



HAVE YOURSELF AN ECO-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

There is growing excitement for millions of people around the world as the month of December starts; it's the beginning of the most wonderful time of the year after all – the festive season. Even as the COVID 19 pandemic hangs a dark cloud over us, many people are beginning to prepare for Christmas by shopping for gifts and the annual 'bruk up' house cleaning tradition. Even as we prepare for Christmas, let us not forget the environment in our preparations. Here are a few tips on how to have an eco-friendly Christmas:

Take reusable bags Christmas shopping

While the ban on single use plastics has not yet been implemented, you can take the initiative to be eco-friendly this holiday season by taking your own bags while shopping. Go a step further and be an advocate for the environment by encouraging your local grocer or your favorite supermarket to take steps to preserve the environment starting with encouraging customers to bring their own bags, providing re-usable bags with discounts for customers who use those bags, and charging customers for plastic bags provided.

Give gifts that will last

In some households, Christmas Day involves the exchanging lots of presents between friends and family, some big, some small, and some extremely short-lived. When thinking about the gifts you're going to buy for Christmas, consider what kind of presents may be more long-lasting than others, and thus reduce the risk of simply being discarded after a short while.

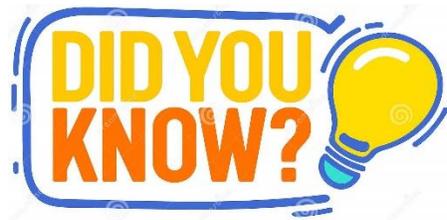
Thoughtful, long-lasting presents may include a photo album, a plant or something the recipient has specifically said they want and is likely to use time and time again.

Additionally, there are a number of local small businesses that have emerged during the pandemic as persons sought to commercialize those hidden skills; why not support those local entrepreneurs and give gifts that will reduce your carbon footprint?

Make sure you use LED lights

Lights are a significant aspect of Christmas celebrations, customarily used to decorate trees, the interior of homes and the exterior. Should you use lights as part of your Christmas decorations, it would be more eco-conscious to use LED (Light Emitting Diode) bulbs.

Let's not forget, it's easier on your pocket too!



“95% of the energy in LEDs is converted into light and only 5% is wasted as heat. This is compared to fluorescent lights which convert 95% to heat and only 5% into light.”

Be eco-conscious with your wrapping paper

Yes, it can be tempting when Christmas shopping to buy several rolls of sparkly, eye-catching wrapping paper to beautify all of your presents. However, it is not an essential part of the festivities, especially when you can be wrapping your gifts in a more sensible manner. There are many great looking alternatives to plastic wrapping paper, including paper, old calendars, cloth, and paper bags (without the wax coating).

Reduce your food waste

Many of us reading this article might say “what food waste?” However, if you do not finish all the food on your Christmas table, then it is important to think twice before chucking it in the bin, as both an environmental and a social issue.

Cook less meat and source ingredients consciously

Perhaps a more controversial option for the meat lovers among us, it's also worth considering reducing the amount of meat consumed during the festive period as we

become increasingly aware of its impact on the earth when consumed in large quantities.

That doesn't have to mean going cold turkey (get it?!); just be aware that there are many delicious veggie options out there – perhaps you could try replacing just one meaty meal? This one may be a bit harder considering our love for pepperpot and garlic pork; just try one.

That said, it's not just about the food we eat; where we get it from can also alter our impact on the planet. Opting for organic meat and veg is the best way to ensure that potentially harmful pesticides haven't been used during the cultivation process. It's also worth sourcing food locally if possible.

Shopping in a supermarket? Avoid plastic packaging where possible – loose veg is a great starting point.

Have yourself a Merry Christmas/ Happy Holiday, remember to follow all guidelines for staying safe and slowing the spread of COVID-19, be responsible and respectful to each other and the environment.

Sources

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/christmas/christmas-eco-friendly-environment-sustainable-wrapping-paper-tree-decorations-a9240836.html>

<https://www.realhomes.com/advice/10-tips-for-an-eco-friendly-christmas>

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