we all made do with a little less. So perhaps this year, with a bit of sensible planning and a touch of realistic thinking as far as our money is concerned, we can have a fabulous Christmas without a New Year hangover of debt that we can't pay. Our advice when thinking about borrowing is “if you are not sure you can afford to pay it back, don't borrow it”. The last thing that you want is to be buying masses of food that lasts just a day, or toys that don't survive until the New Year, and then be left paying it back for months to come. So plan ahead and really get more out of your Christmas cash.

I hope that the information in this e-book will help you have a brilliant Christmas and a great New Year.

Gareth

Gareth Gumbley, CEO, MYJAR

Read Gareth's blog at www.myjar.com/news/gareths-blog

MYJAR REVEALS THE RISING COST OF LIVING

Shopping Up 4%



UK weekly shopping bills have risen by an average

4.4%

in the past year,

but lots of other places spend much more for their basic foodstuffs.

Dining Out Compared



Dining out is more expensive in the UK.

A meal for two in a mid-range restaurant costs **£40** on average.

America **£27.62** France **£37.50** Spain **£33.39**

Cost of Loaf of Bread Compared

According to cost-of-living comparison site Numbeo, the average cost of a loaf of bread is:



House Prices



Average house price

UK **£242,415**

America **£122,073**

And **London** is the second most expensive city in the world to buy property, beaten only by millionaires' playground Monaco.

Petrol



The cost of filling up your tank has almost doubled in the last 10 years in Britain.



The AA says unleaded now costs us an average **£1.30** per litre. But that's still only the ninth highest in Europe. Drivers in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy and Greece all pay more. Spare a thought for Norwegians who shell out **£1.53** for a litre of unleaded. In Venezuela a litre of unleaded is just 8p.

Cost of Christmas



Recent research has shown that the average household spend on Christmas would be **£868** with two-thirds of people expect to pay for the cost of Christmas using savings



and **9%** stating they would use a credit card or loan.



19% of people surveyed admitted they failed to budget for the festive season.

Electricity



Pay on average kWh for electricity:



Islands usually have higher costs because they import energy. But islanders in the Orkney region of **Westray, Scotland** reduced their bills by an astonishing **90%** by clubbing together to buy a wind turbine.

A study by the Energy Collective looked at prices in **17 nations** and we were the **seventh dearest**.

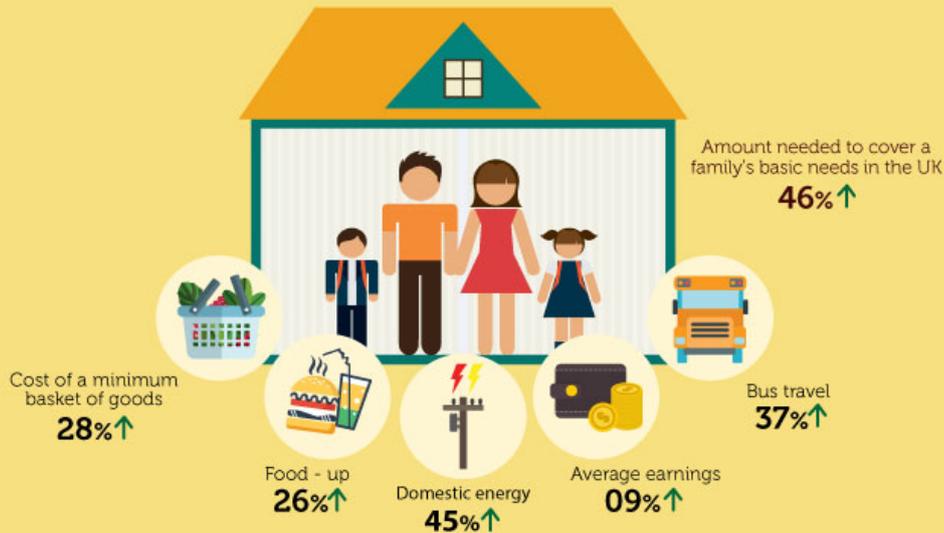


Costs in India and China are less than half those in the UK.

Countries compared to the UK

	Consumer Prices	Rent Prices	Resturant Prices	Groceries Prices
 Australia	UK is 12.61% Lower	UK is 36.52% Lower	UK is 0.70% Higher	UK is 17.19% Lower
 Germany	UK is 18.58% Higher	UK is 42.19% Higher	UK is 34.78% Higher	UK is 17.19% Higher
 Spain	UK is 36.00% Higher	UK is 74.71% Higher	UK is 30.92% Higher	UK is 52.33% Higher
 Estonia	UK is 61.56% Higher	UK is 54.29% Higher	UK is 87.46% Higher	UK is 75.65% Higher

Compared to 2008



Cost of a First Class Stamp



Price of a Loaf of Bread





Setting a Budget

‘Budgeting’ is a word that is often bandied around, but what does it really mean? How do you go about setting yourself a realistic budget that allows you to buy all the essentials, maintain a good quality of life, and have money left over at the end of the month for saving? Sitting down to write out a budget might seem a tedious task, but it can actually be eye-opening and incredibly beneficial for your day-to-day well-being. Here we walk you through the best budget-setting process — it’s actually surprisingly simple!

