

## Dinner party prize for you and 29 friends by top chef

**T**V chef José Pizarro has been confirmed as one of the chefs who will cook a meal for winners of a Waitrose competition.

Pizarro, a regular on BBC One's Saturday Kitchen, will cook up some Spanish dishes, such as paella (below), for one of five meals being created as prizes in the competition.

The dinner parties are being arranged by

Waitrose as part of its Christmas Together theme, which runs over the Christmas period.

Chefs announced include The Great British Bake Off star Martha Collison, Atul Kochhar, and twins David and Stephen Flynn, also known as The Happy Pear.

Collison will provide afternoon tea, Kochhar will cook an Indian-themed meal, and The Happy Pear will focus on vegetarian and vegan dishes.

Locations big enough for a party of between 10 and 30 people will be chosen by Waitrose, and it is hoped the parties will be spread across the UK.

The competition runs until midnight on 10 December.



### How to enter

Complete the form on [waitrose.com/christmascompetition](http://waitrose.com/christmascompetition). Entrants need to tell Waitrose who they would invite, why they deserve a meal cooked for them, and where they are in the UK so that dates and venues can be arranged. Winners will be notified by 12 January.

## News in brief

**Pad power** Waitrose has launched a self-service check-in for John Lewis Click & Collect orders. Customers at 140 branches will now be able register their order number via iPads at the Welcome Desk on arrival so staff can have it ready for them more quickly.

### (Out of this) World food

Ice cream, chocolate and pizza ingredients were sent to the International Space Station this week. The haul was welcomed by the six-man crew made up of three Americans, two Russians and an Italian.



**Correction** A report in last week's Waitrose Weekend (dated 16 November) said last year's Waitrose Christmas book, *Coming Home*, sold 20,000 copies. In fact, the total number was 80,000.

Illustration: Dale Edwin Murray. Photography: Getty, Stockfood

# My week

## Alvin Hall



The broadcaster and finance expert on Thanksgiving with friends and helping out



## Bringing thanks to any table

**T**he week leading up to Thanksgiving may be my most nostalgic time of year. It is full of memories of, and thoughts about, food.

Having been raised on a small subsistence farm, I find that the smell of freshly harvested fall crops stimulates vivid recollection of that life. Although I now live in a city, the farm boy in me seeks out those reassuring signs of the season and the upcoming holiday. I organise my errands so I can walk through the farmers' market in Union Square to take in the fresh fruit and vegetables – stacks of white, green and light-purple cauliflower; piles of gourds, solid, striped and freckled. Quietly, I'm deciding what I will cook for the meal at Thanksgiving.

In America, Thanksgiving is the big family feast day; everyone

travels home for the meal and eats heartily. However, since I left home to attend university, I have never had Thanksgiving with my family. Instead, other families (my college advisor's, my college roommates', my work colleague's and more) have generously invited me to share the day with them. This week I have to choose between several invites, including one from friends in London.

I'm often asked to cook something, and I nearly always choose a dish from my rural Southern childhood. I try to replicate the delicious sides my mother and grandmother made to accompany the turkey, as well as the many cakes and pies they baked for dessert.

At night, I page through

cookbooks to see what recipes catch my eye. Sometimes I do this to get ideas about how to improve a dish I love; at other times I'm figuring out something tasty to do with all of the leftovers I'm invariably given – and happily take home.

As I talked to friends throughout

the week, the same question came up repeatedly: What are you doing for Thanksgiving?

Some friends will be channelling traditions created by their

mothers and fathers; some will be creating their own traditions for the holiday. I'm still deciding whether to let nostalgia keep me in New York or board a flight for London. In either place, I will most certainly be with people who are my family.

### 'Quietly, I'm deciding what I will cook for the meal at Thanksgiving'

## A friend breaks his silence

A long-time friend finally got the courage to tell me that he and his partner have lost their savings and must leave their home. I was truly shocked. This friend had a successful career. His silence indicated something was wrong, but I thought it might be a health problem,

not a financial one.

The cause of the catastrophe: poor decisions about property, stocks and bonds, retirement planning, and finally his own bankrupt business. All of this made worse by his failure to accept reality and take action early enough.

So what did he want from me? That was the question. Do I loan him money, knowing I will never get it back? Do I simply give him money? In the end I decided to make an offer: do you have any assets I can help you sell?

With two watches and some gold bracelets in my

man bag, I went to various merchants and got my friends nearly twice what they would have received in the city where they live. Just enough for them to move on to their down-sized life with dignity. And our friendship doesn't have any added complication.