

A Christmas Story in London

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

12 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

to bustle

DEF

to move around in a busy, energetic, and sometimes noisy way; for a place to be full of lively activity

Bustle is a favourite word for describing city life at Christmas — Oxford Street bustles, markets bustle. It captures energy without implying chaos or stress — there is joy in the bustle.

London's streets bustle with shoppers in the weeks before Christmas.

She loved the bustle of Covent Garden at Christmas — the music, the crowds, the lights.

2

to wander

DEF

to walk slowly and without a fixed destination, exploring as you go

Wander implies leisure and curiosity — you are not going somewhere specific, you are letting the journey unfold. At Christmas in London, wandering is how people discover the best lights, markets, and moments.

They wandered through the Christmas market for hours, stopping to try food and listen to the music.

One of the best things to do in London at Christmas is simply to wander and let the city surprise you.

3

cosy

DEF

warm, comfortable, and giving a feeling of safety and ease — particularly in a small, sheltered, or intimate space

Cosy is the English word for the Danish hygge concept — the warmth you feel inside a café, a home, or a blanket on a cold winter's day. A central concept in British winter culture.

The pub was wonderfully cosy — open fire, low lights, and the smell of mulled wine.

She made herself a cosy corner with a blanket, hot chocolate, and an English audiobook.

4

to stroll

DEF

to walk in a slow, relaxed way — without any particular hurry or destination

Stroll is more leisurely and purposeless than walk — it is the verb of enjoyment and exploration. You stroll through a Christmas market, stroll along the river, stroll in a park. Perfect for describing relaxed social activity in English.

They strolled through the Christmas market, stopping at every stall to look at the lights and handmade gifts.

One of the best ways to practise English is to stroll somewhere new and describe what you see out loud.



5

a mulled wine

DEF

a warm, spiced alcoholic drink made from red wine, typically drunk in winter and at Christmas markets

Mulled wine is the quintessential British and European winter drink. Knowing its name and describing it is a cultural conversation starter. 'Mulled' means gently heated with spices — the verb is not obvious from its parts.

There is nothing like a mulled wine at a Christmas market on a cold evening to make you feel festive.

She tried mulled wine for the first time in London and described it in English to her family back home.

6

snug

DEF

warm, comfortable, and sheltered — giving a feeling of safety and cosiness, especially in cold weather

Snug is similar to cosy but slightly more enclosed — you are snug in a blanket, in a corner booth, in a small warm room. It is a very British concept and word. Using it shows real cultural and lexical depth.

We found a snug little corner in the pub and stayed there for the whole evening.

Her flat was tiny but snug — the perfect place to spend a cold December weekend.

7

to browse

DEF

to look at goods, information, or displays in a relaxed way without necessarily intending to buy or commit

Browse is key for market and shopping vocabulary. You browse a market stall, browse online, browse a bookshop. It is different from shopping with intent — browsing is exploratory and pressure-free.

We spent a happy hour just browsing the market stalls, with no plan to buy anything in particular.

She loves browsing second-hand bookshops and finding unexpected English books to practise with.

8

a stall

DEF

a small shop or booth, typically at a market, where goods are displayed and sold

Stall is essential market vocabulary in English. Christmas markets, farmers' markets, and street fairs all have stalls. Knowing this word — and differentiating it from a 'booth' or 'kiosk' — shows practical English fluency.

Each stall at the market had something different — handmade jewellery, spices, wooden toys, and warm drinks.

She ran a stall at the local winter market, selling homemade jam and practising her English with every customer.

9

to wrap up warm

DEF

to put on enough layers of clothing to keep yourself warm in cold weather

Wrap up warm is a very common British English phrase — parents say it to children, friends say it to each other before going out in winter. It is the practical seasonal equivalent of 'take care of yourself'.

Make sure you wrap up warm before heading out — it is below zero tonight.

She always told her students to wrap up warm because the market was outside and the wind was fierce.



10

festive spirit

DEF

the collective feeling of joy, warmth, generosity, and celebration that characterises a holiday season

Festive spirit is an atmosphere, not a thing — it is the mood that a whole community creates together. In English, it is used naturally in conversation, media, and writing to describe the holiday season's emotional character.

Even in a small flat with no decorations, you can create a festive spirit with the right music and food.

The festive spirit was everywhere — strangers smiled at each other, the shops played carols, and the streets glowed.

11

a pocket of time

DEF

A short protected period that feels separate from normal pressures.

A creative metaphor from the story, useful for describing a small available interval.

The warm shop felt like a pocket of time hidden from the cold.

I found a pocket of time between two meetings.

12

a faded colour

DEF

A colour that has become less bright over time.

Faded can also describe memories, photographs and fabric.

A faded blue door stood between the modern shops.

The curtains had faded in the sun.

