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**FOOD**

# Gincredible! The very best bottles to gift or enjoy this Christmas

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It's the most ubiquitous of spirits – and for very good reason.

Whether you're buying it for the G&T lover in your life, or that oh-so-sophisticated family member who's never seen without a martini in hand, a bottle of gin is sure to put a smile on their face when they open it up on Christmas Day.

But steer clear of the high-street classics – for a truly special gift, try a bottle from a small-batch, independent distiller. We've rounded up a few of our favourites below...

## The adventurous one



Elephant Gin African Explorer, £45, [Elephant Gin](#)

This African-inspired spirit is blended with ingredients from across the continent, including aromatic buchu leaves, baobab and white ginger. It's bright and floral on the nose, with a surprisingly smooth and creamy taste that's a welcome change from more juniper-forward spirits. I particularly loved the vintage bottle, complete with cork stopper and postage stamp-inspired label.

## The classic one



Hayman's Old Tom, £28.50, [Masters of Malt](#)

This full-bodied, botanical rich gin harks back to the richly-favoured spirits of Victorian England. Its bold, floral flavour stands makes for a delicious gin and tonic, and it also stands up very well in a classic cocktail. And what could be more Christmassy than something Charles Dickens would have enjoyed?



## The sophisticated one



Michael Wignall's Cotton Gin, £46, [Otterbeck Distillery](#)

A zesty fusion of East and West, this gin from combines elderflower foraged from Otterbeck's doostep in the Yorkshire Dales with exotic hints of yuzu and kaffir lime. Best enjoyed as part of a classic G&T, you can lie back and imagine you're in a Shanghai speakeasy.

## The luxurious one



The Source Pure Cardrona Gin, £56.95, [House of Malt](#)

I loved Cardrona's 'single malt' vodka last year, so I'm pleased to say the New Zealand-based distillery's gin doesn't disappoint. Locally-harvested rosehip lends it a distinctive flavour, setting it apart from more traditional British offerings. It's undeniably pricey, but its gorgeous packaging makes it an ideal

## The winter warmer



Hayman's Sloe Gin, £21, [Ocado](#)



Sloe gin's complex berry flavours come into their own when enjoyed hot. Either mulled with orange or apple juice, or topped up with boiling water as a toddy, it's the perfect thing to sip on after a blustery winter walk. Of course, it's equally as delicious in a more traditional G&T, or for a twist on the classic Negroni.

### The smoky sensation



Trinity English Garden Winter Gin, £42, [Green Room Distillery](#)

This intensely aromatic gin will not be to everyone's tastes – but if you love smoky peated whiskies, it's a must. It's certainly a sophisticated tippie – seasonal botanicals such as heather, clementine leaf and fir shine through the bold smoked aroma. Incredible in a negroni.