

# CELEBRATE A GREEN CHRISTMAS

*Keep it simple! After all, the first Christmas was very basic. So, what can you do to honour this amazing Gift from God, and respect the planet he has given us also?*


## 1. Spend Less

Can you buy less this time, please? More consumption means more waste when that is not needed at all. Consider waste packaging in particular, please and try using eco-bags for shopping.

## 2. A Store-bought Gift is not the Only Option

Gifts become more precious if that shows thoughtfulness. Try to make something yourself expressing your love and emotions. It may be a doodle on the cardboard but can be more valuable than something you find on store shelves. Make a voucher for something you know the recipient would like (a meal, baby-sitting, gardening, etc) Or second-hand? <https://onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk/shop/>

## 3. Buy Gifts Made Locally

Don't smile  so much: Be selective about buying from the internet. These days gifts are available from different parts of the world, but transportation contributes to significant temperature increase and emission of greenhouse gases leading to climate change. Look for gifts in local artisan shops and craft fairs without additional costs of transportation. Local small shops need our support, especially at the moment: **Calne Christian Bookshop, Waterstones, Cousin Norman's, Barty's, etc**

**BUT**

## 4. Consider buying Fairtrade gifts

They do travel, but the artisan producers are paid a good fair wage for their work, and they receive a premium to benefit their communities. [www.traidcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk); [www.naturalcollection.com](http://www.naturalcollection.com)

## 5. Use Gifts and Wrappers Made From Recycled Materials

Some individuals and small businesses are very creative and they make beautiful products using recycled materials. Some bows, glitters, ribbons are also not recyclable so learn to recycle Christmas gift wrappers. If you can sew, make drawstring bags, which can be a gift in themselves, as reusable packaging. **Furoshiki**, a Japanese practice to use a square reusable cloth to wrap gifts, using old newspaper or brown grocery bag may help in this case. (See YouTube videos with instructions)

## 6. Go for Battery-Free Gifts

This Christmas look for toys without a battery. Batteries, when discharged, become an environmental hazard. Air, water or wind power renewable energy kit is available now. These toys have a less negative impact on the environment. At least use rechargeable batteries if not anything else. Books, puzzles and games are other ideas. [www.eden.co.uk](http://www.eden.co.uk) for Christian books and gifts.

The first Christmas  
was pretty simple.  
It's okay if yours is too.



## 7. Use a Live Tree and Plant a Tree

Why not use a living tree as your Christmas tree rather than cutting a tree or buying an artificial tree? Another good choice would be buying a tree from a sustainable source so that you can plant it again. These are more eco-friendly choices and save valuable resources. Real trees will help to remove carbon from the atmosphere. If you want to be reassured that your tree has been grown sustainably, not in a way that's environmentally damaging, look for the FSC-certification logo. And, try planting a small tree on Christmas to offset the taking of a Christmas tree. Or, rent a Christmas tree.....<https://chippenhampitstop.com/christmas-trees/>



## 8. Recycling real trees

Far more Christmas trees get recycled now than even 10 years ago. Most councils have allocated locations where people can leave their tree after Christmas (take the decorations off first). Or you can usually take them to your nearest municipal tip/recycling centre. The trees are shredded, then used as mulch on plants in parks, or on woodland paths (for a lovely instant pine-forest smell). Or else rotted down and recycled as compost. Look for recycling schemes that benefit local charities, i.e. hospices.

## 9. Eco-friendly Candles

You can find eco-friendly, and smoke-free candles made from soy, natural vegetable-based wax or beeswax from various stockists. Remember, paraffin candles made from petroleum residue are hazardous to your health and for the environment.



## 10. Organic meat

If you can't get past the meat craving, try choosing organic and free-range, and support local and small-scale farming wherever possible.

It might be a bit more expensive, but it's better to buy less than more of the cheap and cheerless intensively-farmed meat.

## 11. Cut food waste

When you're food shopping, try and choose things that are light on packaging, or buy loose items.

