



## Navigating compulsive shopping during holiday season: Are we prepared?

The Christmas countdown has begun and many people are looking forward to celebrations and spending time together. Christmas is a time of joy, celebration, and giving. However, it can also be a challenging time for those who struggle with compulsive shopping habits.

Compulsive shopping or compulsive buying disorder is a psychological state marked by an irresistible urge to shop and spend money, often leading to difficulties with financial and emotional wellbeing.

A Finder survey of 1,061 respondents done this year revealed that the average Australian is expected to spend \$1,479 each this Christmas – a 9% increase from the average spend of \$1,361 in 2022. The survey states that Australians are set to fork out \$30 billion on everything from presents and food to holidays this festive season.

### The triggers behind compulsive shopping



#### The web of enticing ads

The influence of advertising and time sensitive sales create a sense of urgency and play a significant role in fuelling compulsive shopping behaviours during the Christmas season.



#### An escape from emotional stress

Many people use shopping as a means to escape negative emotions and stress. Shopping can stimulate the release of dopamine, an organic chemical linked to the feeling of pleasure and reward, thus leading to happiness.



#### The social pressure

The festive season comes with an added pressure to conform to societal expectations and a desire to impress others. Social media platforms have further amplified this pressure with feeds filled with flawless holiday celebrations and extravagant gifts. As a result, people may feel compelled to meet these unrealistic standards, resulting in excessive spending and financial strain.





# How to conquer compulsive shopping behaviour?

Try to develop a different perspective on the Christmas holiday season; view it as a time of joy and connection rather than a cause of financial and emotional strain. The true value of a gift lies not in its price, but in the thought and love that accompanies it. Prioritise creating meaningful memories and cultivating genuine connections during this festive period.

If you are battling this behaviour, there are techniques you can use to regain control over your finances and emotional wellbeing.

**Create a budget** – Setting a practical spending limit is the key to overcoming compulsive shopping behaviour. And importantly, once you set a limit, try sticking to it.

**Pre-planning can help** – Create a list of presents in advance along with a budget for each of them. Give priority to your needs over wants to avoid impulsive purchases.

**Unsubscribe and unfollow** – If you find yourself struggling with online shopping and wish to overcome your online shopping addiction, the initial step is to begin unsubscribing from promotional emails and blocking access to these websites.

**Seek support** – Reach out to friends and family, or support groups to share your past experiences and receive encouragement and advice.

**Explore an alternative coping mechanism** – Engage in activities that bring you joy and fulfilment without relying on shopping as a means of escape or satisfaction. Try spending quality time with friends and family, go for a walk or meditate.

## Chocolate brandy truffles

Relish this decadent rich chocolate and brandy truffle recipe during the festive season this year. You can also give these chocolate truffles as a great handmade gift to your loved ones!  
Serve 24/ prep 15 min, cook time 5 min

### Ingredients list

- ▶ 1¼ cups (300 ml) of heavy cream
- ▶ 1 vanilla pod
- ▶ 60 ml brandy
- ▶ 3 cups of chopped good quality dark chocolate
- ▶ 1½ tbsp (30 ml) of butter
- ▶ ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ▶ ¼ cup finely chopped pistachios

### Method

- ▶ Begin with gently heating the cream along with a fragrant vanilla pod and brandy in a double boiler, allowing the flavours to combine together.
- ▶ Once heated, remove the mixture from the heat and let it cool down for a minute.
- ▶ Now remove the vanilla pod; and then add the chocolate pieces, stirring until they melt into the creamy concoction.
- ▶ Transfer this mixture to a fresh bowl, add butter and mix well to get a luscious shine.
- ▶ Cover the bowl and place it in the refrigerator to chill overnight.
- ▶ Next day, sprinkle a dusting of rich cocoa powder onto one plate, and crushed pistachios onto second one.
- ▶ Scoop out a portion of the chilled ganache using a scooper, and roll it between your hands into a small, delectable ball. Repeat this process allowing each truffle to take shape.
- ▶ Finally, roll half of each truffle ball into cocoa powder and the remaining half into pistachio crumbs.
- ▶ Refrigerate them for an hour to set.
- ▶ Serve these truffles to your friends and family when they visit you over Christmas.



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