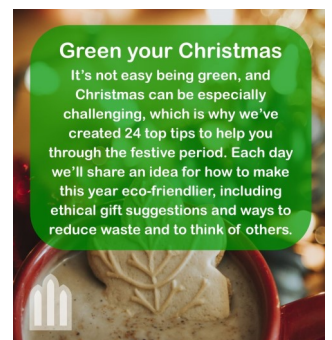


It's not easy being green, and Christmas can be especially challenging, which is why we've created 24 top tips to help you through the festive period. Each day we'll share an idea for how to make this year eco-friendlier, including ethical gift suggestions and ways to reduce waste and to think of others.



Give experiences – and lasting memories – rather than ‘things’. Theatre tokens, cinema vouchers, Go Ape experience, ranger for a day at an animal sanctuary ... there are lots of options out there!

Avoid greetings cards and wrapping paper with foil or glitter as they cannot be recycled with paper and card.



Many of us already have all we ‘need’ so why not give a virtual gift to support projects in the UK and around the world? (e.g. <https://charity-gifts.christianaid.org.uk/> <https://sendacow.org/> etc)



Go cracker-free! Either make your own (e.g. <https://www.keepthiscracker.com/>) and put a home-made treat inside, or wrap a

small extra gift for each person at your Christmas table.



Feeling crafty? Homemade gifts are always appreciated. There are loads of ideas online for simple gifts you can make yourself.



Avoid balloons for this and all celebrations: they are a source of plastic pollution and very dangerous for small children and animals.



If you send ‘round robin’ Christmas newsletters, make sure to add a personal note. Even those friends you haven’t seen for years will appreciate knowing that you are thinking of them, this year especially. (Don’t forget to save the stamps from cards and letters you receive, too!)



Christmas tree decorations are a great gift, that we enjoyed year after year. There are plenty of ethical options or why not make some?



Make your own greetings cards: you could use seasonal photographs that you have taken, collage pictures with scraps cut from magazines, or your own artwork.





For a gift that lasts all year, how about a magazine subscription or even a book club subscription? (<https://www.shelterbox.org/book-club/>)

<https://www.thesimplethings.com/subscribe>

<https://www.slow-journalism.com/subscribe> etc)

If you have space in your garden, look out for pot-grown Christmas trees and invest in a real tree that you can bring inside year after year.



Shop local for gifts and look out for local crafts to minimise the carbon footprint of your presents.



Green your Christmas. Check all your Christmas lights and when buying new ensure they are LED to minimise energy use; have outdoor lights on a timer so that they are only turned on after dark and until bedtime.



Unless you already have artificial garlands or wreaths, make your own from foraged hedgerow prunings.

For local friends and family, think about giving homemade preserves or baked treats – you could even make up a small local produce hamper for a special friend or neighbour.



A beautifully wrapped present is a joy to receive, but can you manage without the Sellotape (which can hinder recycling and re-using of the paper)? Ways to wrap your gifts to avoid tape include using fabric or gift bags. Use raffia or string or ribbon on paper – not tied in knots!



If you give toiletries, look for those that are eco-friendly and contain no palm oil. Shampoo bars, solid soap and other toiletries, sold without any plastic packaging, can make colourful and thoughtful gifts.

Plan your Christmas meals realistically to avoid food waste. Aim for seasonal fruit and veg to minimise air miles and your carbon footprint.



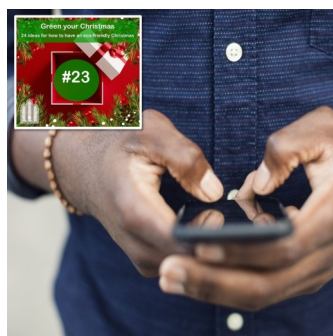
We all enjoy chocolate at this time of year; check for the Fairtrade mark to ensure that producers have received a living wage.

If you already have an artificial tree, then use it annually for as long as possible; its carbon footprint will eventually be less than having a live tree felled each year. But make sure that at the end of its life, it is disposed of carefully.



Make your own gift tags: you can recycle parts from the cards you received last year or cut out seasonal shapes from colourful card packaging.

Be prepared: look up recipes for leftover chicken/turkey and seasonal vegetables. You can make a great soup using almost anything.



Phone a friend. With many people more isolated than usual this year, give someone a call and make their day.

Enjoy nature this Christmas. Take a walk and spend time noticing the wonder of God's creation.

