

Cuffing season: When a partner is just for Christmas

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As soon as the colder months hit... it's time for cuffing season

Summer is a time for festivals, long lazy days in the park and for some of us... being single.

But come September, as the daylight hours get shorter and temperatures drop, you might find yourself wanting someone to cuddle up with.

That is basically the premise of "cuffing season" - that's when people who are normally happy being single decide it's time to find a plus-one for the Christmas party.

And then swiftly dispose of them before their trip to Ibiza in the spring. Brutal.





Everyone wants a romance like Love Actually at Christmas right?

Cuffing season has its own entry in the **Collins English Dictionary**, a playlist dedicated to it on a major streaming service, and it's even referenced in an advert for a drinks brand starring Lizzo.

It might sound like a bit of a joke - but some actual research has been done into seasonal dating patterns.

Dating app Bumble told Newsbeat that more new users join between November and January than any other time over the year.



Bumble says people get swipe-happy between November and January

We found two people who have succumbed to the temptations that cuffing season brings.

Elena is 26 and recently found her partner after swiping on dating apps.

"I'm currently dating someone I met on an app a couple of months ago. I actively started searching in September and October, realising we were approaching the winter months," she tells Radio 1 Newsbeat.

"Winter is the time to be snuggled up because it's cosy - you just want to be on the sofa watching a Christmas film with someone."



sam 
@samnicoleee98



Kinda wanna man so we can just cuddle watching Disney movies maybe even bake some cookies but also I'm kinda happy where I'm at and just having fun and going with the flow

cuffing seasons weird for me 😊

3 9:54 AM - Dec 2, 2019 · Blythe, CA



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She says there's an "unspoken pressure" to be in a relationship at this time of year, and that social media definitely influences it.

"Whether it's decorating the Christmas tree or going to family events - people's partners are everywhere."

And while Elena is enjoying being in a couple at the moment, the question remains - will she be single come the new year?

"Am I going to dump him after winter? That isn't my long-term goal but when you're young the summer is the perfect time to be single, so we'll have to wait and see."



kayleegolding
Winter Wonderland

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Swipe to see my 'it's a month till Christmas face' 😊

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Kate Mansfield is a dating and relationship coach and says the time leading up to Christmas can be difficult for single people.

"Holiday seasons, like Christmas and New Year, can feel very lonely when you're not in a couple, whereas in the summer you're not going to notice it as much as everyone's out," she tells Newsbeat.

"I think it's fair to say a lot of people find their families quite difficult at this time of year so that can make you feel lonely."

She says if people are worried about spending Christmas by themselves there are plenty of things they can do to improve the way they feel.

"If you're feeling lonely then you can get out and help others like doing something for charity.

"You're likely to meet other people and be able to shift those feelings. Giving back can really help you."



Someone else who's experienced cuffing season's highs and lows is 21-year-old Kaylee Golding.

Kaylee, who recently chatted about her experiences on **1Xtra Talks**, says it makes sense to end romances as spring approaches because it's less fun going away in the summer when you're coupled-up.

"I think people want to go on holiday and have the best time of their lives," she says

say:

"It's not about going and getting with other people - it's just not having to worry and feel guilty for having fun."

But in a bit of a plot twist, after coupling up in the winter last year she decided that she wanted to stay with her girlfriend.

"When we got together I was like 'oh yeah we can just get to know each other and maybe have a bit of fun'. Then as we spent more time with each other over the winter we decided we wanted to be together," she says.



Over the past few years, people have joked on social media that cuffing season is for finding someone to take you to Winter Wonderland in London's Hyde Park (other Christmas markets are available).

"As soon as cuffing season starts you can download a dating app, swipe and find someone to take you to Winter Wonderland," Kaylee says.



Is it even a good date if they don't win you a cuddly toy?

She says there's "so much pressure" to find someone to go on Instagram-worthy festive dates with, which isn't helped by a bombardment of happy couples putting pictures up with cuddly toys they've won at Christmas fairs.

This year, though, she could be one of them.

But that perfect Insta post doesn't look likely: "My girlfriend is rubbish at winning stuff, she never wins anything for me in fairground games - so yeah I'd love to take that picture, but it's not gonna happen," she laughs.

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