



CHOOSE
TO
REUSE

This Christmas



ZERO
WASTE

MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING AND WASTE AUTHORITY

A GUIDE ON HOW TO SAVE MONEY AND PROTECT THE PLANET AT CHRISTMAS

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Christmas doesn't have to cost the earth...



It's the most wonderful time of the year and we are so ready to celebrate!

There's a certain charm and warmth about Christmas that gives us a special tingly feeling inside...

Making merry memories with our loved ones, getting festive with decorations, donning our Christmas jumpers, indulging in tasty treats and tipples and, of course, exchanging gifts.

Here at Zero Waste LCR, our role as Santa's helpers is to ensure that residents discover ways to celebrate which don't cost the earth.





33 million UK adults receive at least one unwanted gift at Christmas, equating to an estimated total cost of £1.2billion.

Source: Finder

The amount of wrapping paper thrown away at Christmas in the UK alone could stretch all the way to the moon.

Source: Waste Managed

The amount of plastic packaging likely to end up burnt, in landfill, or exported overseas over the festive period equates to the weight of more than 1000 blue whales.

Source: Wildlife and Countryside

ZERO WASTE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

#ChooseToReuse

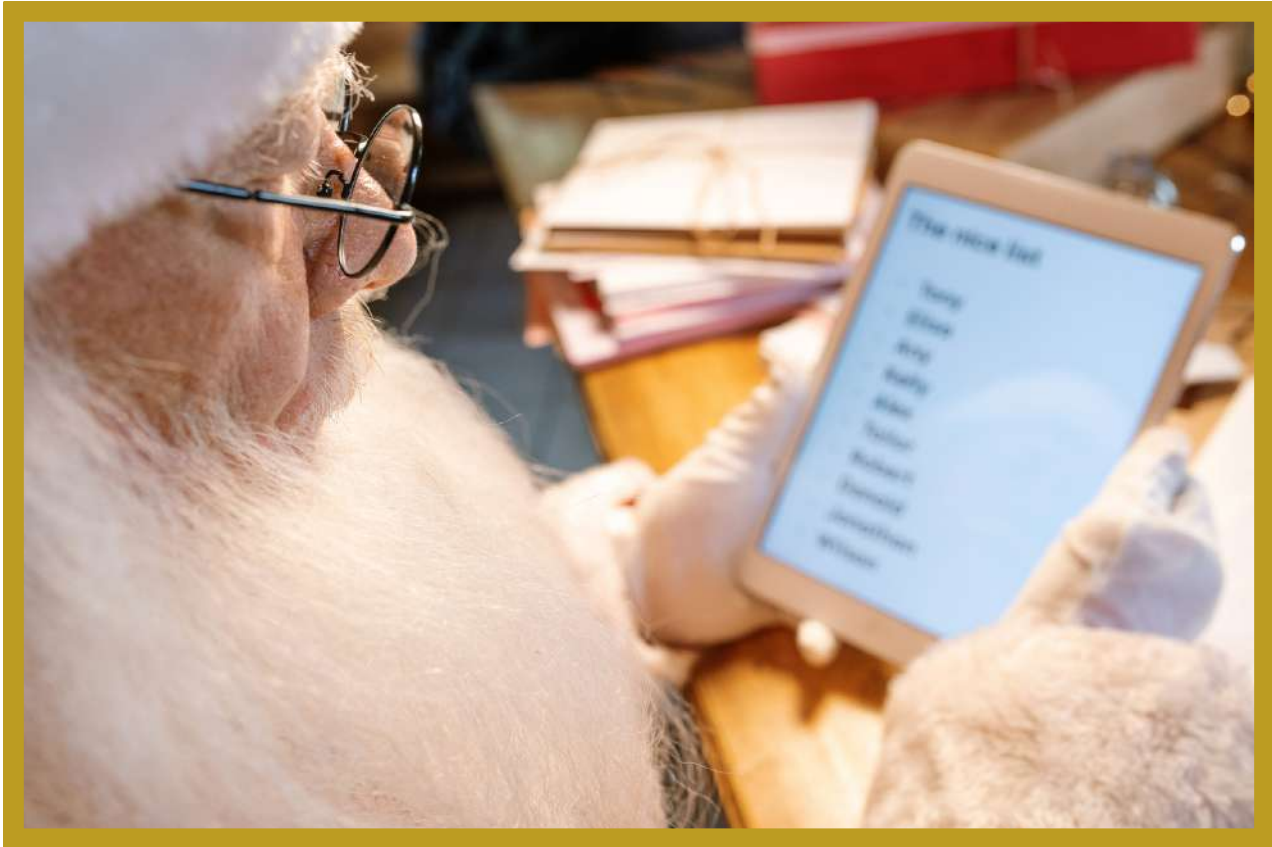
Stats such as the ones above are why we are making this festive period our best snow fight yet – the reason why we are choosing to reuse, in a bid to tackle climate change.

The clock is ticking, and we are on a Santa dash to deliver our message as far and wide as we can to residents across all six districts of Liverpool City Region.

Residents of Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral – we are inviting you to the place where the spirit of giving meets sustainable living...



An introduction to our Good List Guide...



Our Good List guide covers a range of Christmas-themed activities – from gifts, gift wrap and greetings cards to Christmas trees and Christmas decorations, there are plenty of ways to get involved.

Aside from choosing to reuse, there are a host of other ideas which are less harmful to the environment, can stop unnecessary waste and save money – all in a way which doesn't compromise the joy of the holidays...

Christmas Trees



Branch Out Environmentally...



The Christmas Tree is more than just a festive symbol! Nothing quite tops these beacons of merriment (with the literal exception of fairies, angels and stars, of course).

Our #ChooseToReuse Christmas Tree edition provides you with sustainable tips which can help you to branch our environmentally...





Natural Christmas Trees

For those of us who pick up natural (or “real”) Christmas trees, coming home with a fresh, live one is a family tradition which fills our homes with a natural seasonal scent and brings unbridled joy.

Beyond the advantages of being tree-mendously traditional and effusing festive fragrances, real Christmas trees are better for the environment...

What makes real Christmas trees better for the environment?



They are grown to be harvested and are also compostable – whereas their artificial counterparts don't go anywhere fast once they inevitably end up in the waste stream.

They are beacons of biodiversity – in the years it takes to grow a real Christmas tree, they provide a habitat for wildlife to thrive in.

Research has found that the growth cycle of Christmas trees attracts up to 40 different bird species!



Where should I buy my real Christmas tree?

Buying real Christmas trees that are UK-grown is a sure way of keeping your carbon footprint low.

Choosing to buy locally is viewed as the best option, as it reduces the miles travelled, while [The Soil Association](#) state that organic independent retailers or farm shops are more likely to opt for growers who totally avoid the use of harmful pesticides on their farms.

There are a number of local providers in and around Liverpool City Region that sell UK-grown trees. We have listed a few below:

- Based in Liverpool: [Christmas Trees Liverpool](#)
- Based in Sefton: [Wright's](#)
- Based in St Helens: [Rainfords Christmas Trees](#)
- Based in Wirral: [Church Farm Christmas Tree Forest](#)
- Based in Cheshire: [Ivy Cottage Tree Farm](#) and [Cheshire Christmas Trees](#)
- Based in Lancashire: [Giltrees Christmas Tree Suppliers](#)





Potted Christmas Trees



Potted Christmas trees come in all shapes in sizes. They are a lot heavier than cut trees, so buying one under 5ft is recommended for ease of movement.

