



Celebrate Christmas in Greener Way



During the season of celebration, we have to be more careful for the environment. From wasteful purchases and non-recyclable wrapping paper to disposable party ware and high electricity bills, the holiday season can take a toll on the environment. With a little effort and imagination, we can reduce the environmental impact of the holiday season.

There are easy ways that can green our Celebrations. Here are some ideas to help celebrate the festivals while caring for the earth.

Gift

Christmas and Gifts are synonymous. It is a time of gifts, joy, and family togetherness. Buy eco-friendly gifts if not Doing it Yourself.

- **Choose Sustainable Materials:** Organic cotton, hemp, silk, wood...all are natural, renewable materials.
- **Less Really is More:** Make every gift count by purchasing things with value, purpose and meaning.
- **Make It Fun and Easy:** Go for a White Elephant gift exchange or Secret Santa. To make it most memorable exchange go for DIY gift.
- **Shop Locally:** Buying local supports community and boosts the local economy.
- **Sustainable Wrapping Paper:** Ditch the rolls of wrapping paper and avoid glossy or metallic gift wrap. Use the old greeting cards or any other recycled material. Wrap gift in a reusable gift wrap.



Decorations:

Part of the fun is in creating a winter wonderland both inside and outside our home using simple, affordable and beautiful decorations.

- **Choose Handmade and Homemade:** Whether made by yourself or a local artisan, handmade items will bring a simple, beautiful energy into your home.
- **Decorate with Nature:** Avoid plastic and opt for wood, burlap or organic cotton. Bring in elements from the outdoors to incorporate into your home, such as a wreath of pine boughs or an abandoned nest to place a candle within.
- **Save Energy-** If the strands of lights are older than 10 years, better to replace them with newer, LED bulbs. Save you up to 90% or more on power costs and will last longer than traditional bulbs.



- **Christmas Tree:** Choose a **Live Tree** from a nursery and grow organically if space is available. A potted tree is another green choice that can be used for multiple years.
- **Less is Still More:** Cluttered decorations are neither inspiring nor beautiful. Keep it simple and clean to enjoy more.
- **Ornaments:** Choose durable and meaningful ornaments. Wood, metal, or cloth will all last longer than plastic or thin glass.
- **Replace Burnt Out Bulbs:** Burned-out holiday lights, even the cheap kind, are often fixable with a small investment of time and money. Do not throw strings of lights with a few burned out bulbs.
- **Utilize Timers:** Keep lights on timers, from the strands adorning your trees to the lights outside. Some jobs are better left to machines. Given our forgetful nature, it is a job that we humans are not all that good at.



Dinner

The family meal is a time to relax, connect and celebrate. It is the perfect occasion to bring everyone together.

- **Compost:** Any food scraps not used as leftovers can be composted to reduce any potential waste.
- **Leftovers:** Do not let delicious food go to waste. Go for some delicious ways and recipes to use up Christmas leftovers.
- **Natural Centerpiece:** Bring festive charm and the beauty of nature to centerpiece. Try Pine wreaths, an arrangement of Poinsettias and beeswax candles.
- **Organic and Local Produce:** Choose organically raised produce. Buy seasonal food from local farmers and shops and homemade rolls all create a sustainable, delicious and healthy meal.
- **Skip Disposables:** No to disposables and bring out the utensils and cloth napkins to use.

Be Green

After sustainable shopping, eco-friendly decoration and food there are many more ways to make celebration GREEN

- **Carpool or Opt for Public Transport:** It will decrease fuel consumption and traffic congestion. Combine shopping trips and make lists to save time.
- **Celebrate Together:** Invite your near and dear ones in your home. It will conserve resources and connect with others.
- **Homemade Cards.** Use last year's cards or colourful calendars. Cut out the section of pictures, make a beautiful collage and paste on the folded paper. Use recycled paper to create a new card. It will give a personal touch.
- **Green shopping — online or in-store:** It depends on what your priorities are, and how you do it. If you live in the suburbs and have to drive more, better



to go for online shopping. If you can get what you need at a nearby location, go for in-store shopping. Better to make a combination of the two will produce the greenest results.

- **Recycle:** Save any special gift wrap, ribbons and bows. Shred the non-glossy paper for the compost or add to the recycling bins. Keep packaging of beverages or food containers for reuse.
- **Ship through Eco-friendly Services:** Choose services — postal or courier, which are committed to the sustainable use of natural resources.

Enjoy Christmas with way less waste, way more hands on fun, and way less burden to both your pocket and the environment! Go on - enjoy!



Source: <http://www.sustainablebabysteps.com/green-christmas.html>

