

# Five of the best Edible Advent Calendars

From irresistible milk chocs to gaudy baubles dangling from a wooden moose, **Andrew Baker** lifts the lid on a quintet of boxes that are ripe for Christmas giving

**1 Hotel Chocolat Truffle Sharing Pairs Advent Calendar** £26; hotelchocolat.com

We have to be honest here and say that – well in advance of the first date on the doors – we broke into this calendar and a scene of appalling plunder followed that would have put the Vikings to shame. Luckily there are two of each truffle behind each door, so while we trashed the box, the colleague-on-colleague violence was limited. Act with more patience and decorum than we did and you will discover simple milk and dark truffles, as well as salted caramel, gingerbread, almond and nutmeg, cinnamon, raspberry and hibiscus, and mulled wine versions.

**2 Bettys Advent Calendar** £47.50; refill bag, £18; bettys.co.uk or 0800 456 1919

Bettys' celebratory countdown takes the form of a pinny such as those sported by the waitresses in their deservedly celebrated Yorkshire Tea Rooms, with a milk or white sculpted novelty tucked into each of the 24 pockets. The calendar was designed exclusively for Bettys by Cornwall-based textile designer Poppy Treffry and, human nature being what it is, a bag of refills is also available.

**3 Artisan du Chocolat Ultimate Advent Calendar** £49.99, artisanduchocolat.com; also in Selfridges

This is a real show-stopper: 24 cute little bags containing delectable, high-quality chocolate gifts, all hung from the wooden antlers of a charmingly gormless moose. Undeniably pricey, but this is a conversation piece for

grown-up visitors as well as a well-nigh irresistible treat factory for the youth.

**4 Prestat Advent Calendar** £29.95, prestat.co.uk

Gorgeous gaudy Deco box contains two of each of 12 flavours nestling behind scarlet doors. 'Tis the season of goodwill, but conflict is likely over who gets their mitts on the divine orange and frankincense pair. Prestat is favoured in high places and it would not be unusual for this item to be found nestling among the cards of the Commonwealth at Sandringham.

**5 Amelia Rope Advent Calendar box** £43, conranshop.co.uk

Exclusively designed for the Conran Shop, this desk-friendly advent calendar box contains 24 of London chocolatier Amelia Rope's Pale Collection chocolate cubes. With typical elegant minimalism, the vital dates float above the cubes on a diaphanous wrapper. Conran customers will be ethically aware, but so is Rope and the single-origin Ecuadorean chocolate used to create the 39% cubes ticks the right boxes. The chicest such item on the market by a mile.

### Also worthy of your consideration:

**Montezumas Organic and Vegan Advent Calendar, £9.99, montezumas.co.uk**

If you have a no-animal-products household or are likely to be entertaining such visitors, Montezumas has the calendar for you. Design is not the snazziest but the chocolate is excellent as well as virtuous: it's dark (vegan milk is tricky) and 73% cocoa, but the flavour is on the gentle side.