According to [The Carbon Trust](#):

“Potted trees (with roots) are able to be re-used, spreading the carbon footprint over multiple years and potentially avoiding transport emissions, making them a more sustainable option if you’re after a real Christmas tree.”

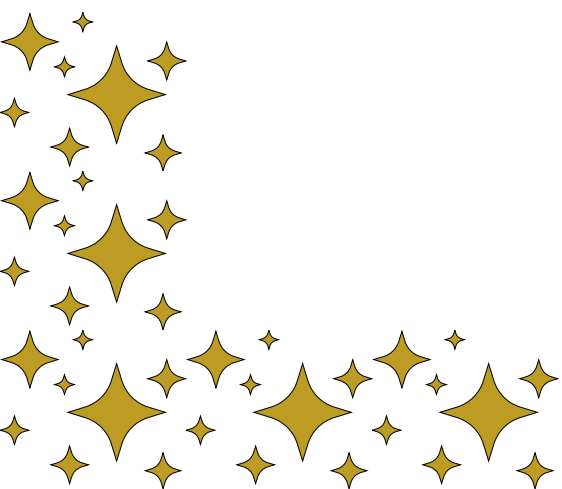




With regards to caring for potted trees, [The Royal Horticultural Society](#) advises that potted trees should be brought indoors as late as possible – ideally, the weekend before (or a few days before) Christmas Day.

Potted trees should be displayed in a cool room to reduce stress and damage, and should be kept in the house no longer than 12 days. If your potted tree begins to look sad, putting it back outside sooner rather than later is the best option to increase its health and longevity.

You can then either plant the tree out in the garden after Christmas, or you can grow it on in a container and reuse next year – visit the official [Royal Horticultural Society website](#) for further guidance on how to do this.





Rent a Christmas tree

Renting live Christmas trees is also an option worth considering, thanks to online retailers such as [Good Elf](#) who deliver across the UK.

Pros: Rent-a-tree schemes usually include delivery and collection, with the guarantee that your real Christmas tree won't end up going to waste.

Cons: This option can be more costly and is likely to result in extra miles travelled. You also don't get the benefit of seeing the tree up close and personal before paying your rental fee.





Responsible reuse and disposal of real Christmas trees

If your real Christmas tree is not potted with roots and has been cut, then it cannot be replanted.

However, the good news is that there are several ways you can prevent your real Christmas tree from going to waste – this is important, as real trees decompose and produce methane gas, which is 25 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

Here are the options you can pursue when disposing of your real Christmas tree responsibly:

- Recycle at your local Household Waste Recycling Centre – find the nearest one to you via the [Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority website](#).
- Use your local Council's green waste collection service – some districts do charge, and operate their green waste kerbside collections at different times of the year, so be sure to check directly in your area: [Halton Borough Council](#), [Knowsley Council](#), [Liverpool City Council](#), [Sefton Council](#), [St Helens Borough Council](#), [Wirral Council](#).





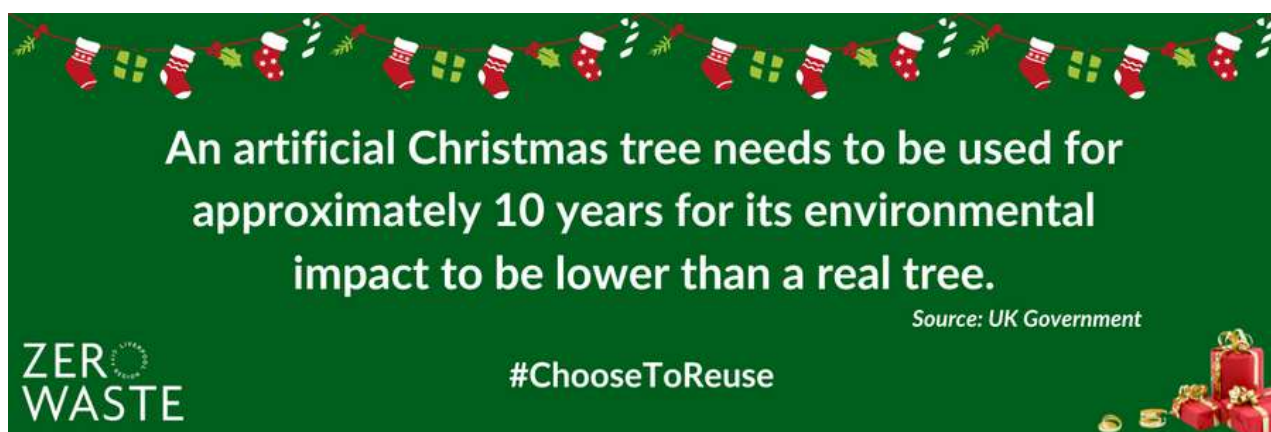
- **Start a new compost pile – trim and stack your Christmas tree branches four to six inches high and start adding your kitchen scraps thereafter. The vegetable peelings from your Christmas dinner may be a good place to start!**
- **Shake off your pines – cutting off branches and shaking dead pine needles onto lawns, flowerbeds and plants is a great way to keep your garden well fertilised. This owes to the fact that pine needles don't collect mould and decompose slowly, which are perfect characteristics that help to enrichen soil!**
- **Embrace biodiversity – take your Christmas tree outside into the garden and either leave in its stand or place on its side so that it can act as a shelter for bugs and birds during the winter months.**
- **Safely burn your tree – chopping up your tree and safely burning in your fire pit or chimenea emits the carbon dioxide that it stored up when it was growing, so there is no net increase!**



Artificial Christmas Trees



Those of us who use artificial trees in our homes laud them for their ability to create a streamlined aesthetic, as well as for their convenient, low-maintenance nature... What's more, if you look after them properly, they can be reused for years on end!



The above statistic from [the UK government](#) indicates that reusing artificial Christmas trees is a crucial component towards protecting the environment.

As stated by [The Soil Association](#):

“Most artificial trees are made in China, with the dual environmental impact of being made from plastic, PVC and metal, and then shipped overseas.

However, it isn't just the manufacturing that racks up their carbon footprint. Artificial Christmas trees aren't recyclable, so when they're inevitably thrown away, they end up in landfill, going nowhere fast.

According to the [Carbon Trust](#), a two-metre artificial tree has a carbon footprint of around 40kg, more than ten times that of a real tree that's burned after Christmas.”

But it's not all bad news...



The Carbon Trust states that an artificial tree used over multiple years (7-20 times depending on the weight and different materials in the tree) is actually better for the environment than buying a new, commercially grown tree every year.

So, while the artificial tree route is not the primary recommendation, it can be a good solution if you treat it as a long-term investment.

If you keep your artificial tree in good condition but no longer can use it, donating to a local charity to reuse or sell is the best option.





Christmas Decorations



Deck The Halls...



Once you're decided on your Christmas tree, it's time to get the decorations sorted!

Our Christmas Decorations section features a list of eco-friendly ideas for how you can add a touch of festive fancy to your tree and home this Christmas...



LED Christmas Lights



LED string lights are not only brighter than incandescent ones, but they save energy and money too. With the right treatment, they can be used for years on end!

If you have yet to make the switch to LED Christmas lights, then now is the time to do it!

