

More room at the inn

It may be prudent to invest in a good-quality sofa bed to extend your sleeping space for house guests keen to sleep off their Christmas turkey. By **Trish Lorenz**

If you're hosting Christmas this year then along with the usual dilemmas – what to wear to the office party, what to buy your in-laws and how much weight you're going to gain between Christmas

Eve and Boxing Day –

there's also the question of where your visitors are going to sleep.

Unless you live in a mansion, hosting demands

the co-ordination and planning of a military campaign: children in with parents, grandparents in the kids' room, Uncle Alan on the sofa. It's a wonder anyone gets any sleep and no surprise that tempers fray.

Investing in a good sofa bed is one way to extend your sleeping space and there are stores that have sofas in stock that can still be delivered before Christmas.

'There are three factors to consider when buying a sofa bed: the mechanism, mattress and seat cushion quality,' says sofa.com head of marketing Emma Drew.

The mechanism should be easy to use and durable; for best quality buy a constant use sofa bed even if you only intend to use it occasionally.

Seat cushions are important too, as you don't want to feel the bed mechanism when you're sitting on the sofa. And a sprung mattress is a better choice than foam. 'There's a limit to how thick the mattress in a sofa bed can be and sprung mattresses offer maximum comfort,' says Drew.

It also helps to try to make space where guests can relax on their own, even if it's just a comfy chair in a quiet corner. 'We find that guests like to retreat to a calm space,' says Sarina Dhillon, co-owner of country house hotel the Olde Bell. 'We always stock Penguin classics and a radio. People can take a break, leaf through a classic or unwind to Radio 4's Christmas ghost stories in the bath.'

