

Is the UK obsessed with Christmas?

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The other day I read an article about British people and Christmas. The article stated that the people of Britain undertook more Christmas searches on Google than any other country in the world. I'm not going to lie, I wasn't surprised.

My name is Laura and I'm a Digital Planner/Buyer at MediaCom Scotland. I was born and raised in Barcelona, but have lived in the UK for over 3 years now. I have known many Spanish people to struggle with cultural differences after a move to London, Edinburgh, or indeed any of the other UK cities. But personally I always felt it wasn't THAT different. Maybe I adapted easily or perhaps being from a big city myself made me more open minded.

Anyway, I found it all rather easy until Christmas started to approach. Suddenly people seem to turn into robots that were stuck in one programmed setting: Christmas! They became obsessed and it was all rather new to me.

I think most people would agree it's too early for a pub to install a full Christmas window display in September, but in my first year here I had the pleasure of experiencing just that. It was mid-September and I was heading home after a long day at the office and suddenly there it was the Christmas tree, staring at me proudly from the other side of the street. I had so many questions...

Was it normal to install your Christmas tree in September? Should I be starting to decorate the flat? *What about listening to Christmas songs? Or eating mince pies? – I had one two weeks ago, – Am I one of them now?*

I'd be completely fine with all the mayhem if it started in December, I'd even be happy to accept it mid-November but September?

I work in media, so I do understand how important this time of year is for brands. Pre-Christmas activity is all about getting people in the mood, enticing them with ideas and encouraging them to spend more money in the run up to Christmas. And at the end of the day, when most of the gift buying and Christmas planning is done over November, it wouldn't be smart to let this opportunity go.

But let us talk for a minute about what John Lewis have done. They have managed to have people desperately waiting to see their Christmas advert year after year. The reveal has somehow become part of British culture, which is something very few foreign people including myself, fully understand. How can an ad could be the highlight of the month for so many people? All I saw and heard during that week was – have you seen the new John Lewis ad?

So yes, I had to watch it (...for research purposes only) and to be honest I was a bit disappointed. But let's not talk about that now (especially as I could write a whole article just

on that alone).

Maybe I will never be able to fully understand the UK's hunger for the festive season to begin. After all, if we go full-on by October, saturating people with ads, window displays and decorations, surely everyone is over it all by December? What is there to look forward to if you've decorated the flat, listened to all the Christmas songs and eaten all the mince pies before December even starts?

Please don't get me wrong I am not a hater, I love Christmas. It's just I'm slightly confused by all the over excitement. Do we really need to start so early? Because if we continue like this we're going to have to start making a 50-day advent calendar!

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