Why? Because LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights use up to 90% less energy than traditional incandescent lights and last up to 100,000 hours when used indoors.



As well as being kinder to the environment, LED lights are also kinder to your bank balance too. According to Money Saving Expert, running LED Christmas lights can cost as little as 1-2p per day.

It goes without saying, the more lights you use and the longer that you use them for will use more energy and cost more money – so this is something to bear in mind when choosing how to light up your Christmas tree and/or other parts of your home.

To get an idea of how much running your LED Christmas lights will cost, use Money Saving Expert's online calculator.



Homemade Christmas Decorations

Homemade Christmas decorations are a great way to reduce waste, save money and spend some quality time getting creative.

Whether you're crafting on your own, with friends or with family, DIY deccies are a fun activity for both adults and children alike!

There are so many different innovative decoration ideas available to explore online. Here are a few from us to get your creative juices flowing...



Cardboard Star Garland



Using brown string gives your cardboard star garland a more rustic aesthetic, but jewellery wire can be used if you prefer a cleaner look.

Before you pop that cardboard box into the recycling, why not transform it into something that will add a bit of festive magic to your Christmas tree?

When initially launching our [#ChooseToReuse](#) campaign in 2023, we tried our hand at making a cardboard star garland. Here's how we did it...

We used the following supplies:

- Cardboard, plus extra to protect painting surface
- Star-shaped hole punch (available to purchase online)
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Gold acrylic paint
- Small paint brushes
- Brown string
- Hot glue gun & glue sticks

Method:

- Step 1: We deconstructed a large cardboard box before flattening it out and using our star hole punch to cut out our stars. We cut out 60 stars in total, but less or more can be used depending on how long you want your garland to be.
- Step 2: We used a pencil and ruler to draw a line to the mid-point of our stars.
- Step 3: We cut along the lines of each star to create slots.

- **Step 4:** We painted each star front and back, using a small paint brush and gold acrylic paint - we used extra cardboard to protect our surface, then let the stars dry.
- **Step 5:** Once our stars were dried, we took a long piece of brown string, inserting it into one of the slotted stars, then using a hot glue gun to apply a small blob of glue to the area of string sat within the slot. We then slotted in another star, enclosing the glued string. Please be sure to take care if you opt to use a hot glue gun, as we did here!
- **Step 6:** We repeated this step along the string, measuring each star 5cm along from the next to provide a symmetrical pattern. We allowed our glue to dry before hanging our garland on a small Christmas tree.

If this particular method doesn't take your fancy, other star garland tutorials are available, including this paper-based one from [Inspired by Charm](#).



Salt Dough Christmas Tree Decorations



Making your own salt dough decorations at home is a fun and rewarding activity for children and adults alike.

Making salt dough shapes is not only a great way to create customisable ornaments, but is a fun, cost-cutting activity for people of all ages!

Salt dough is made using only three ingredients – plain flour, salt and water.

It takes 10 minutes to prepare and once the dough mixture is made up, you can use it to make whatever shapes you desire!

You could make a homemade paper template (such as a star or Christmas tree shape) and a craft knife to cut around – although, using cookie cutters is a less time-consuming method. Christmas-themed cookie cutters are available to buy in various stores and online.

Once you have cut your dough and baked it (we baked ours at a low heat for three hours) it's simply a case of allowing it to cool before painting the shapes to your liking.

In 2023, we followed [this simple recipe from BBC Good Food](#) at home and ended up with the below Christmas decorations...



We opted to make smaller shapes, as we knew anything bigger may look a little over-bearing for our tiny Christmas tree.

We glued two of the same shape back-to-back to give each ornament extra sturdiness – we did this with a glue gun, gluing jewellery wire between each shape so we could use them as hanging ornaments for our tree.

If you have a larger tree (the tree we used is only 3-feet), then it may be worth thinking about making the shapes a little bigger, so that they don't get lost in the aesthetic.

One last observation we thought worth sharing – we made too many shapes to fit in the oven when baking. The leftover shapes were subsequently put to one side. When we revisited them a few days later, they had solidified, so there was no need for us to bake them. This saved us time, as well as money on our energy bill!



Christmas Cone Decorations



Reusing old card or magazine pages to make cones which you can customise and use as a decoration for multiple Christmases is a fun and creative way to beat the waste stream while saving money.



Over the next couple of pages, we will share another DIY decoration idea we tried when launching Choose to Reuse back in 2023, with various colleagues from the Authority coming together for a fun lunchtime Christmas crafts session...

First of all, you're going to want to make your cone. You can do this by following the below suggested steps:

- Cut out a circle from paper.
- Draw a triangle wedge over one-quarter of the circle.
- Cut the wedge out with scissors.
- Bring the cut sides of the disc together and overlap them to make a cone shape.
- Tape the inside of the cone closed.
- Depending on how thick your paper or card is, you may want to gently wrap some tin foil around the outside to make it more sturdy. Doing this also helps with heat resistance, should you choose to use a hot glue gun to stick on your decorative elements (as we did).

Once you have created your cone shape, now it's time to decorate however you like.

We opted to use a hot glue gun to stick on various colours of knitting yarn and pom poms to our cones, with other decorative items such as beads, buttons and ribbon being used in some instances, as you can see from the image on the right.



Our Christmas cone decorations were later taken to a Sustainable Christmas Fair at our partner Veolia's Recycling Discovery Centre, where our team launched Choose to Reuse in 2023 (as pictured below, bottom left)...



We're pleased to report that many of our Christmas cone decorations are still in good condition, ready to be reused at home this year round.

One piece of advice we will leave you with is to tailor your Christmas cone decorating activity appropriately to age groups... If you are creating your cones with young children for instance, you can use glue sticks instead of glue guns. You can also opt for bits of colourful card and cotton wool balls over beads and buttons to allow for a more child-friendly decorating experience.



Other Great DIY Christmas Decoration Ideas

Cardboard stars and salt dough shapes were just two DIY decorations we tried at home, with a little help from some friends. It was a fun way to socialise and although we're sure that the legacy of great artists such as Da Vinci, Van Gogh and Turner will remain unthreatened by our work, we were pleasantly surprised with the outcome of our efforts.

Here are some other ideas which we're thinking of trying ourselves in future (and which may interest you too)...

Festive DIY Toilet Roll Tube Crafts

The humble toilet roll tube is one of the best everyday items you can use to make Christmas decorations. It's amazing how these usually dull and grey objects can be customised and upcycled into something festive for your home.

Whether you're opting for something simple or elaborate, here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing...

Just remember, if you opt to create a toilet roll tube decoration which uses glitter or plastic, then these items can't be placed in your kerbside recycling collections. The best thing to do would be to keep them safe to be reused next year. However, if they get a little tatty and can't be reused, then place them in your residual waste bin at home.

Read on for some tubular tips...



Santa Claus in a Chimney

Kicking off our DIY toilet roll tube crafts is this simple yet effective Santa Clause decoration from survivingateacherssalary.com.