To create an effective budget, you need to calculate two fundamental figures:

- **Money coming in**
- **Money you spend**

There’s a little more to both of these, so take the time to understand exactly what you need to know in order to put a working budget together.

Money coming in

By this we mean any form of income. You need to work out exactly how much money your household makes, including putting together the salaries of anyone in the house who works, and adding benefits and/or money you might receive on a regular basis from family members. Be realistic — only count overtime and bonuses once they’ve been earned and you’re sure they will be coming.

Money you spend

Many of us have a rough idea of what we spend every month, but in order to get a full overview of our outgoings, we need to do some digging around for the detail. Find your bank statements, utility bills, rent payments, food receipts and any other record of spending for the last few months. Once you know how much you spend on essentials, you can begin to see where you have room for the more enjoyable things in life. Remember to be a bit strict with yourself, though. It’s important to have fun days out with the kids now and again, but try to keep the costs down and make sure there’s enough remaining money in your budget for saving.

Some other handy budgeting tips to bear in mind

If you've got access to a computer, use a programme like Excel to organise your monthly budget. With all the information and numbers recorded in one place, you'll find it a lot easier to see what's going on financially. As vital as budgeting is, try not to obsess over it. Make planning your monthly budget a routine, rather than a chore.

5 everyday money-saving tips:

Once we record what we spend on a day-to-day basis it's easier to identify where savings can be made. Everyday expenses can really mount up, so concentrate on reducing these and you'll find yourself with some welcome extra cash.

Consider switching energy suppliers

It's definitely worth taking the time to compare your energy costs with those of other providers. If you're with one of the major suppliers, it's likely you could save serious sums by switching to a different company but you should always look for any hidden costs.

Bring your own lunch to work

When lunch hour beckons, it can be tempting to pop to the shops or the office canteen to fill yourself up for the afternoon. Take ten minutes in the evening to prepare a home-made meal for the next day, and you could not only save money but improve your diet too. There's a host of great recipe sites online that will help you keep your DIY lunches interesting.

Make shopping lists and stick to them

It might sound obvious, but it's amazing the difference a well-planned shopping list can make to your food budget. Check the fridge and cupboards thoroughly before you hit the supermarket, and make sure you're not doubling up on anything. Write a shopping list that only includes items you definitely need for the next week. Don't

shop hungry; an empty stomach often leads to impulse purchases!

Don't buy brands

It's astonishing how much more expensive branded items can be. Own-brand often offers similar quality at drastically lower prices. Take the branded goods out of the trolley and watch your shopping receipts shrink.

Keep an eye on small outgoing

We're all guilty of spending small sums of money here and there on items that aren't essential — coffee, a bus ticket when we don't feel like walking, an extra drink with a meal out. Keep tabs on these expenses and try consciously to cut them out where you can. It will quickly make a noticeable impact on your budget.



Making your money go further

Cheap Days Out

We all know that necessities — food, heating, rent — should take priority in any budget. This doesn't mean, however, that it isn't important to enjoy life and regularly allow yourself affordable rewards for working hard every day. Spending time doing the things you enjoy is vital for keeping up motivation and morale. To stretch your entertainment budget and increase your happiness levels throughout the winter, follow our simple tips.

Free exhibits at art galleries

While you might find yourself forking out a fair amount to see a special exhibition, permanent exhibits at many of the country's top art galleries are free. If you fancy a cultural day out, you can't do better than seeing some fine art in the flesh.

Matinee movie screenings

Are you a film buff who simply can't wait to see the latest releases? You should consider going to the cinema during the day rather than in the evening. These screenings can be cheaper, and the cinema is likely to be less crowded!

Use your local library

It might seem the easy option to buy an e-book or a DVD when you fancy whiling away some leisure hours. Before you take out your wallet, though, get yourself to the library where you'll have your pick of books and films, all for nothing.

Go for a walk

Appreciating nature doesn't cost a penny, and the UK is packed full of simply incredible beauty spots. A bracing walk through stunning landscape will do the whole family good.



Groceries — How to save for Christmas

Save money on shopping

Food is one of the most significant aspects of a monthly budget, and can also be one of the most costly. If you're bringing up a family, making sure everyone is well-fed and healthy can take a hefty chunk out of your monthly pay. Luckily, there are plenty of ways to cut down on the grocery bill while still enjoying delicious and nutritious meals every day. Here we bring you some savvy solutions for food shopping on a tight budget.

