Take the Buy British challenge: how to shop local for all your Christmas gifts

Want to do all of your Christmas shopping with UK brands this year? Here's how...

By Caroline Leaper, SENIOR FASHION EDITOR 27 November 2020 • 6:00am



every time an order is placed in her online shop. "I go up and

January.

down with worrying about the business," she admits. "But then an order comes through and I'll be really excited." Can you imagine the same sort of reaction happening at, say, a giant, multinational e-tailer this Black Friday, as a robotic arm picks your presents off the shelf?

As a customer who has attempted to shop exclusively British for almost a month now, I can attest that the Google searching does take longer, the delivery windows are less reliable, and, overall,

might have if I had opted to shop with a hyper-fast, mega-cheap, world-dominating alternative. But there is a lovely feeling of satisfaction that comes with each package that arrives - the knowledge that I'm spending with a local business and that my Christmas shopping might go some small way to saving a few more Brits from redundancies come

each order placed probably costs me a few pounds more than it

knees, with store closures and mass lay-offs happening across the high street. Yet in a YouGov survey conducted in July, 64 percent of Brits said that after the spring lockdown, they wanted to support local businesses and products. Want to buy less, buy better quality, and buy British? Now's the time to put our money where our mouths are, as pausing to think

before piling all of your Christmas shopping into one big virtual

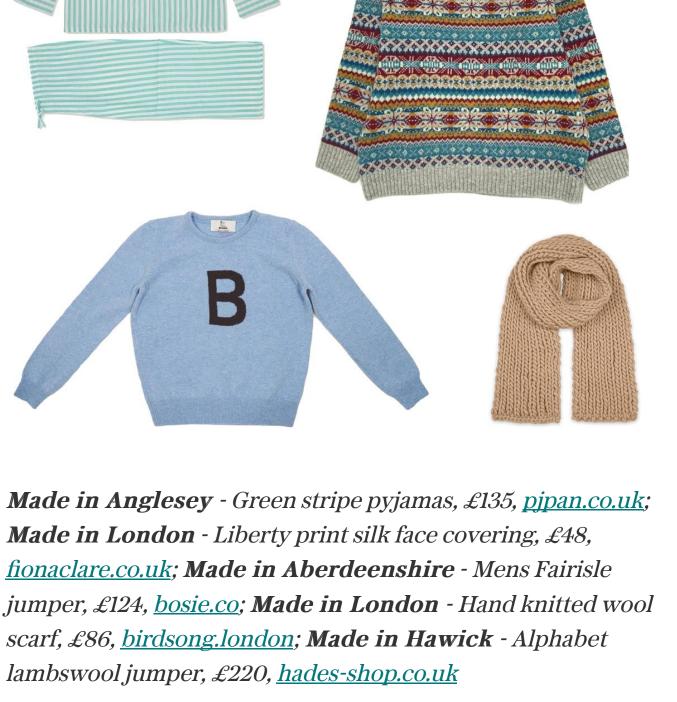
basket this Black Friday could make a huge difference.

After a year like no other, the British retail industry is on its

"A business owner's greatest gift this Christmas could be you discovering their brand and shopping with them for the first time," says Tara Capp, founder of British lifestyle brand Truly, noting that spreading your spending across multiple companies is the best thing you can do. "I do understand that convenience is

key. But try and share the love and explore other small British

brands who offer fantastic and affordable products and would welcome you with open arms into their community."



obvious. When running through someone's Christmas list, particularly children's, there will be some items that are easy to find at an alternative, British-based online shop. It can be as simple as ordering the toys on their list from The Entertainer, or the books you know they wanted from WH Smith, or Bookshop.org, which unites the stock of local bookshops in Britain on one website.

But some of the best items I've found so far (and the ones that will

make the most memorable presents) have taken a little more

To shop successfully this way, you need to think beyond the

research. So far I've sent homemade brownies by post to people I know I won't see, from Gower Cottage Brownies, based in Swansea and bought customised cards from The Papercut Emporium in Ellesmere. I've swerved an incident with my sister-in-law, who Whatsapped Amazon links to toy wooden tea sets for my three-year-old niece, instead finding one by JoJo Maman Bebe - sounds French, but is in fact based in Newport, employing around 800 people. I was