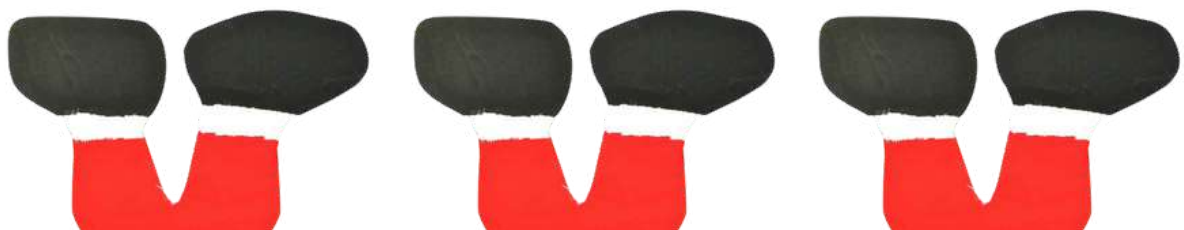
As stated on the website, “this adorable Santa Claus Toilet Paper Tube Christmas craft for kids is great for preschool and older kids! All you’ll need is a recycled toilet paper tube (or cut paper towel roll), red, black and white paint, and a red piece of card stock or construction paper”.



Image credit: Surviving a Teacher's Salary

Visit here to find out more:

www.survivingateacherssalary.com/santa-claus-toilet-paper-tube-christmas-craft-for-kids.



Cut-Out Christmas Trees

Originally shared during the height of the pandemic back in 2020, this cut-out Christmas Tree decoration from [Coley Kuyper Art](#) can be made as an individual ornament for your mantle piece – or as part of a collection (or “forest”, as the article states).

Items you’ll need to create your toilet roll Christmas Trees include:

- Empty toilet roll tubes and/or kitchen roll tubes
- A marker or pencil for sketching tree shapes
- Craft paint of choice
- Scissors



Image credit: Coley Kuyper Art

Visit here to find out how you can make your own cut-out Christmas Trees at home:

coleykuyperart.com/blogs/blog/diy-toilet-paper-roll-christmas-tree-forrest.

Christmas Elves

What would Christmas be without Santa's little helpers?

This next DIY toilet roll tube craft from [A Mom's Impression](#) is a tribute to elves and uses the following supplies:

- Toilet Paper Tubes
- Felt
- Glitter Foam Sheet*
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pom Poms
- Glitter Tape*
- Paint Markers



Image credit: A Mom's Impression

*Instead of glitter foam sheets and glitter tape, a more-environmentally friendly way to add colour would be to use watercolour paints.

Find out how you can make your own Christmas Elf toilet roll tube decorations at home here:

amomsimpression.com/easy-kids-christmas-crafts.

Eco-Friendly Christmas Crackers

While Christmas crackers are a well-loved tradition for a lot of people, the reality is that the cheap and easy-to-buy nature of these snap-tastic festive table decorations means that they are highly wasteful.

According to research from [BusinessWaste.co.uk](https://www.businesswaste.co.uk), it's estimated that over 40 million Christmas crackers end up in the bin on Christmas day – furthermore, a survey found that 99% of individuals throw their Christmas cracker gift in the bin at the end of the day!

Aside from that, crackers usually contain foil, glitter or plastic which means they cannot be recycled after use.

However, there are a range of eco-friendly Christmas cracker options available to purchase in various stores and online. Eco-friendly Christmas crackers are often made from 100% recycled paper or reusable fabric.

Or, if you're feeling extra adventurous, you can have a go at making some yourself! Check out [this two-minute craft from Diane in Denmark](#). This simple method allows you to reuse items such as toilet / kitchen roll inners and scraps of Christmas gift wrap. It's easy to make, fun for kids and zero waste... What's not to love?



Reusable Advent Calendars

What makes being a day closer to Christmas even more exciting? Getting a little treat for your troubles along the way!

Fun for both children and adults, Advent calendars are a great way to count down to Christmas Day.



Image credit: National Trust

BUT... Just like the previously covered topic of Christmas crackers, they can be highly wasteful due to their disposable nature and the levels of packaging that they contain.

According to research from [BusinessWaste.co.uk](https://www.businesswaste.co.uk), around 5 million advent calendars contain single-use plastics – furthermore, advent calendars have around 38 times as much packaging per gram of chocolate compared to a standard chocolate bar.

This level of waste is a huge contributor towards climate change. Thankfully, though, there is a way we can tackle this... By choosing a reusable Advent calendar!

Available via a range of local, high street and online retailers, reusable advent calendars are easy enough to buy... But also fun to make!

There are plenty of different ideas you can try listed on [Pinterest](#), as well as a range of online tutorials. You can even buy DIY reusable Advent calendar kits if you don't already have the required materials at home.

Once your reusable Advent calendar is in place, you can fill with whatever prizes you wish. [Life Before Plastic](#) has a great range of ideas including:

- Small toys and trinkets
- Handwritten notes or inspirational quotes
- Eco-friendly treats like FairTrade chocolates or organic sweets
- Mini skincare or beauty products
- Craft supplies for DIY holiday decorations
- Sustainable and reusable items like bamboo toothbrushes or reusable shopping bags

Natural Christmas Wreaths



Creating your own Christmas wreath is a great way to make use of natural resources lying around in your garden or local park.

[Woodland Trust's Foraging for Natural Christmas Decorations guide](#) is a good reference point for finding out what to collect and where.

As well as offering top guidance on materials, they also have this [handy tutorial on how you can make your natural Christmas wreath at home](#).

Beyond Christmas wreaths, Woodland Trust have other online video tutorials including how to make [Seasonal DIY Twig Centerpieces](#), [DIY Hanging Tree Branches](#), and [DIY Table Setting Decorations](#).



Christmas Cards



Season's Greetings...



Christmas cards are easy to buy, write and send... But sadly, they're even easier to throw away!

For many, they are tradition, seen as a small gesture which goes a long way. But the reality is that these small, kind gestures have a big, harmful impact on climate change.

Here, we take a closer look at how we can bid season's greetings in a more eco-friendly way...





Know Your Recycle Rights

There are many Christmas cards that use glitter, plastic and dyes, which means that they are not recyclable.

If you receive cards which fit the above description, please do not put them in your recycling collections. Instead, you can dispose of them in your local council kerbside residual bin. Or better still, keep hold of them to reuse as gift tags next year (more on that later on).

So, what shall I do if I want to send a Christmas card?

If you just can't shake the tradition of sending Christmas cards, then our advice is to make eco-friendly purchases.

When it comes to buying Christmas cards which are recyclable, make sure they are 100% paper or card.



Another good indicator to look out for is that most recyclable cards will have the Forest Stewardship Council stamp on them, which certifies that the paper has been sustainably produced.

Go Homemade!

Going homemade is a great way of reusing materials and saving money. Here are a few suggestions of how you can make eco-friendly choices when it comes to making homemade Christmas cards...

- **Reuse and repurpose:** Raid the cupboards to see if you have any old stationery knocking about. As well as standard sheets of cardboard and paper, cardboard boxes and paper plates are handy items you can use.
- **Use recycled paper or cardboard:** These materials are made from post-consumer waste, which essentially means that they have been made from paper that has been used and then recycled. This reduces the number of trees that need to be cut down to make new paper products.
- **Steer away from glitter, dyes and plastics:** Using coloured pencils is the best route to choose when making your homemade cards – although, vegetable inks and paints can also be used if you feel like getting extra creative!



Digital Christmas Card Alternatives

Here are a few money-saving ideas which can keep Christmas cards out of the waste stream...

