



The

GREENPEACE

Guide to the
Festive Season

Season's greetings

However you celebrate the festive season, it can be a time of togetherness, good food and great company. But it can be hugely wasteful too.

This year, we want to change that, with 25 ways to make Christmas kinder to the planet and your bank balance.

PS. If you're reading this guide on mobile, it's best viewed by turning your phone on its side. You can then zoom in and out on ideas and screenshot the ones you want to do first.

↓ SCROLL DOWN ↓



Gifts

1. Go for quality over quantity when buying presents. One thoughtful, well-chosen gift is better than giving someone ten things they don't need.
2. Instead of buying physical gifts that contribute to overconsumption, get your friends and family experiences, digital subscriptions or something handmade.
3. Do a Secret Santa this year so you only buy one gift instead of something for everyone. Set a budget, pop everyone's name in a hat and reduce your gift haul substantially.
4. If you still want to give physical gifts, consider buying reusable items that encourage your family and friends to reduce their impact. This includes things like reusable coffee cups, water bottles and bags.
5. Head to charity shops, antique centres and second hand websites to find preloved gems for your Secret Santa, or re-gift things you don't use.
6. If you send Christmas cards, consider making them yourself or buying ones that are printed on recycled materials without any plastic wrapping.
7. In the UK, we use 227,000 miles of wrapping paper every single Christmas.

So, if you need to buy wrapping paper, make sure it's recyclable and look for biodegradable tape, then ask your loved ones to unwrap carefully so you can reuse the paper. Better yet, wrap your presents in festive fabric that can be used again and again!
8. If you do stockings, choose reusable fillers or small handmade gifts over single-use plastic items.



Decorations

9. Make your own biodegradable decorations instead of buying new ones. You can create gingerbread stars, dried fruit garlands or popcorn tinsel that looks as good as it tastes.
10. All that glitters is not green—especially tinsel! It's made of plastic and can't be recycled. Try making paper chains out of fabric so that they last year after year. [Here's how.](#)
11. Use vegan candles instead of synthetic ones which give off harmful chemicals.
12. Christmas trees are a festive staple but can be enormously wasteful. This year, why not rent one instead? They get replanted and can be used again, making them a zero waste option. Or buy your own and pop it in the garden in the New Year, ready for Christmas 2022.
13. Forgo tradition entirely by decorating a beloved houseplant instead of buying a Christmas tree, or create a stylish festive feature out of [a ladder.](#)
14. If you have Christmas tree lights or outdoor fairy lights, set a timer so that they automatically turn off when you go to bed. This will save money on your energy bills and reduce pressure on the grid.
15. Forage for holly and evergreen shrubs in your local area to create a festive wreath which is completely biodegradable. Choose foliage that dries well to create a wreath that lasts for years!
16. Spread festive cheer to our feathered friends by decorating trees in your garden or street with [bird seed ornaments](#), keeping them fed throughout the cold winter months.

Food & drink

17. HIGH IMPACT

Go meat and dairy free this yuletide season and see just how delicious a plant-based feast can be.

18. If you enjoy a festive tippie, choose organic, vegan wines for your mulled drinks, and support local distilleries and breweries.

19. Do your food shop locally if you can, and stock up on fruit and veg from greengrocers, which tend to use less plastic packaging. If supermarkets are your only option, then look for loose items. Every piece of plastic avoided sends a signal to supermarkets.

20. In the UK, we waste five million Christmas puddings, two million turkeys and 74 million mince pies every year! But with some forward thinking, you can turn your leftovers into hearty meals and snacks, saving you money as well as avoiding food waste.

21. If Santa visits you and your family, leave out dairy-free milk and vegan mince pies on Christmas eve. And don't forget wonky carrots for the reindeer!

Traditions

22. Novelty Christmas jumpers are all the rage but most of them contain plastic. Instead, opt for second hand vintage knitwear made of natural fibres like cotton and wool, to keep warm and stylish this winter.

23. Going for a festive walk in your local area can be a brilliant tradition, helping you and your family connect with wildlife during winter.

24. Traditional crackers contain huge amounts of single-use plastic that go straight in the bin after dinner. Instead, make your own or buy reusable ones that you can refill next year.

25. Make a New Year's resolution to do more to protect our world in 2022 by downloading [The Greenpeace Guide to Life](#) and find out 101 ways to make an extraordinary difference every day.

And finally...

The best way to make December less wasteful is to consider the true meaning of the festive season. Is it about gifts, glitter and novelty jumpers? Or is it about sharing what you already have with the people who matter most? By reflecting on the reason behind our yuletide traditions, we can make Christmas extra special for our loved ones and our precious world.

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