



## A glutton's guide to *Christmas dining*

*With the holiday season just around the corner, now is the time to plan for that big party or romantic evening repast*

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Carols and Christmas trees, gingerbread houses and roast turkey, a hamper of sweets or a basket of honey ham. These are among the smorgasbord of goodies on offer at Taipei's hotels, bars and restaurants this holiday season, with one hotel providing fortune-tellers to, undoubtedly, predict a prosperous future to diners. Read on for a comprehensive list of where you can dine on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, as well as a few Web sites that provide advice on how to moderate your gobbling and boozing during the festive season.

Readers should be aware that hotel and restaurant prices are subject to a 10 percent service charge. Dining times are for Dec. 24 and Dec. 25, unless otherwise noted. A 5kg turkey is enough to feed six people with healthy appetites. All hampers and gift sets should be ordered three days before pickup, and reservations at restaurants should be made in advance as seats fill up quickly.

### HOTELS

The **Sheraton Hotel Taipei** is getting into the holiday spirit with "Bringing Love and Hope Closer," a charity sale and donation campaign for the Children's Charities Association, an organization that helps raise awareness of children's issues. Antoine, the hotel's French restaurant, is also in a festive mood with a sumptuous dinner that includes duck liver pate salad, pan-fried king prawns with saffron sauce and pan-fried turbot fillet with sea urchin sauce (set menus are NT\$2,900 and NT\$3,600). Pizza Pub will serve an array of Italian antipasto and a roast turkey dinner (NT\$1,800). **Tel: (02) 2321-1818**

Shangri-La's **Far Eastern Plaza Hotel Taipei** is hosting a myriad of Christmas events at its restaurants. For an Italian-style Christmas Eve, Marco Polo on the hotel's 38th floor will serve a five-course dinner for two in a romantic environment that offers stunning views of eastern Taipei. The menu includes tuna tartar in a crispy pastry, herring caviar and mustard dressing and braised beef short ribs with sauteed spinach, black truffle mashed potato and seared duck liver. Guests



can choose window seats (NT\$7,600) or regular seats (NT\$6,400). From 8pm to 1am on Dec. 25, Marco Polo offers a "Red Hot Christmas Party" for NT\$990 per person, which includes complimentary red and white wines and cocktails.

Li Bai Lounge jazzes it up with a Christmas party that features live jazz. The dinner set (NT\$3,800 for two) comes with a bottle of sparkling wine. An eight-course Shanghai-style set menu can be found at the Shanghai Pavilion (NT\$2,500). **Tel: (02) 2378-8888**

Roast turkey and honey glazed ham are among the items the **Howard Plaza Hotel Taipei** has in store for its Christmas dinner buffet (NT\$1,500) at the Rainbow Terrace on Christmas Eve. The hotel's Champs Elysees restaurant will feature a salad bar (NT\$699) and set menu (NT\$990), while Le Louvre offers a candlelight buffet dinner of turkey and roast beef (NT\$1,200). A French Christmas Eve set menu (NT\$1,990) is available at the Rosewood. **Tel: (02) 2700-2323**

The **Sherwood Taipei's** Toscana Italian Restaurant will present a six-course dinner set (NT\$3,000) consisting of pan-fried crispy duck foie gras with scallops on a bed of spinach and semi-dried tomato, Hokkaido king crab salad served with crispy dried Parma ham and black truffle salsa, sea urchin linguini with garlic-flavored baked baby abalone and slow-cooked Australia wagyu beef with sauteed wild mushroom and vegetable risotto. **Tel: (02) 2718-1188**

Robin's Grill on the second floor of the **Grand Formosa Regent Taipei** will serve up a carnivore's feast. The set menu includes crab salad with lemon sauce, pan-fried Australian prawn with lobster foam, gingerbread sorbet and a choice of Australian sirloin wagyu beef with prawn red wine sauce, US rib eye steak with Maine lobster or baked Christmas turkey. Lunch sets begin at NT\$1,800 and dinner sets begin at NT\$3,000 per person. Christmas Eve dinner includes a complimentary glass of champagne.