- **Free design websites and apps:** Using free online graphic design tools such as [Canva](#) and [Fotor](#) are a great alternative to traditional cards, as they feature a range of ready-made Christmas card templates which can be customised as you please (both from a visual perspective and also in terms of personalised messages). Once you are happy with your design and message, download and send via email or social media messaging platforms. You can do all that in the time it would take you to head out to the shops (let alone writing, sealing and posting your cards) – what's more, you'll be shaving spend off your Christmas shopping budget!
- **Make a video message:** This is such a fun idea! Truly embrace the spirit of Christmas... Don your best Christmas-themed attire among the festive backdrop of your home. You can either say a few words to the camera with your favourite yuletide tunes playing quietly in the background, or you can belt out a verse or two yourself! Whether it's a modern classic or a traditional Christmas carol, the choice is yours. If you're dosed up on Christmas spirit, Santa snacks or a festive tipple, we won't judge!



- **Arrange a video call:** If a pre-meditated message isn't your thing, then arranging video calls with those who would usually be on your Christmas card list is a great way of exchanging greetings. Nothing says "I'm thinking of you" more than the gift of time.

The above are just a few ideas to help you beat the bin in terms of Christmas card waste. We know that digital isn't for everybody, but if you're technically savvy, then adopting these methods can save you time and money.

Save Christmas cards you receive to make gift tags for next year



This is a simple hack which will extend the life of your received Christmas cards and will also save you money for next year!

Check out [this video tutorial](#) from crafting influencer, [Jessie Katz Greenberg](#), to learn how you can create DIY gift tags.



*it's
the most
beautiful
time of the
year*

Christmas Gift Wrap



Here's Something to Unwrap...



Addressing gift-wrapping habits is such a simple and effective way to be more environmentally savvy at Christmas time.

This section of our guide provides advice on sustainable choices we can make when wrapping gifts this year...



Switch to Kraft Paper

Making the switch to Kraft paper (brown recycling paper) will not only save heaps of wrapping paper going into the residual waste, but it also offers scope to get creative...

A touch of creativity could be as simple as including some string or festive fabric to bound the gift.

If that still seems a little understated, then adding festive stamps and old Christmas decorations are great ways of enhancing your brown recycling paper gift wrap.

Why switch to Kraft paper?

We recommend switching to Kraft paper on the basis that most decorative Christmas gift wrap contains plastics and glitters – meaning that they are not recyclable!

Some Kraft paper does come readily decorated with Christmas patterns and motifs, so it's always worth keeping an eye out in store or searching online.



Know Your Recycle Rights

So, now we know what paper is best to go for in terms of boosting our sustainability efforts, equally as handy to know is how to discard of the gift wrap that we receive...

If it's Kraft paper, then you'd think it would just be case of placing straight into your home recycling – however, an important thing to note is that all sticky tape and decorations must be removed before making this step. If sticky tape and decorations aren't removed, then this will contaminate your recycling (which essentially means materials will needlessly go to waste).

**Remember to
remove sticky
tape and
decorations
before placing
recyclable gift
wrap into your
home recycling**

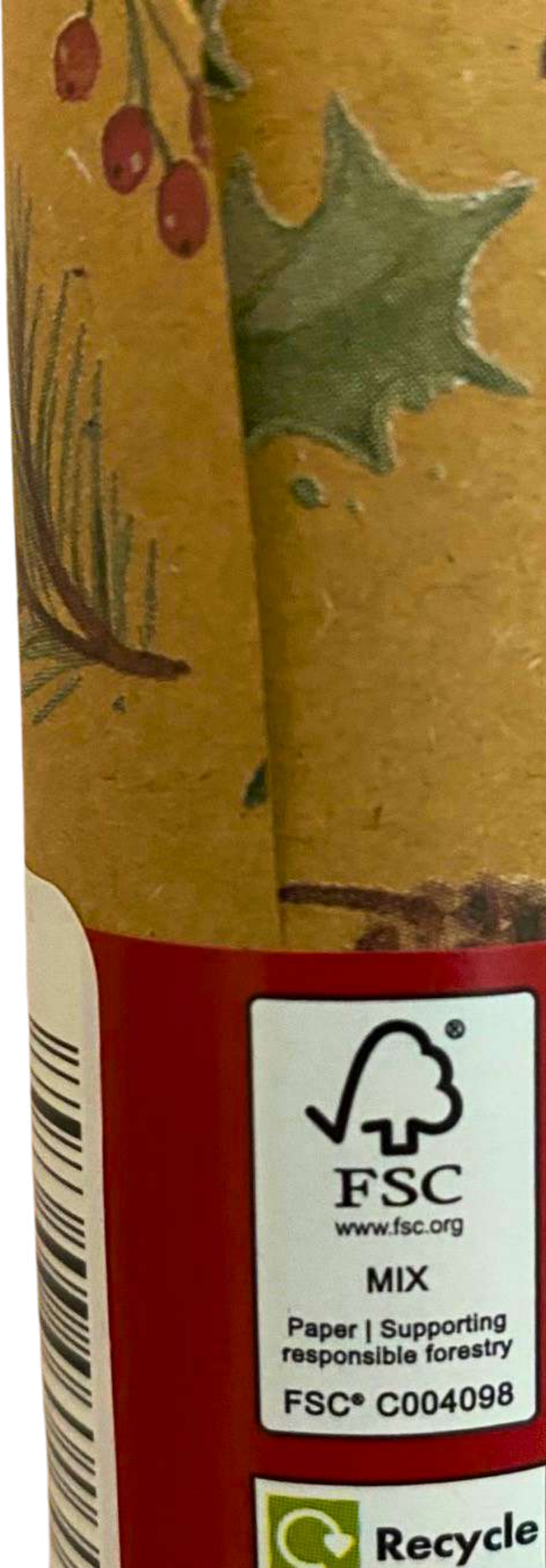


How can I tell if gift wrap is recyclable?

The simplest way to determine if gift wrap is recyclable is to look out for the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) logo (pictured bottom right).

However, you can also do the scrunch test:

- Take some wrapping paper and scrunch it in your hand.
- If it springs back, it has a plastic coating (plastic has a memory and that's why it bounces back) and should not be recycled.
- Wrapping that does not spring back is the one you should recycle, as it is purely paper.



Plan ahead to ensure you're discarding of your gift wrap properly



We all recognise the scene of the black bin bag in the middle of the room, stuffed as fat as Santa's sack with ripped wrapping paper!

Instead of putting all the paper into one bin bag, use two – one for recycling and one for waste. This method is a smart way of recycling the right gift wrap and preventing unnecessary waste - just be sure to remove the recyclable gift wrap from the bag before placing into your recycling collection!

More Eco-Friendly Gift Wrapping Ideas



There are other sustainable ways of wrapping gifts which will look great under the tree and help you reduce waste this Christmas! Here are just a few suggestions...

Reuse gift wrap: If you don't already do this, then start saving for next year. Unwrapping presents carefully, neatly folding the paper and then storing for next year is a great way of saving your money... And the planet!

Use newspapers or magazines: If you're really smart with this method, you can wrap gifts in a way which features images of your loved ones' favourite celebrities, or pictures relating to their hobbies! This magazine gift wrapping tutorial on Brit + Co Guides not only shows you how it's done, but also how good it looks!

