

# Tips and Tricks for a Sustainable Holiday

## 9 Core Tips

1. Sustainable holiday gift wrap
2. Sustainable gifts (Check our guide!), including stocking stuffers and cards
3. Eco Friendly feast (plan it out, no plastics, donate unused items, share leftovers, compost)
4. Get an organic real tree from a sustainable tree farm that plants more trees than it cuts down (or use a plastic one for more than 20 years)
5. Recycle or replant the tree (if possible) after Christmas
6. Sustainable Christmas decorations
7. Switch to LED Holiday lights and a timer
8. Recyclable cards or ecards that also [plant trees](#) with each purchase!
9. Adjust your thermostat to save energy

## Reduce Waste around Meals

- Buy and **prepare** the right amount of food
- Try out this **tool** for determining how much food you need:  
<https://savethefood.com/guestimator>
- Stick to your **shopping list** and opt for items in recyclable packaging
- Give all produce a chance!
  - Don't only choose perfect produce. Also, check out [Imperfect Foods](#)
- Shop **local** and try out local **farmers' markets**
- **Plant based** meals and **smaller** portion sizes are ideal
  - Use smaller plates and bowls
- Provide **leftover containers** for guests
  - Use recyclable foil instead of plastic wrap for leftovers
- **Donate** unused food and used cooking oil (don't pour this down the drain!)
  - [WasteFreeSD.org](#)
- **Freeze excess leftovers** that probably won't get eaten in time
- Use **real dinnerware**

## Tips for Green Holiday Shopping

- **Shop close to home** if possible or from stores close to delivery point
- Give an **eco-friendly** gift!
- Give gifts that encourage others **to use less** stuff
  - Cookbook for leftovers, crafts from reusable items, re-usable takeout containers; check our [guide](#)!
- **Long-lasting** gifts; no batteries required; or can be recycled once used
- Give **apps** to kids with smartphones
- Gift certificates for **experiences** instead of material things

- Museums, concerts, restaurants, subscriptions to content, theaters, online movies/shows, lessons, concert, zoo, sports
- **Make a gift**
  - Edible gifts like bread, cookies, candy; crochet or knit gifts; jewelry; paintings/art
- **Donate** in someone's name
- Remember those **handmade gift certificates** you gave out as a kid? Do that for your time and talent as an adult!
  - Home cooked meals, offering your professional assistance, helping with a home deep clean
- **Recycle old electronics** after receiving new ones! Or provide info on recycling when giving electronics

## Gift Wrap, Holiday Cards, Packaging

- Use a **bow or ribbon** instead of wrapping paper
- Make the wrapping **part of the gift**
  - Bowls, pots, clothes, towels, blankets
- **Tree-less** source of wrapping paper
- Magazines, newspapers, maps, posters, old calendars
- Save old gift bags/baskets, ribbons, bows, etc. **to re-use**
- Metallic/foil and plastic wrapping paper is NOT recyclable; **avoid if possible**
  - If it glitters or has texture, it is also not recyclable
- Unwrapped gift **scavenger hunt!**
- Send **e-cards** instead of paper cards
- Stuff **stockings** with homemade, natural treats

## Holiday Decorations and Christmas Trees

- Use **energy star** qualified **LED** lights
  - Lasts longer and more efficient
- Use a timer to **auto-turn off** and on lights
- **Recycle** or swap old holiday lights
- Try light free with **reflective ornaments**, candles
- **Avoid tinsel** and plastic decorations
- Use things from **nature** to decorate
  - Berries, flowers, herbs, fresh fruit, evergreen branches, twigs, bark, flowers
- **Make garlands** out of cranberries and popcorn, small jewelry, small stuffed animals, cookie cutters, buttons
- **Real Christmas trees** are a greener choice than artificial trees
- Purchase an **organic potted** Christmas tree that is native to your area and **replant it** after the holidays
- Decorate a tree in your **yard**
- **Recycle your tree** with your city if it can't be replanted

## New Holiday Traditions

- Join the **Christmas Bird Count** and do a Christmas day nature hike - <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>
  - Make it a **trash collection** event too and bring a garbage bag to collect litter
- **Plant trees** or other types of winter plants to symbolize the value of nature
- **Walk** around your neighborhood to admire the lights
  - Driving may not be as sustainable, but it is probably safer during COVID!
- Organize a **caroling party** when COVID is less of an issue
  - Or try a virtual one!
- **Offset** your holiday travel through [Terrapass](#), [CarbonFund](#), or [Carbonify](#)
  - Make sure to **turn off** all lights and electronics, plus turn power strips off and unplug devices from outlets
  - More carbon offset options: <https://www.treehugger.com/best-carbon-offset-programs-5076458>
- **Volunteer** for an environmental cause

## Resources

<https://www.ilacsd.org/2020/11/03/10-tips-to-reduce-food-waste-this-holiday-season/>

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8829.html>

<https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/eco-friendly-holiday-tips>

<https://onetreepanted.org/blogs/stories/sustainable-holiday-ideas>

<https://earthhero.com/11-tips-for-a-sustainable-holiday-season/>

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/holiday-sustainability-tips>

<https://www.aashe.org/sustainable-gift/>

<https://www.nbcsandiego.com/lx/save-the-planet-recycle-and-think-green-for-the-holiday-season/2458454/>

<https://green.harvard.edu/tools-resources/green-tip/green-your-holiday-season>

<https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/You-and-your-home/Live-sustainably/Transport-and-travel/Sustainable-holidays>

<https://www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with/wrapping-paper->

[1#:~:text=Before%20recycling%2C%20remove%20any%20sticky,go%20in%20the%20general%20waste.](#)

<https://earth911.com/home-garden/holiday-tip-dont-recycle-gift-wrap/>

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/environmental-services/pdf/recycling/recyclingfaqs.pdf>