

1. **Try buying locally-made gifts.** Transporting goods made on the other side of the world contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions. Reduce the carbon footprint of your gifts and help local shops and craftspeople by buying something made nearby.
2. **Buy less:** Resist the temptation to buy any of the strangely pointless items that seem to be produced specifically for Christmas and will almost certainly end up in the bin before New Year! Get people gifts that you know they'll like and if you can't find anything, don't buy....



3. ...Or, as an alternative, you could **consider buying a charity gift.** That way, you can give the recipient the satisfaction of knowing that their gift has helped somebody else. Many charities offer schemes through which your donation can be used to buy something like a goat, a cow, or even a toilet for people around the world who are in real need.

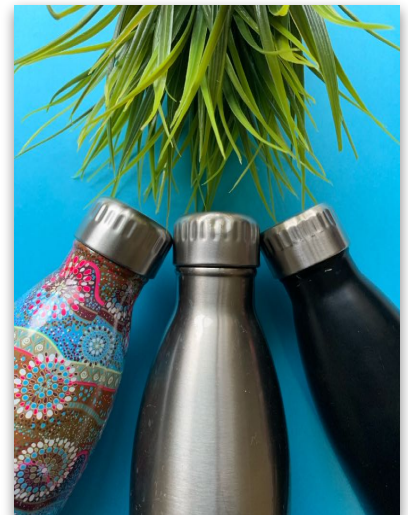
4. **Try buying a gift made from recycled materials.** Re-using and recycling help to cut down on the waste that ends up in landfill.

5. **Make your own gifts.** Why not have a go at making your own, personalised gifts for your family? There are lots of ideas available on the internet! They are often the most appreciated, as they show a lot of thought and care.

6. **Buy pre-used gifts.** A charity shop or auction site can be somewhere that you can pick up something really special, often at a bargain price too! And by buying something that has been pre-used, you're giving an item a new lease of life while also reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.

7. **Give a funky flask and say goodbye to plastic bottles.** There are lots of stainless steel flasks in all kinds of colours and designs on the market now. Many of them are able to keep their contents hot or cold for hours and they can be re-used literally thousands of times. So help your friends and family to give up single-use plastic bottles forever!

8. **Donate to a food bank.** If you can afford to, buy a few extra items of food to give to your local food bank to help less fortunate people in your community.



9. **Get a real Christmas tree.** Real trees are the greener choice. That may seem wrong, as many of the 8 million real trees sold in the UK are simply thrown out after Christmas, but they will rot down naturally in time. Local tree farms are among the best places to buy, as their trees provide a habitat for wildlife during the year. Find your local producer from the British Christmas Tree Growers' Association (bctga.co.uk). Many local councils offer a tree recycling service, turning unwanted Christmas trees into wood chips for use in parks and gardens.

In theory, an artificial tree, which is usually made from a mixture of metals and plastics should last forever and after about 15 years of re-use, they start to be a greener option than a real tree. But the reality is that most artificial trees are thrown away after a few uses, because they start to look a bit scruffy after a few years stuck in a shed, loft or cupboard! Once thrown away, they end up in a landfill, where they will stay for centuries to come.



10. **Buy your real tree in a pot.** You might be able to use a small real tree in a large pot for 2-3 years before you need to repot it, plant it or compost it. Just make sure it gets taken outside again once the festive season is over. Christmas trees don't like being in the warmth of our houses for too long!



11. **Go for a walk.** Christmas is a great time to reconnect with nature. Why not head out for a walk, either before or after Christmas lunch, either to work up an appetite or to help walk off all those festive calories!

12. **Give the birds a Christmas treat!** If you have any trees in your garden or school grounds, why not decorate them with some bird feeders over Christmas? You can make the bird food yourself too - it's a great activity for children.

13. **Make homemade Christmas cards.** A cool way to do this is to save last year's Christmas cards and cut them up to create new designs that you can stick onto some plain card. But that takes a bit of planning - you have to have saved last year's cards, so maybe it's one for next year! You could also draw or paint your own cards. Home-made cards are always really appreciated, as the sender has to make much more effort to create them.
14. **Make video cards.** This is a great idea for school, if you've got the technical know-how. Each child can record a quick Christmas message for their friends, which can then be played back on a big screen in the dining hall at lunchtime. Each message reaches everyone in the school, so it reduces the number of cards the children feel they have to send. In a school of 200 pupils, if pupils normally send 30 cards each to their friends, that's a potential saving of 6,000 cards! Video Christmas cards might be a great way for friends and family to stay in touch too, if they aren't able to see each other in person over Christmas!
15. **Donate any unwanted gifts you receive to a charity shop, or give them as a present to a friend or relative** (if you know it's something they would like!). Try to do this in a way that doesn't offend your gift-giver!



16. Use recycled wrapping paper, or make your own. Try to use wrapping paper made from recycled paper, re-use old wrapping paper or have fun creating your own wrapping from whatever you have spare. That could include old comics, old maps, posters or fabric offcuts. If you use ribbon rather than sticky tape to wrap your presents, more of the wrapping can be re-used in the future.

Avoid metallic or glossy wrapping papers, as they are really hard to re-use or recycle.

17. Use energy efficient LED lighting for your Christmas tree. They use around 95% less energy than old-fashioned tree lights with traditional bulbs.

18. Turn your decorative lights off at night. Do the lights need to be on when everyone's asleep? Many lights now come with a built-in timer to help save energy.

19. Try to decorate your tree using natural materials. Avoid plastic decorations and glitter.

20. Buy local, organic and free-range foods for your Christmas lunch. If you've planned ahead, you could even harvest the winter vegetables from your garden to accompany your meal.

21. Share Christmas lunch with family and friends by video calling if you can't get together. You can still have fun!

22. Get creative with your leftovers! Most of us waste a third of the food we buy for the Christmas period. You can make amazing dishes like bubble and squeak or frittata with your leftover veggies, and a brilliant curry with leftover turkey before making a soup or stock with the turkey bones.

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