Use Christmas scarves to wrap your gifts: The great thing about this idea is that using Christmas scarves (or any other scarves or fabrics for that matter) as 'gift wrap' forms part of the gift, and they can be reused over and over again! There is a Japanese technique called Furoshiki which is basically a much easier form of origami that uses fabric instead of paper. There are tons of tutorials online which can help you learn Furoshiki – here are a couple from Pointful Things to get you started:

- [How to Furoshiki - Japanese Gift Wrapping 1](#)
- [How to Furoshiki - Japanese Gift Wrapping 2](#)



Christmas Gifts



Time to Open Your Presents!



For many, sharing quality time with our loved ones during the festive season is the real gift of Christmas... But it's also fair to say that exchanging presents ranks high on the yuletide activities we like to partake in when in the company of family and friends!

According to [2023 research data presented by Finder](#), the average spend on unwanted gifts per person is £37, equating to an estimated total cost of £1.2billion.

This Christmas Gifts section features some tips which can help to shrink both your spending and your carbon footprint...



Secret Santa

Before we launch into specific reuse and eco-friendly gift ideas, we're sharing a tip which can save you money while preventing waste... We are, of course, referring to Secret Santa!

If you are unfamiliar with the concept, Secret Santa is a tradition in which a group of people are randomly assigned a person to whom they give a gift (usually through picking names out of a hat). The identity of the gift giver remains secret and is usually not revealed until after gifts have been exchanged.

Doing Secret Santa at home is a great way to retain the festive spirit and can prevent you and your loved ones launching yourselves into serious Christmas debt. Agree with your family and/or friends who wants to get involved, throw your names into a hat and decide on a budget to spend on gift recipients. This way, everyone gets a nice gift without breaking the bank!



Get Them Something Pre-Loved!

Getting second-hand (or “pre-loved”) items is a great way of nabbing unique bargains which are as good as new – and, in some cases, completely unused! See our list of tips for inspiration...

Pick up items free of charge

Thanks to the emergence of online apps and websites, we are now able to locate items that people are giving away for free.

Such free items are usually available on a pick-up only basis, so our advice here is to ensure that you either share your location via your smartphone’s GPS or use a web filter to indicate where you live and how far you are willing to go to pick up (the shorter the journey, the better, as this saves you money and reduces carbon emissions).

Keep reading to discover a range of platforms which can help you on your quest to purchase pre-loved items...





IMAGE CREDIT: FABNEWS.LIVE/HELL YEAH!

Olio

Originally starting life as a food-sharing app, Olio now lists other free non-food items. You can download and sign up for free via Android or iOS to view a whole range of items available near you – or list items of your own which you are willing to give away. The app also features a sale section if you wish to buy or sell products.

Visit olioapp.com/en to find out more.



Shpock

Perhaps more famed for being a marketplace tool where you can buy and sell goods, Shpock is another app whereby you can pick up and list free items. Just simply type '£0' as a value in the 'Price' tab to explore free pre-loved items near you. You can download and sign up for free via Android or iOS.

Visit www.shpock.com/en-gb to find out more.



Preloved

Preloved is an online classified ads tool which features a “Freeloved” section. Again, you can register for free with a view to obtaining free items or listing ones which you are willing to give away. Aside from Freeloved, the option to buy and sell products is also available.

Visit www.preloved.co.uk/freeloved to find out more.



Gumtree

Gumtree

Another online classified ads tool where you can get free items and list them too. The option to buy and sell products is also available.

Visit www.gumtree.com to find out more.



Craigslist

Yet another online classified ads tool where you can get free items and list them too. The option to buy and sell products is also available.

Visit liverpool.craigslist.org to find out more.

facebook



Facebook Marketplace

Exclusive to people who have a Facebook account (if you don't already have an account, you can sign up for free and just create one to use exclusively for Marketplace). As with previously mentioned platforms, you can get free items and list them too. The option to buy and sell products is also available.

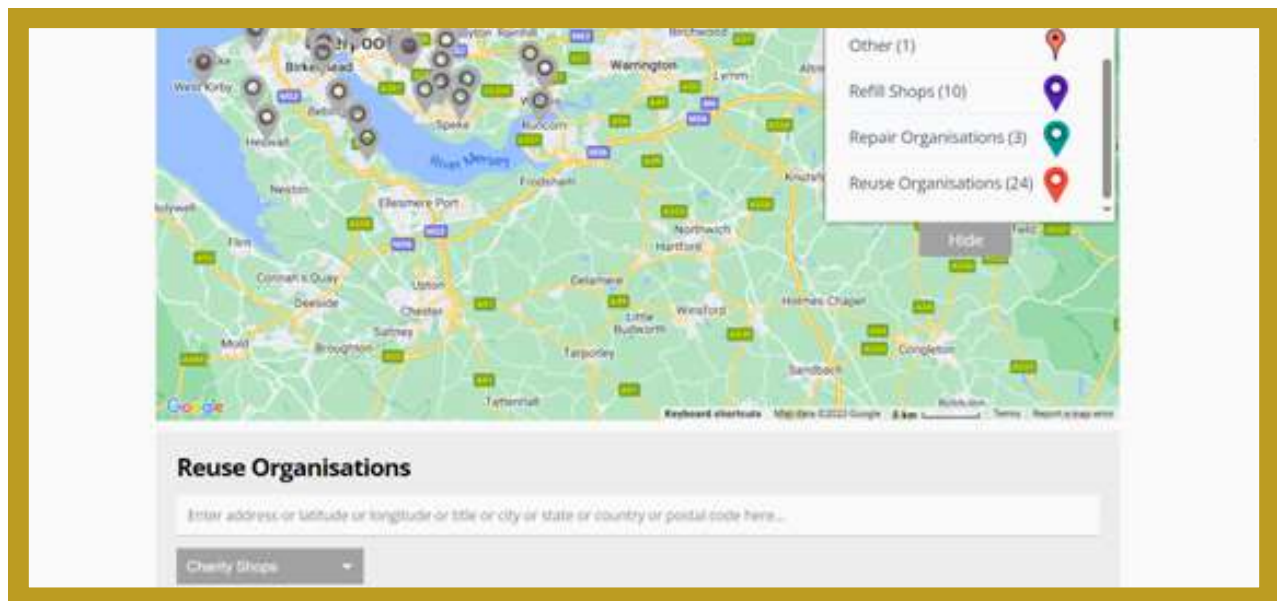
Visit www.facebook.com/marketplace to find out more.

Fashion



If you are hoping to buy your loved ones unique or vintage fashion items this Christmas, or you're looking to sell clothes and accessories of your own, the next few pages contain a range of resources and platforms for you to explore...

Zero Waste LCR Interactive Map



Our zero waste map features plenty of reuse organisations that sell second-hand clothes. Just [visit this page](#), then hit the 'Select Category' tab below the map to explore charity shops and reuse organisations near you.

Vinted



A great user-friendly app which you can download and sign up for free via Android or iOS. Vinted has become a household name in recent years and is a great way to buy, sell and even swap a wide range of pre-loved clothes (with many rare finds available for purchase).

Visit www.vinted.co.uk to find out more.

Vestiaire Collective

Vestiaire Collective

This app specialises exclusively in second-hand designer clothing, allowing you to buy big brands at a lower cost. Again, you can download and sign up for free via Android or iOS.

Visit www.vestiairecollective.com to find out more.

Books



If you have avid readers among your gift recipients to buy for this Christmas, the beauty of buying them a book or two is that it's hard to go wrong. There are literally millions of titles you can choose from! Just find out what kind of books they are into and then filter your search based on their preferences.