On the hotel's first floor, Azie Bun creates an intimate Christmas Eve feast with Christmas aromas and romantic lighting. The menu (NT\$2,200 per person) includes duck pate with apricot and vinegar, Australian beef soup with truffle sprouts, fish with potato and spinach sauce, gingerbread sorbet and a choice of prawns and scallops with soft-shell crab in white wine sauce or pan-fried US rib eye and asparagus with scallop in hollandaise sauce. The dessert menu includes Christmas cake with raspberry sauce and French chocolate truffles. **Tel: (02) 2523-8000**

The **Sunworld Dynasty Taipei Hotel** continues its Christmas tradition of inviting fortune-tellers to foretell what's in store for its guests. The hotel's Le Parc Cafe offers a buffet dinner that includes Western and

Asian dishes, including stewed squid in cocktail sauce, beef tenderloin with duck liver and truffle sauce, sauteed prawns with asparagus and garlic butter and sliced turkey. NT\$1,000 for adults, NT\$500 for children. **Tel: (02) 2719-7199 X3310**

Across town, the **Landis Taipei Hotel** is offering a 10-course French menu at Paris 1930 (NT\$3,500) on Dec. 24 and Dec. 25. It features foie gras with poached pear, baked lobster thermidor, pan-fried Dover sole with Espelette pepper and sea urchin, beef tenderloin and a mini Christmas loaf served with chocolate and pineapple mousse. More French-themed specials are available at La Brasserie (set menu NT\$1,300). **Tel: (02) 2597-1234**



### CHRISTMAS HAMPERS AND OTHER YUMMIES

The **Sheraton's** Deli offers a number of hampers including a roast turkey gift basket that comes with port wine and giblet sauce and cranberry jelly, a roasted Virginia ham set garnished with pineapple and applesauce and a US steak gift basket with beef gravy and horseradish sauce. Each option costs NT\$2,800. An additional NT\$700 gets you such yummy trimmings as sausage and corn bread stuffing, mashed potato with fresh thyme, roasted vegetables and sweet potato bread. The Deli also has selections for sweet tooths including a gingerbread house (NT\$680), a Christmas log cake (NT\$420) and a 9-inch Christmas chocolate cake (NT\$1,100). **Tel: (02) 2321-5858 X8373**

Not to be outdone, the **Sherwood's** Toscana Gourmet Corner has gone all out this year with three Christmas hampers. Hamper A (NT\$4,500) features a 5kg roast turkey, smoked mashed potato, sauteed baby carrots and mushrooms, candied sweet potato, an 8-inch pumpkin pie and a bottle of Martini Asti (375ml). Hamper B (NT\$3,600) is the same minus the bottle of sparkling wine. Hamper C (NT\$3,000) is for those with a sweet tooth and includes white truffle honey, homemade chocolate, Lavazza coffee beans and a bottle of Remole Toscana IGT Marchesi de Frescobaldi. **Tel: (02) 2718-1188**

The **Grand Formosa Regent's** Azie Bun offers a Christmas turkey hamper (NT\$3,000) with stuffing made from green apple and chestnut, glazed vegetables and mashed potato. Azie Bun has also erected

a wooden cabin to sell a variety of French sweets including brandy cake, chocolate orange cookies, French vanilla Yule log, gingerbread houses, chocolate almonds and several flavors of macaroons including cherry brandy and lime chestnut. **Tel: (02) 2523-8000 X3157**

Liz Gastro at the **Landis** offers an affordable turkey hamper (NT\$2,980), which includes a bacon-basted roast turkey (5kg), seasonal vegetables and freshly made cranberry sauce. The hampers are available until Christmas and orders placed at least three days in advance receive a 10 percent discount. Liz Gastro also offers a variety of desserts such as a gingerbread house (NT\$320), a 6-inch pumpkin pie (NT\$360) and a 7-inch raspberry white chocolate mousse (NT\$650). **Tel: (02) 2598-5558**

