

RETAIL

Selfridges appeals to early birds, tourists with Christmas in July

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Selfridges opened its Christmas Shop on July 31. Image courtesy of Selfridges

By STAFF REPORTS

British department store chain Selfridges is getting a jump on the holiday shopping season with the opening of its Christmas Shop 147 days ahead of Dec. 25.

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Selfridges is responding to a growing demand for Christmas products outside of the typical shopping season by offering everything from holiday food to gifting items starting in summer. This tactic, which the retailer has deployed in recent years, has helped drive sales growth each year, as locals shop early and tourists visiting the U.K. seek out ways to bring a London Christmas home with them.

Christmas comes early

Phase one of the retailer's holiday plans includes The London Christmas Shop, a selection featuring themed merchandise dedicated to the city where the first Selfridges opened in 1909. Ahead of the launch of the full assortment in September, consumers can scoop up London-inspired items such as decorations and stocking stuffers starting now.

From Aug. 4, Selfridges will begin retailing Christmas food items, pushing the debut of some of its bestsellers earlier. Normally treats such as Christmas pudding and fruit cake would hit store shelves in late October, but the retailer has decided to extend their availability from 10 weeks to five months.



Selfridges' Christmas Shop at its London store. Image courtesy of Selfridges

"We've been opening the doors to our Christmas Shop during the summer for years now and have become a real destination for fans of Christmas and festive decorations within and outside the U.K.," said Eleanor Gregory, Selfridges Christmas and home buyer, in a statement. "Some customers return to us year after year, excited at the prospect of discovering the new ranges and adding to their collections."

"We have so many customers visiting from all over the world, eager to snap up festive decorations and souvenirs on their London summer holidays which they can't buy at home," she said. "So, we make sure we're ready to showcase Christmas decorations they will truly treasure."

"The fact that we're also going to be selling some of our most requested Christmas food lines from Friday for the first time ever, is complementing the Christmas selection we make available in the summer perfectly. This new extension to our usual offer is simply addressing this growing demand for convenience Christmas shopping outside the traditional Christmas season from many of our customers."

"They include a large number of domestic customers who love to Christmas shop very early in the year to get it wrapped and taken off their to-do list. They also tell us that they like to be able to take their pick of the very best selection available, whilst the range we offer is at its most comprehensive."

Along with the opening of its Christmas Shop for 2017, Selfridges also unveiled the theme for its holiday campaign. In light of recent events, the retailer is spreading love from the cities of London, Birmingham and Manchester, where it has its stores.

"With Love From" will showcase the cultural identities and strength of the towns the retailer calls home.

Although consumers tend to only start shopping in October, 69 percent of marketers begin planning for the holiday rush in August, taking a "never too early" approach to the gifting season.

During Facebook's "Holiday Preview" press brunch June 27, two executives shared holiday trends, research and predictions, as well as new tools created by the social network to drive sales this upcoming holiday season ([see story](#)).