particularly pleased that even the toy biscuits were Jammy

What has been more tricky is to guarantee that products, as well

as coming from British based companies, were also made in

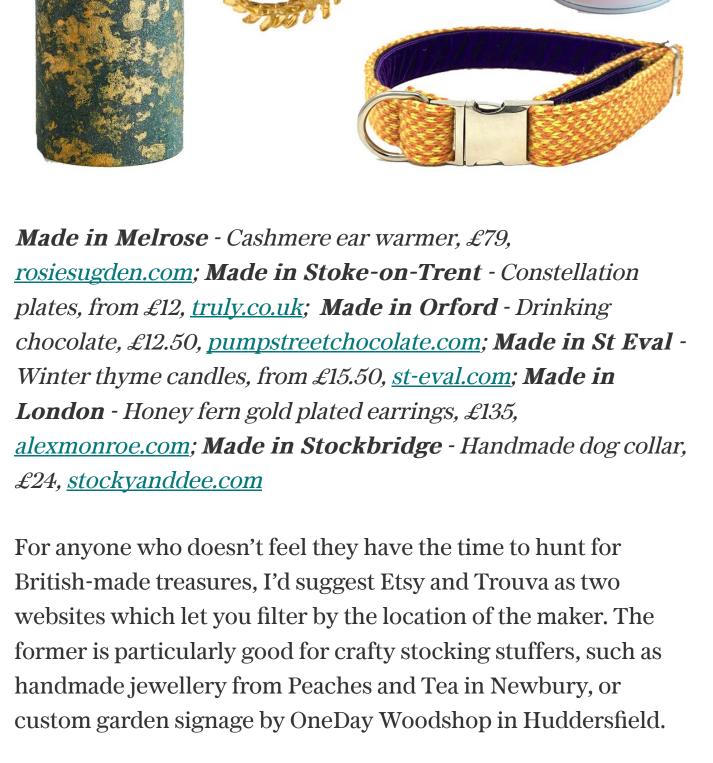
Britain. For the purists (or the patriots) attempting this retail

Dodgers and Custard Creams.

average prices at around £10.

challenge, shopping online is tricky, as most retailers do not state the country of manufacture in their product description. All of the items pictured in the merchandise map on this page have been made in Britain. Along the way I've found amazing small brands to recommend, from PJ Pan, which makes its luxury men's, women's and children's pyjamas in Anglesey, to the St Eval Candle Company, making beautiful scented candles, reed

diffusers and hand soaps from a farm in North Cornwall, with



The micro-retailers are important, but the big British brands are too. Even if it's not possible to find everything you're after with a tiny local firm, it will still count some way towards 'doing your bit' if you shop at Next, Marks & Spencer, John Lewis & Partners, Liberty, Selfridges and so on, all of which have struggled this year too, and employ thousands around the UK. This isn't a charity campaign. There's no need to buy things you

don't want or need, nor to spend more than you intended to on

unsustainable Black Friday race to the bottom this year, actions

presents. But, rather than contributing to the crippling,

like this may just provide an antidote.

Over this Black Friday weekend I plan to whittle off most of

competitive, race-to-the bottom offers to be had, but because I

know that smaller companies typically need longer lead times

and some will be (hopefully) inundated with orders in the weeks

what's left on my list, not because there are unmissable

to come.

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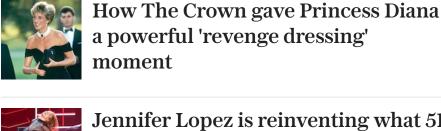
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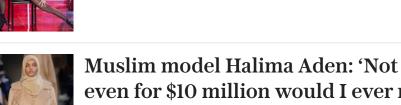
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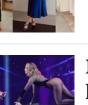
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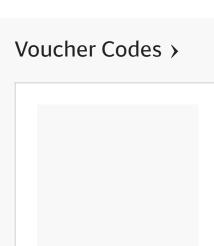
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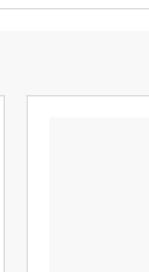
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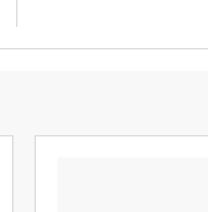
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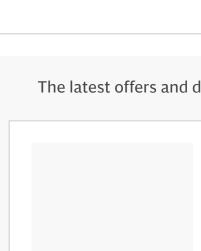


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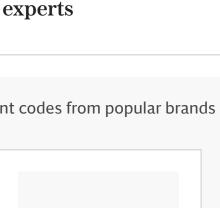
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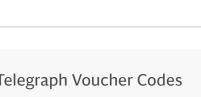
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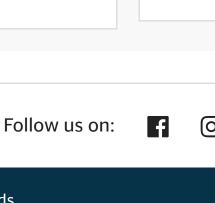
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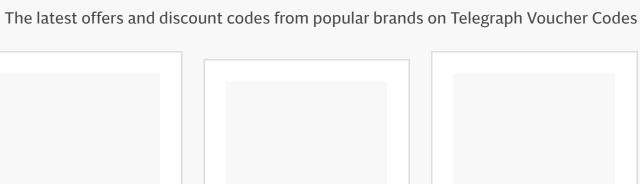
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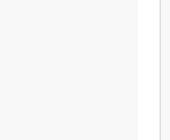
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