Plan, plan, plan

If you buy items randomly without really knowing when you're going to use them or what you can use them for, your grocery bills will quickly soar and you're likely to waste a fair amount of food. Carefully plan your meals for the whole week, every week, and make a concise shopping list. That way, when you get to the supermarket you'll have a focused attitude, and be less inclined to purchase whatever catches your eye on the day.

Buy own-brand products

This is a fail-safe way of saving money. Sticking to branded goods can add hundreds of precious pounds to your food bills every year. Downgrade to own-brand items, which are often of comparable quality, and you'll find your weekly supermarket shop is suddenly a whole lot cheaper.

Switch to a cheaper supermarket

Old habits die hard, and it's easy to get stuck in a routine of going to the same shop every time. Shake things up and see if you can score cheaper deals elsewhere. If you do your grocery shopping online, you'll often find that big supermarket chains offer discounts to new customers. You may well be able to get a good percentage knocked off your final bill.

Time your shopping right

Just as we often visit the same shops without exploring other options, we also tend to go shopping at the same time of day. Remember, there are specific times of day when food shopping is cheapest. If you go to the supermarket in the evening, you are likely to get your hands on more discounted items. Feel free to ask a member of staff when their particular store cuts prices on certain items. Be cautious about ‘*Buy one, get one free*’ or ‘*Buy Three for £X*’ as you can often be enticed into buying something you really don’t need, or more than you need.

Don’t shop on an empty stomach. Hunger can be the downfall of savvy shoppers! Shopping when hungry encourages more impulse purchases, and is therefore definitely to be avoided. Eat a good meal before you set off to the supermarket, and you’ll be better able to think clearly.



Top tips for a frugal festive feast

At the heart of every magical Christmas Day is the all-important lunch. Everyone looks forward to a feast of turkey, crispy roast potatoes, and of course the piece de resistance, the Christmas pudding. If you're cooking for lots of family and friends this year and you're worried about the cost of the supermarket shop, follow our top tips for saving money on your Christmas lunch.

Plan ahead

This is the golden rule whenever you're trying to save money. If you do your shopping last-minute, it's far more likely that you'll throw things you don't really need into the trolley. Carefully plan what you're going to serve on the day, and write out a detailed shopping list. When you're in the supermarket, make sure to stick to the list and try not to get side-tracked by tempting offers.

Use a price comparison website

You can compare supermarket prices online using handy comparison sites. Just a few clicks could save you significant sums on your Christmas meal.

Ask friends and family to bring a dish

It might sound like cheating, but the more help you can get, the easier and more enjoyable Christmas Day will be. Ask everyone to bring something small and you'll soon have many of the key ingredients of a Christmas feast sorted for you.

Use leftovers

Many of us feel that we need to start completely from scratch for Christmas, and this is where the serious overspending can happen. Before you go shopping, have a thorough search through your cupboards for anything you've forgotten about. You'll almost certainly find something that will come in handy. Make sure to check the use-by dates.

Choose your turkey wisely

If you're the sort of family that likes to eat Christmas leftovers until New Year's Day, buy a large turkey and get value for money. If you know you're unlikely to want to look at another turkey for a whole year, buy a small bird. That way you won't be faced with plates and plates of leftovers.



Decorations that look great but at a fraction of the cost

The time has come to give your house a touch of sparkle and a sprinkling of festive cheer! Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without decorations: baubles for the tree, fairy lights for the outside of the house, tinsel for some added glitz. Transforming your home into a Yuletide wonderland needn't cost the earth. Take our advice for creating a dazzling Christmas for less.

Re-use last year's decorations

There's no shame in putting up the same decorations as last year. In fact, this way you'll create family traditions and make Christmas after Christmas truly memorable for the kids. As the old saying goes — if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Think about storage solutions

It makes sense to store your decorations carefully. By storing them safely and securely, you're more likely to preserve them for years to come, and get as much use out of them as possible.

Downgrade your tree

This isn't to say you shouldn't have a beautiful Christmas tree that everyone in the family can feel proud of. Smaller trees can often be prettier and more delicate than their larger, more overbearing counterparts, and they help create a lovely cosy atmosphere in any living room. A more compact tree means fewer baubles, so it's certainly worth considering.

Quality over quantity

When it comes to Christmas lights, pick out a choice selection that really make an impact, and don't go overboard. Putting up too many lights could rack up a small fortune in electricity bills, which is the last thing you'll want to face come January.

Use sweets as decorations

At this time of year, multipacks of Christmas-themed wrapped chocolates and sweets are a dime a dozen. Hang some edible treats on the tree as a cheap and cheerful alternative to baubles.



Top tips for money saving this Winter

Top Tips to Keep Warm this Winter

The winter is notorious for bringing with it higher energy costs, but there are savvy ways to stay warm and reduce your bills. We've got 5 top tips for getting through the chilly months, bank balance intact.

