

YOUR MONEY



Edited by
TRICIA PHILLIPS

Christmas? Still time to plan-et carefully

FROM GIFTS TO FESTIVE GRUB, LET'S CELEBRATE SUSTAINABLY

BY HARVEY JONES

IT may be the most wonderful time of the year, as the song suggests - but Christmas is also a festival of rampant consumerism that has knock-on effects in the battle against climate change.

Every year, an estimated 227,000 miles of wrapping paper goes into landfill, along with unwanted presents and all the plastic involved, uneaten food and throwaway trees.

But people are becoming more aware of the impact of our festive splurge, with almost half of us now trying to shop more sustainably and younger generations keen on greener gifting, Tesco research shows.

Here's how you can make this Christmas as eco-friendly as can be, and bring some much-needed glad

tidings for the environment.

Make gifts at home

Nine out of 10 of us say it's more heart-warming to receive a homemade present for Christmas instead of a shop-bought gift.

It also reveals eight in 10 will visit Christmas markets and buy more original presents away from big stores.

Eco-friendly under-30s will be most likely to gift handmade jewellery, knitted jumpers or homemade bath bombs, while the over-60s will turn to homemade jams or chutneys, says a study by 3D laser print firm Glowforge.

Founder Dan Shapiro says: "Other popular homemade gift creations include candles, baked truffles, biscuits, Christmas decorations, artwork, pottery and soap bars."

Pass on unwanted prezzies

More than a third of us have binned unwanted Christmas presents on Boxing Day, including perfume, clothes and books. But instead of just throwing them away, regift, resell or recycle at charity shops, says Tessa Clarke, co-founder of sharing app Olio.

"Upload them to a recycling app, because one person's trash could be another's treasure," she adds.

Classifieds website Gumtree says 100,000 electrical appliances will go to landfill this Christmas and is urging us



to sell online if still usable.

Keep kitchen eco clean

The kitchen is the least environmentally friendly room in the home, with an average 277 plastic water bottles, 906 snack wrappers, and 215 crisp packets going through every year, according to research by conscious living brand AllMatters.

Cleaning products use harsh chemicals so consider planet-friendly alternatives such as Delphis Eco, Home-things or Bio D, says Laura Harnett, founder of the

seepcompany.co.uk which sells 100% compostable household essentials. "Or go one step further and make your own natural cleaning solution by mixing lemon juice with bicarbonate of soda to scrub off stains, or cleaning kitchens and bathrooms with white vinegar."

Seep's website sells plastic-free sponges, loofahs, scourers, cloths, bin bags and bamboo washing-up brushes.

Sustainable cleaning company OceanSaver offers plant based, non toxic, power-cleaning EcoDrop refills which dissolve when added to reusable spray bottles filled with water.

If you're buying a new kitchen appliance go for the highest efficiency rating, says Jo Hand, co-founder of sustainable lifestyle app giki.earth.

"To save power when using appliances, only boil the water you need, put lids on saucepans and always use the eco settings on the dishwasher."

If throwing out kitchen appliances, whether it's an old blender or a fridge, make sure it's recycled properly, Jo adds. Cheeky Panda (uk.cheekypanda.com) sells eco alternatives to traditional tissue and paper products, such as bamboo

napkins, straws, multi-surface wipes and kitchen towels.

Bamboo is more eco-friendly simply because it

can grow 30 times faster than trees.

Plan carefully and eat green

Every year we throw away a staggering five million Christmas puddings, two million turkeys, 17 million Brussel sprouts and 74 million mince pies.

Avoid food waste by planning meals and purchases, says Gabrielle Bourret-Sicotte, co-founder of carbon footprint tracking app Greenr. "Only serve fresh

food you know will be eaten, and use those leftovers." Domestic appliance maker Miele's home economist Cesar Fernandez suggests making a delicious Bubble and Squeak on Boxing Day using leftover roast potatoes and vegetables. "Freeze any cooked vegetables separately and use them to bulk up soups, stews, curries, fajitas or vegetable frittatas."

Take care when reheating turkey and other meats, says Sarah Taylor, food and drink content production manager at career development site highspeed-training.co.uk.

"Make sure you properly heat meat the whole way through, so that it is steaming in the middle.

"If reheating a large portion of meat or chicken, be sure to check the temperature at the core of the meat - this is the thickest part." You could have a greener Christmas dinner by replacing meat with seasonal vegetarian recipes.

Another way to be more sustainable is to buy food directly from suppliers, says Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones, said to be the UK's only black farmer.

His site theblackfarmer.com sells both traditional and Caribbean Christmas food

boxes, plus food, drinks and clothing all year round. Wilfred says: "As well as buying high quality produce, you can support local food and drink businesses that have been hit hard by the pandemic."