Another affordable option is the 6kg turkey hamper offered by the **Sunworld Dynasty** (NT\$2,450). It comes served with mushroom sauce, potato bread and Caesar salad. Add NT\$250 and get an 8-inch apple pie. **Tel: (02) 2719-7199 X3310**

The Cake Shop situated on the first floor of the **Far Eastern Plaza Hotel** has prepared an array of festive goodies, artisan pastries and gift hampers for Christmas — the latter ranging from NT\$2,180 to NT\$4,680. **Tel: (02) 2378 8888 X5867**

### RESTAURANTS AND PUBS

For those who wish to celebrate in an intimate, relaxed setting, Christmas dinners and parties can be found at pubs and bars across the capital. **Carnegie's** is holding a "White Christmas Eve Party" (NT\$1,000). The price of admission includes two drinks. Those dressed in "festive white" get in for free and have a chance to win NT\$5,000 in a "sexiest costume show."

Carnegie's will offer an all-day Christmas turkey spread that runs from Dec. 20 to Dec. 26, except for Christmas Eve. The set menu (NT\$490 for lunch and NT\$680 for dinner) includes roast turkey with sage and onion stuffing, pork sausages and traditional Christmas pudding. For Carnegie's Christmas Eve dinner (NT\$1,500), the entree selection is a traditional English turkey set or prime Angus rib eye steak, with unlimited house wine between 6pm and 9pm. Turkeys can be ordered for takeout (NT\$2,900) beginning on Dec. 20. **Tel: (02) 2325-4433**

**Jake's Country Kitchen** in Tianmu offers a traditional Christmas dinner of roast turkey with all the fixings (NT\$800). Jake's also has take-out turkeys (NT\$2,400 to NT\$3,400) and a roast turkey basket set (NT\$4,740). **Tel: (02) 2871-5289**

**Dan Ryan's Chicago Grill** will serve up a traditional Christmas dinner (NT\$950) of roast turkey, mashed potato, homemade gravy, stuffing and cranberry sauce, followed by apple crumble and Haagen Dazs ice cream for dessert. **Tel: (02) 2778-8800**



An old Shida favorite, **Grandma Nitti's** continues its long tradition of offering Christmas nourishment. Two set menus are on offer, including turkey (NT\$800) and roast beef (NT\$400). Both are served with all the trimmings, pumpkin pie and a glass of house wine. **Tel: (02) 2369-9751**

**On Tap** features the best price for traditional Christmas dinner that the *Taipei Times* came across. The three-course set meal, which will be served from Dec. 24 to Dec. 26, consists of soup, turkey with all the trimmings, pudding or pumpkin pie for dessert plus a glass of wine or beer for NT\$590. The pub's "The 12 Beers of Christmas" promotion runs from Dec. 19 to Dec. 30, during which time On Tap will offer a different beer special each day, from 6pm to midnight. **Tel: (02) 2741-5365**

### ADVICE SITES

Worried about eating or drinking too much during the holidays? The following Web sites — chosen because of their low-stress advice — offer tips on how to moderate your Christmas consumption.

■ Dietitian Juliette Kellow provides 50 excellent reminders on how to avoid over-eating during the Christmas season, from how to make your own stuffing to what items to avoid on the Christmas dinner table (eat the turkey but not the skin, indulge in green vegetables but moderate when it comes to booze). **On the Net: [www.weightlossresources.co.uk/food/christmas.htm](http://www.weightlossresources.co.uk/food/christmas.htm)**

■ "Enjoy the festivities without gaining fat." This article on the Health & Wellbeing Web site offers advice on how to motivate yourself and avoid over-indulging.

**On the Net: [health.ninemsn.com.au/dietandnutrition/nutrition/693816/diets-christmas-survivor-diet](http://health.ninemsn.com.au/dietandnutrition/nutrition/693816/diets-christmas-survivor-diet)**

■ HealthCastle.com lists sensible tips for avoiding certain food and drinks in favor of others. **On the Net: [www.healthcastle.com/holiday-eating-tips.shtml](http://www.healthcastle.com/holiday-eating-tips.shtml)**

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