

## 16 ECO FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS TIPS

Christmas is traditionally a season for spoiling yourself and your family. But it can also be a time of waste with too much food, presents and packaging. We've got some great tips to help you enjoy Christmas, so you can spoil yourself without spoiling the planet.

### 1. Artificial trees

If you have one already, use it for as many years as possible to make the most of it. If you don't have one, try [Freecycle](#), [Ebay](#) or [Gumtree](#) for a pre-loved one.

### 2. Eco friendly real trees

To make sure your tree's UK grown, buy from a retailer registered with the [British Christmas Tree Growers Association](#). If you want a tree that is certified organic, check to see that it has been approved by the [Soil Association](#).

### 3. Grow your own

Buying a potted tree with roots allows you to grow it outside and use it again next year, reducing its environmental impact and costing you less. But be warned - they require some looking after and you'll need a big pot. Read these expert tips on caring for Christmas trees in pots <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=374> .

### 4. Recycling cut trees

Don't let your tree be part of the [90% that end up in landfill](#). Many local councils now compost them so find your local Christmas tree recycling point.

<http://www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with/christmas-trees>



Let your imagination run wild. Homemade gifts, food gifts and free gifts can be a refreshing and creative alternative to high street or online purchases.

### 5. Homemade gifts

You can make use of what you already have, with these beautiful [origami Christmas models](#) or [make your own candles](#) in bespoke containers, like old tea-cups. Websites such as [All About You](#) have oodles of Christmas craft ideas, or see some of our favourite .

<https://www.pinterest.com/wwwfoecouk/>

### 6. Food gifts

Sweets, biscuits and preserves can all make fabulous Christmas presents, especially with some creative packaging. To make the most of your pantry and garden, Alys Fowler's book [Abundance](#) is a wonderful resource, including recipes like jams and pickles which you can make months before Christmas. <http://www.bookdepository.com/Abundance-Alys-Fowler/9780857830784>

### 7. Free gifts

Why spend if you don't have to? [Free Christmas Gift Cheques](#) are a lovely way of making your time the thing that counts. <http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/xmas-gift-cheques>

### 8. Friends of the Earth shop

The [Friends of the Earth shop](#) has a fabulous eco-friendly range of cards, calendars and gifts, so you can do all your festive shopping and support Friends of the Earth at the same time. We've also got gift vouchers, so you can let your friends or family choose their own present.



A turkey on the table doesn't have to be a seasonal inevitability. Here are some festive food tips to help you shop and cook for a planet-friendly feast.

### 9. Vegetarian recipes

Why not cut the meat this Christmas, or cook vegetarian for Boxing Day and over the festive break? According to the [British Soil Association](#) "food is the single most important, everyday way for people to reduce their own environmental impact". This doesn't have to mean walnut roast or mushroom risotto. Try the [Vegetarian Society](#) or [Cook Vegetarian](#) for hundreds of fantastic recipes.

### 10. Organic meat

For planet-friendly meat and dairy, choose organic and free-range, and support greener, small-scale farming methods. Organisations like [Riverford Farms](#) (<http://www.riverford.co.uk/shop/farm-shop?tldr=tldr/>) run dependable organic delivery schemes, geared towards the festive period. If you indulge in seasonal excesses, why not eat less meat before Christmas to make up for it? Eating less but better meat would be a great New Year's resolution.

### 11. Leftovers

Transforming leftovers can be a great way to create new meals, save money and cut waste. Try [Love your leftovers](#), <http://www.foeshop.co.uk/love-your-leftovers-cico.html#> or <http://scotland.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>). OR challenge your family to suggest recipes with whatever ingredients you've got in the fridge. Classic winter dishes like turkey pie and bubble and squeak are perfect for making the most of your leftovers, not to mention Brussels sprout curry.

### 12. Cut food waste

Choose food that is light on packaging or loose. If you have too many leftovers, see what you can freeze. If you still have too much, why not donate to an elderly neighbour, local food bank or soup kitchen. Compost any other waste.



Christmas decorations, present wrapping and cards add a touch of flair, colour and personality to the Christmas period. But experts estimate that paper waste over the Christmas period is equivalent to 5-12 million litres of biofuel – enough to power a bus to go to the moon 20 times. So why not recycle or make your own Christmas decorations? It's a great excuse to have fun and keep kids busy.

### 13. Gift wrap

Use [cloth](#), recycled paper or magazine pages to wrap gifts, or keep the kids entertained by making your own wrapping paper. Recycle once the presents are open.

### 14. Cut your card footprint

1.5 billion Christmas cards are thrown away by UK residents each year according to [Imperial College researchers](#).

E-cards are increasingly popular for good reason. They cut your carbon footprint, save trees and save money - see [Friends of the Earth free e-cards](#) (<https://www.foe.co.uk/living/cards>) Alternatively, make your own cards from recycled paper and make a cute design with these [Christmas wooden blocks](#). (<http://www.foeshop.co.uk/christmas-print-blocks-6.html>)

### 15. Decorations

Looking for [eco friendly and Fairtrade Christmas decorations?](#)

(<http://www.foeshop.co.uk/catalogsearch/result/?q=christmas+decoration+kit&order=relevance&dir=desc> ). Our favourites include Christmas stockings made from recycled sari fabric, felt dove and robin decorations, recycled sari bunting, distressed glass baubles and a cloth advent calendar kit.

## 16. Lighting

Turn off tree lights and outdoor house decorative lighting at bedtime

It's simply a waste of energy to leave the holiday lights on at night after everyone's gone to sleep.

Use LED lights for house and Christmas tree lighting

LED (Light Emitting Diode) holiday lights use up to 95% less energy than larger, traditional holiday bulbs and last up to 100,000 hours when used indoors. LED holiday lights use .04 watts per bulb, 10 times less than mini bulbs and 100 times less than traditional holiday bulbs. Over a 30-day period, lighting 500 traditional holiday lights will cost you about £15.00 while the same number of LED lights costs only £0.19. As an added bonus, if one of the LED lights burns out the rest of the strand will stay lit.