Online butcher fieldandflower.co.uk supports British farmers and fishermen. All products are free range and meat is traceable. It sells festive Christmas meat and trimmings boxes, hampers and cheeseboards. Or order from British cheese board maker butlerscheeses.co.uk.

Make a fashion statement

Our addiction to fast fashion is damaging the planet because it is full of micro plastics which end up in rivers and seas, and our bodies.

Sarah Divall, from online campaigning group Hubbub, says we can still look great without harming the planet. "Buying something new shouldn't be the default when there are so many gems hiding in our wardrobes, so get inventive by restyling something you already own."

To turn your clothes green rewear, restyle or upcycle an outfit you already own, she says.

"Borrow or swap with friends, rent from sites like Loanhood, By Rotation and

Hurr, or buy second-

hand from a vintage shop, online reseller or a charity shop.

Milk it for all it's worth

Many of us miss the old-fashioned milk round, with its reusable glass bottles and electric vehicles, but now there is a modern, equally sustainable alternative.

Website themodernmilkman.co.uk lets you order milk, eggs, yoghurts, shakes and juices in returnable glass bottles, which it collects, washes and reuses.

The site also delivers Christmas treats such as brandy butter, double cream and mince pies to doorstep. Any packaging that isn't reusable is



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From gifts to festive grub, let's celebrate sustainably



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Go net zero all year round

Another way to get a net zero lifestyle is to offset your carbon footprint by paying a regular monthly subscription to online platform Selva which will plant trees on your behalf as part of its mass reforestation programme.

Founder Harry Hely-Hutchinson says planting trees can meaningfully reduce CO2 in the atmosphere. “It costs around

£5 a month to get a new zero lifestyle, which is cheaper than a Netflix subscription.”

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mcqueensdairies.co.uk lets you order milk and juices in returnable glass bottles, which it collects, washes and reuses.

The third generation family business began in the 90s and now delivers to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife and Galashiels.

Their free range eggs are delivered to your door in cardboard boxes which can be recycled.

They also have milks from the Omsco dairy co-operative whose farmers produce solely raw organic milk.



SECOND-HAND GIFTS MAKE A LAURA SENSE

THE founder of children’s clothes resale website Kids O’Clock has committed to having a thrifty Christmas this year.

Laura Rose Vidrequin says she will be giving second-hand gifts. “I’ll also buy my festive food from food-waste fighting delivery service oddbox.co.uk, and source local produce from farmdrop.com.” Laura will also be wrapping gifts in recycled fabrics.



**GREEN
GIFTS
Laura**



MUM-of-two Jenna Roberts has decided to not buy any new party clothes this year, to save money and have a more sustainable Christmas.

"I'm going to re-wear some vintage outfits I already own and am borrowing a dress from a friend for a 20s party, too. I reckon I've saved myself around £100."

Jenna, 42, from St Albans, Herts, has set up a small business making handmade vintage-style baby and child knitwear called bobbleknits.com - and is knitting Christmas jumpers for her husband and two young children too. "The children's will be two sizes too big so they can wear them for longer."

Instead of buying rolls of single use wrapping paper she will also use classic brown paper that can be recycled. "I've made ribbons and bows out of old comics and magazines, which look brilliant, cost nothing and can also be recycled."

The family has started eating less meat and plans to make a "veggie Wellington" for Christmas dinner. It's delicious, better for the environment and £20 cheaper than a turkey."

Jenna also plans portions carefully so she expects few leftovers.

Jenna added: We've had a fake Christmas tree for 10 years now and it's still going strong, saving up to £40 on a real one each year."

LET'S WRAP UP WELL FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

TRY to use an alternative to rolls of shiny, sparkly festive paper that's not eco-friendly.

The North London Waste Authority has teamed up with web firms Red Ted Art, Style and Sustain, Origami Est and fashion designer Sophie Cochevelou, to

suggest sustainable Christmas wrapping. Reuse gift bags and use colourful fabric scarves, pillowcases or blankets that you already own for larger items.

Decorate your home with bows and snowflakes by reusing old comics, magazines and

newspapers, which can easily be recycled afterwards.

Tie string around plain brown paper for a rustic look and use foliage and herbs, such as holly or rosemary, to decorate gifts. Steer clear of wrapping paper that's shiny, metallic, laminated or wax-coated or contains glitter. If

you do want to use wrapping paper, then look for "recyclable" paper, marked with FSC for the Forest Stewardship Council.

Cut back on non-recyclable sticky tape or avoid it altogether by wrapping your presents origami-style.