Here are a couple of UK-based* online second-hand book retailers to get you started...

**We have specifically listed UK-based online retailers in the interests of keeping miles travelled as low as possible.*



World of Books

As described by the World of Books website, this is a platform designed to “offer an affordable, sustainable alternative for bookworms who want to save the money and save the planet”. With over 7 million titles to choose from, economy delivery is free, with “Fast & Tracked” delivery services also available at a cost.

Visit www.worldofbooks.com/en-gb to find out more.



AbeBooks

AbeBooks allows you to discover millions of gently used second-hand books. Their mantra is that “by choosing to shop for used books, you can save money, be sustainable, support independent booksellers, and have access to an unbeatable selection of literature from the past”.

Visit www.abebooks.co.uk/UsedBooks.shtml to find out more.

Charity Shops



Getting out and visiting local charity shops is a great way to pick up Christmas gifts. Often, you'll come across rare finds which are in high quality, durable condition.

Items on offer usually include (but are not limited to) clothing, books, toys, ornaments, and kitchenware (as well as furniture and electrical appliances in some cases).



IMAGE CREDIT: [@CHARITYSHOPGIRLCSG](#)

Local Instagram influencers such as [@charityshopgirlcsg](#) and [@rows.of.rosie](#) are leading the way in terms of charity shop haul inspiration – we recommend checking out their channels for ideas before heading out on your next charity shopping spree!

Looking for charity shops near you? Visit our [Zero Waste Map](#), then hit the 'Select Category' tab below the map and select 'Charity Shops' to explore outlets near you.

Choose wooden toys and board games over plastic toys

There are plenty of reasons why wooden toys and board games (which don't have plastic pieces in them) are a better choice than their plastic counterparts...

According to parent-empowering website [GoodTo](#), wooden toys are:

- Safer for your child
- Better for the environment
- Longer lasting
- Great enhancers for early education
- Encouraging for creative play
- A great way to promote teamwork skills
- Cheaper in the long run
- Adaptable (i.e. can be upcycled, repurposed)
- Better looking

If the above quick pointers aren't enough to convince you, or if you just want to find out more, then [you can read the full article here](#).



Buy a universal battery charger and rechargeable batteries

Buying universal battery chargers and rechargeable batteries to accompany an electrical appliance which you are gifting is a nifty tip...

It allows your gift recipient to cut down battery waste, while also saving them money in the long haul.

Perhaps buying yourself a charger and rechargeable batteries to have at home may not be a bad idea either? They could come in handy for any electrical appliances you may receive as gifts. They would also be useful for certain toys if there are little ones at home.

Just remember...

Not all batteries are rechargeable! Once they die, batteries must be disposed of safely.

Placing batteries in your residual waste bin causes life-threatening fires at home, in waste collection vehicles, and at Recycling Centres. Binning batteries also pollutes the environment and is a waste of valuable resources.

Please recycle your batteries at your nearest large supermarket or at your local [Household Waste Recycling Centre](#).



Make and Bake



If you are looking to cut your budget or you're unsure of what gifts to give, surprising family and friends with homemade treats is a perfect way to remedy such Christmas conundrums!

Making and baking festive sweets is also a great way to keep the kids entertained...

Homemade chocolate truffles, classic fudge and Christmas Jam are just some recipes which are simple to make and can be packaged as gifts... Either on their own or as part of a festive hamper!



Christmas Truffles

Not many recipes come easier than this [Christmas Truffles recipe from BBC Good Food](#) – however, it is a messy one, so you may want to grab your apron!

All you need to do is:

- Finely chop up some dark and milk chocolate and place in a bowl.
- Then, melt double cream and butter in a pan until the butter has melted (you'll want to take off the heat as soon as the butter has melted, as the mixture is likely to split when stirred in with the chocolate if you go any hotter).
- Then, pour the mix onto your chopped chocolate, stirring together until your chocolate has melted. At this point, you can either leave the mixture as it is or add other festive flavours such as brandy, Irish Cream or orange zest.
- What you now have is a lovely ganache, which should be left to cool and then popped in the fridge to chill for 7 hours. You want the ganache to be sturdy but flexible enough to roll into balls. If the mixture is too hard when you take it out, then leave it at room temperature for half an hour or so.

- Now comes the fun (but messy) part – shaping and coating your truffles! You'll need to use a flavourless oil on your hands before spooning small heaps of the ganache mixture into your hands and forming into balls, ready for coating. The BBC Good Food video tutorial uses chopped hazel nuts and crushed amorette biscuits, but you can use other coatings such as cocoa powder, icing, sprinkles or a crushed biscuit of your choice. Speculoos (caramelised) biscuits could add a festive warmth to your flavourings, while something light like a Rich Tea biscuit would add a nice crispy texture. Whatever coating you decide on, just make sure you roll your truffles around so that they're completely covered.
- Once coated, place your truffles back in the fridge for a couple of hours to firm up. The truffles will keep for up to 3 days in the fridge or a month within the freezer. They can be packaged in a greaseproof-lined gift box – you could even add a gift tag saying “Keep me in the fridge” along with a use-by date and/or home freezing guidelines.

View the full Christmas Truffle method and recipe here:

www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/christmas-truffles.



Classic Fudge

Moving onto a cleaner but slightly more challenging recipe – yet again, from BBC Good Food – [this homemade fudge recipe](#) is another great gift option to consider making.

As stated on the website, this recipe uses:

- 125g [salted butter](#), plus extra for the tin
- 397g can [condensed milk](#)
- 460g [light muscovado sugar](#)
- 150ml whole milk
- 2 tsp [vanilla bean paste](#)

Aside from the above ingredients, you're going to need the following utensils:

- A 20cm square cake tin
- Baking parchment
- A saucepan (plus a wooden spoon for stirring)
- A sugar or probe thermometer
- A stand mixer or electric handheld whisk

Once you have all of the above ingredients and utensils in place, we advise you [follow the step-by-step video tutorial listed at the top of the article.](#)



IMAGE CREDIT: BBC GOOD FOOD

After you have made your fudge, it will keep up to three weeks in an airtight container, so bear this in mind when it comes to packaging as a gift. You may want to use a fancy container and possibly add a decorative touch – we recommend using reusing jars (just make sure they have a wide rim and that you sterilise them before storing your fudge). If you opt to use glass food containers or Tupperware, then you can always wrap with Kraft paper or a scarf (which can form part of the gift). Whatever container you use, we recommend adding a label with a use-by date written on it.

View the full Classic Fudge method and recipe here:
www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/classic-fudge.

Christmas Jam

Our third and final recommendation from BBC Good Food is [this Christmas Jam recipe](#), which has a rich cranberry base and is vegan, dairy-free and egg-free.

For this recipe, you will need the following ingredients:

- 500g [fresh cranberries](#)
- 2 [oranges](#), zested and juiced
- 1 [star anise](#)
- 1 [cinnamon stick](#)
- 2 [cloves](#)
- 500g [caster sugar](#)
- 2 tsp edible glitter (optional)*

*Edible glitter is not a microplastic, making it both safe for consumption and harmless to the environment (as opposed to normal glitter).