And if you end up over-catering, don't just bin what's left. Transforming leftovers can be a great way to create new meals, save money and cut waste. Try the BBC Good Food leftovers recipes for ideas – or challenge your family to suggest recipes with whatever you've got in the fridge. If you have too many leftovers, see what you can freeze. Compost any other waste. [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com) for inspiration!

## 12. DIY cards

An unbelievable 1.5 billion Christmas cards are thrown away by UK households each year, according to Imperial College researchers. E-cards (sent online) are an increasingly popular alternative. They cut your carbon footprint, save trees and save money. Alternatively, pick up some supplies when you're next in the forest and try your hand at making leaf-pressed cards. Remember to **avoid glitter** on your cards, as they contain harmful microplastics. Instead, decorate with eco-glitter, or watercolour paint. Hand-deliver (and knock on the door to say hello!) as many as possible.

### 13. Have a crafty Christmas

How do you fancy creating your own edible Christmas decorations , or a homemade Advent calendar? Try Pinterest for ideas: [www.pinterest.co.uk](http://www.pinterest.co.uk)

Or even making a natural Christmas wreath from carefully foraged materials? It's a great excuse to have fun, and keep kids busy, if there's any around. You can also try getting creative with dried fruit peel, pine cones, Christmas tree offcuts and the like. And you can always see what **Scrapstore** has in stock!



### 14. Alternative gifts:

Many charities are now offering alternative gifts: you pay an amount for a one-off donation to a specific cause, the charity acknowledges your gift with a card, which you then send to those in your family who have everything..... Try **Tearfund.org**; **The Leprosy Mission** [www.tlmtrading.com](http://www.tlmtrading.com); [www.sat7uk.org](http://www.sat7uk.org); [www.shop.embraceme.org](http://www.shop.embraceme.org); <https://www.avonneedstrees.org.uk/gift-cards/> (for gift cards to plant forest locally), or look at your favourite charity.

### 15. Share a meal via Zoom



Well, this year there may not be that many huge family gatherings around the turkey, so why not plan a Zoom meal? Arrange the food and drink, (doesn't have to be the same for everyone) set up a time and a Zoom meeting, then all pull the crackers together. Hopefully there will be time for some fun games or a quiz around the table too.

### 16. Eco-friendly stocking fillers for Christmas 2020

Look for different stocking fillers and small gifts at [www.greenpeople.co.uk](http://www.greenpeople.co.uk) or [www.naturalcollection.org](http://www.naturalcollection.org) where you will find a great range of gifts which consider the environment.

### 17. Choosing Eco-conscious Christmas Crackers

Traditional Christmas crackers can come in handy should you even need a miniature screwdriver or a paper hat but if you're consciously trying to reduce your use of plastic, it's worthwhile investing in reusable Christmas crackers.

An eco-friendly way to embellish your Christmas dinner table, reusable Christmas crackers can be used year after year and filled with small but useful zero-waste items. <https://www.notonthehighstreet.com/katesprostonembroideredtextiles/product/reusable-christmas-cracker>

Or you could make your own.....

### 18. Christmas Decoration tips

Bringing nature indoors is an easy way to create an interior design that is inviting, seasonal and sustainable and, for an eco-friendly festive style, we recommend swapping glitter and tinsel for natural foliage.

If you have holly branches, berries or ivy growing in your garden you can use these to give your home an eco-friendly rustic Christmas aesthetic, just remember to



wear gloves as ivy is known to cause skin irritation.

### 19. The Lights

Love to decorate with Christmas lights but want to curb your energy use? Use indoor LED fairy lights to enjoy the sparkle of Christmas whilst remaining environmentally conscious.

You can even get solar-powered fairy lights but be aware that the limited hours of daylight at Christmas may curb their sparkle a little.

### 20. Internet searching

Lots of this is expected, of course, so why not ditch Google for a search engine which actually does some good? [www.ecosia.org](http://www.ecosia.org) is a search engine which uses its profits to plant trees worldwide. Every 45 searches plants a tree.