Pay your bills by direct debit

You could save up to £90 a year by paying your energy bills with a monthly direct debit. Remember, though, that your direct debit payments will be based on an estimate of your energy usage. To ensure you don't overpay, these estimates need to be accurate. Provide your energy supplier with meter readings on a regular basis, to help ensure you're only paying for what you actually use.

Turn your thermostat down

Every degree counts! You could cut your bills significantly by turning your home thermostat down by just 1°C. This will ensure that you save money even if you forget to turn it down manually when you leave the house.

Avoid heating the whole house

It's unlikely that you'll be using every room of your house or flat at any given time. Unless it's freezing weather, use space heaters in the most-used rooms and keep the whole house at a lower temperature.

Invest in two duvets

Using a low tog duvet in the summer and a high tog duvet in the winter will mean you automatically feel toastier at night in the cold months. This will save you money in the long run as you won't need to heat your bedroom excessively.

Seal gaps and cracks in windows and doors

Before winter hits, make sure your house is well-insulated. It's easy to underestimate small draughts, but they'll undoubtedly lead you to crank up the heating and therefore waste your money. With higher energy bills and Christmas around the corner, winter can really take its toll on family finances.



Revamp your winter wardrobe for less

Warm coats, boots and snuggly jumpers are a fixed-feature of the winter months. Making a few cosy and fashionable additions to your wardrobe can make the prospect of longer nights a little more appealing, but remixing the contents of your wardrobe every season can get a little costly. Fancy updating your look without breaking the bank this winter? Keep reading for our top tips and tricks on how to revamp your winter wardrobe for less.

Learn how to sew!

Why not treat yourself to a crash course in dressmaking and watch the bank balance rise as you spend less on clothes? Once you learn how to sew, you can make yourself a glittering array of garments in bespoke fabrics in styles that suit your personality. You'll spend a

fraction of the cost of buying from stores and your clothes will be one of a kind. If you're not a crafty type, why not spruce up your old clothes with DIY embellishments?

Host a Clothes Swapping Party

One girl's trash is another girl's treasure and chances are, your friends are feeling wardrobe-fatigue too. Why not grab a bunch of pals and host a terrific clothes trade party? Even if you don't find anything you like, you're bound to have fun in the process!

Invest in Key Pieces

Rather than being a slave to trends and updating your wardrobe every season, why not invest in a few simple, elegant staples that will last the test of time? A great quality winter coat in an everlasting design is

worth ten cheap and cheerful jackets, so source your new purchases carefully and considerately.

Take advantage of sales and deals

If you must buy clothes new from the store, make sure you're getting the best deal possible by waiting for sale season to start. Most shops are online these days, so scour the internet for coupons and flash deals to make sure you save the most money possible.

Do a good deed

If you're set on a few new seasonal additions, why not get a warm feeling inside and donate old and unwanted items to a charity shop. That way you scour for bargains at the same time, safe in the knowledge you've helped someone out.



Motoring tips to reduce car running costs

Motoring Tips To Reduce Car Running Costs

It might seem that nothing could be simpler than jumping in the car every day and going from A to B. However, if you pause and reflect on how much your set of wheels is actually costing you, you'll realise that there's more to motoring than meets the eye. However, by knowing how your motoring costs are made up, you'll be better equipped to save money by changing your habits in small but significant ways.

Follow our top tips for stretching your motoring budget and you'll find that you have more in the pot for rainy days.

Buy the right petrol

This might sound so obvious that it's barely worth mentioning — but it could save you a lot of money in the long-term. Don't buy high-performance fuel unless you've got a seriously high-performing car; a sports car, for example. Regular fuel is absolutely adequate for a standard

car, and will cost you substantially less than the premium alternative.

Do your insurance homework

Dedicate some time to shopping around, and you could find excellent deals on fully comprehensive cover. It may seem counter-intuitive, but this kind of insurance can often enough be the cheaper option, especially if you need to make a claim on it.

Adopt cost-efficient driving habits

You can save money just by carefully monitoring how you drive. If you tend to rev hard, try to accelerate more slowly and you'll use less power. Similarly, the slower you come to a stop, the less fuel you'll burn. And always make sure you're driving in the right gear.

Consider a car-sharing scheme

Sharing the daily commute with others could save you hundreds of pounds a year. If you drive to work every day, it may well be in your best interests to join a car-sharing scheme.

About **MYJAR**[®]

Who are MYJAR?

MYJAR are a responsible lender of flexible loans of up to 3 months repaid in instalments. We've been in business since 2009 and processed over 3 million loans.

At **MYJAR** we have always worked a little differently to other short-term loan providers. We have never given rollovers and always offer support when our customers tell us they need a helping hand. We help people to manage their finances by lending small amounts.

Find out more at www.myjar.com