You will also need the following utensils:

- A small plate (to put in the fridge so you can test the jam)
- A heavy-based saucepan
- Sterilised jam jar(s) – depending on size (the article recommends 3 x 228ml jars)



Essentially, all you need to do is chuck all the ingredients into the pan (save for the edible glitter, which you stir in later if using), bring to a boil and then simmer for around 30-35 minutes before testing.

Once ready, you leave to cool for 10 minutes and then decant into sterilised jars and seal – it's as simple as that! What makes this jam even more appealing is its long shelf life – it will keep for three months if stored in a cool, dark place for three months, or for one month in the fridge once opened.

As with the other recommendations, we suggest adding a label with storage info and an expiration date.

View the full Christmas Jam recipe and method here:
www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/christmas-jam.

Other homemade Christmas food gift ideas

The above recipes are just some ideas to get your creative juices flowing.

Aside from truffles, fudge and jam, you could also search for the following recipes:

- Christmas cookies
- Shortbread biscuits
- Rocky Road
- Peppermint bark
- Gingerbread shapes
- Mini Christmas cakes
- Festive chutney

Who knows? You may even add your own twists along the way or come up with a completely new recipe of your own!





Buy them an indoor plant



Indoor plants are a great gift to buy. Besides from looking pretty, they are long-lasting, durable delights which bring several scientifically proven health benefits...

According to studies highlighted in [this article from Healthline](#), indoor plants may:

1. Reduce stress levels.
2. Sharpen your attention.
3. Be therapeutic.
4. Help you recover from illness faster.
5. Boost your productivity.
6. Improve your whole outlook on work.
7. Improve the quality of indoor air.

Furthermore, the [Royal Horticultural Society](#) states that indoor plants can reduce blood pressure, as well as fatigue and headaches.

Top tips before you buy

- Choosing a low maintenance option: Succulent plants are a good place to start your indoor house plant search, as they are very low maintenance in most cases. [BBC Gardeners World Magazine's list of 20 of the best succulents to grow](#) may come in handy!
- Buying plants that are safe for your gift recipients: If your gift recipient lives with children and / or pets, then not all plants are safe, so you're best checking this in further detail before completing your purchase. Healthline lists a few plants you may want to avoid buying for people with children and pets [here](#).
- Composting plants at the end of their lifecycle: With the right level of care, indoor houseplants should last for years. Once they do come to end of their lifecycle, however, composting them is a great way of reducing waste, feeding soil and fuelling your garden. Want to learn more about composting? Join our [Home Composting Network](#) today to receive tips on how to compost your organic waste.



Give the gift that keeps on giving



Give someone the gift that keeps on giving this Christmas... Memberships and courses are great, as they give your gift recipients the opportunity to indulge in a hobby or passion, and in some cases, even allow them to develop new skills!

[Giftmembership.co.uk](https://www.giftmembership.co.uk) lists gift membership choices in one place for convenient browsing. Whether your loved ones are passionate about history, nature, gardens, culture, or food and drink, there are plenty of options which suit a variety of budgets.

If you'd prefer to buy them a course instead, [Buyagift](https://www.buyagift.com) features a range of online packages available to purchase from as cheap as £5! Yoga, makeup, fashion design, nail technician, British Sign Language, tarot reading and musical instrument courses are just a few of the options which you can gift to family and friends.

Gift them an experience



What's life without making memories? Instead of physical gifts, buying your loved ones an experience day not only gives them something to look forward to, but also something precious to look back on too!

Whether it's a meal voucher, a pampering session, a trip to the theatre, or something a bit more out-of-the ordinary such as a hot air balloon ride, feeding animals at the zoo, or even a beekeeping experience, the options are almost endless!

Experience day gift cards are available to purchase online, so it's worth researching your options before taking the plunge and buying as a gift for your loved ones.

Encourage others to reuse and be more eco-friendly

Buying presents which are reusable or eco-friendly is a great way of helping your gift recipients to protect the environment and, in some cases, save money.

Here are some ideas which may be worth pursuing...

Reusable water bottles



According to [Recycling Facts](#), we generate 15 million single use plastic bottles a day! Thankfully, reusable water bottles are becoming more and more mainstream. Some of them even have in-built water filters!

Reusable travel mugs



According to most recent government research, in the UK we throw away 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups per year... With estimates predicting a rise to 3.75 billion in 2025! Recently, this has been offset by the willingness of coffee retailers to allow customers to use their own reusable mugs. Many coffee shops and retailers even encourage and incentivise reuse cups by offering discounts!

Reusable straws



These are a great sturdy alternative to use instead of single use paper straws, which have become commonplace since plastic straws were banned in the UK back in 2020.



Reusable shopping bags

Trendy tote bags are handy to carry your bought items on the go, time and time again.

Recent research states that we use 13 billion carrier bags in the UK each year, so embracing more durable and aesthetically pleasing cotton shoppers is generally a good way to go in terms of saving money and the planet!



Reusable produce bags



Reusable produce bags are great for storing loose items such as fruits and vegetables. These bags are usually made from breathable materials such as organic cotton and mesh. You can even buy reusable and washable sandwich bags! Reusable produce bags are a great way to cut down everyday plastic waste.

Insulated lunch bags



Insulated lunch bags are a great alternative to the humble lunchbox and a handy gift for children and adults alike! The insulation is a game changer in terms of keeping your lunch cool and fresh.

Loose leaf tea infusers



Aside from offering a sustainable alternative to tea bags, gifting loose leaf tea infusers along with a batch of loose leaf tea is a presentable little gift bundle for your loved ones to open on Christmas Day.

Solar powered portable power banks



Charged by daylight, these power banks can be used to charge your phone and other electric appliances on the go!



Bamboo toothbrushes



Bamboo toothbrushes are a bathroom essential which will help your gift recipients cut down on plastic pollution. Clean teeth, clean conscience!



Bamboo make-up brushes



Bamboo make-up brushes are a durable way to greenify your beauty tools!



Eco-friendly beauty bars



Eco friendly beauty bars can be used for hair, face and body, and are packaged without plastics. The zero-waste way to shower, bath and wash at home!



Reusable nappies and wipes



Buying for a baby this Christmas? Getting reusable nappies and wipes will not only save the baby's guardians heaps of money but will also significantly reduce waste. According to [WRAP](#), "by the time one baby is potty trained the baby could use 4,000 to 6,000 disposable nappies. In comparison, a baby only needs around 20 to 30 modern real nappies, and these can also be used by any siblings that come along". As disposable wet wipes are non-recyclable, getting reusable wipes (or flannels) is also a good way to save money and protect the planet.

Pass It On



Received a gift you don't need but don't want to ask for the receipt? Return it for an exchange, re-gift it if someone else would love it, sell it online or feel great and donate it to charity!

Thank you for choosing to reuse



Thank you for taking the time to read our guide... We hope we've given you plenty of inspiration to help you save money and protect the planet this Christmas. Even if you only try one or two of the tips on offer, every little step towards reducing waste is a big stride towards protecting the environment.

Disclaimer: The #ChooseToReuse campaign was originally publicised in 2023. Since the first publication, all external links, statistics and advice have been checked and, where necessary, updated. Please note, with the exception of MRWA-published documents, external links featured within this guide are not officially endorsed by MRWA and are for reference and information purposes only. All external linked features and the information contained within them may be subject to change.

ZER
WASTE

The logo for the Liverpool City Region, featuring a circular emblem with the words "LIVERPOOL CITY REGION" around the perimeter.

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