

# A Very Merry, Green Christmas

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Christmas can unfortunately be quite a burden both financially and emotionally to a lot of people, there is often so much to plan, organise and do. But did you know that Christmas also bears a big burden on the Environment? During the festive season we consume more and create more waste.

An environmentally friendly Christmas is surprisingly not that complicated. A green Christmas can easily be achieved by keeping things simple. Keeping Christmas planning simple should also help to reduce the typical stress, costs and waste associated with Christmas, giving you more freedom to celebrate joyfully with family & friends (Sustainable Baby Steps 2018).



## Green is Simple



## Decorating Christmas

While most of us will already have our Christmas Tree out and the house adorned with Christmas decorations, those who are still decorating theirs should consider the types of decorations you are using. Many of our Christmas decorations are made out of lots of plastic and non-recyclable materials and will end up in landfill when disposed.



Consider buying quality over quantity. The best decorated Christmas trees are often quite simple and elegant. Look for quality decorations and take care of them to ensure they last as long as possible. Tinsel is a notorious decoration that is made of plastic, so avoid excessive amounts of it if possible or make sure to use it for many years (Ceranic 2018). If you want more variety each year consider making your own decorations out of materials you have at home. Make the act of creating your own Christmas decorations could become a nice family tradition and keep the kids engaged during the holidays.

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## Last Minute Gifts

Those who are still looking for those last couple of gifts should consider keeping an eye out for green gifts. Gifts made from recycled, Fairtrade, non-profit organisations and other eco-friendly sources are becoming more available so keep an eye out for these (Eartheasy 2018). Rather than purchasing a last-minute gift that may end up being unwanted, try giving gifts of food, vouchers for experiences (Ceranic 2018) from local sources or make your own gift.

Donate any unwanted gifts to charity where appropriate or regift them (Natural Strategies Group 2017).

## Wrapping

We go through a lot of wrapping paper at Christmas. There are many different ways to wrap presents this Christmas while reducing the amount of waste wrapping paper sent to landfill:

- ◆ Old Newspapers and Magazines
- ◆ Children's artwork
- ◆ Old linen
- ◆ Gift Bags or boxes – That can be reused many times
- ◆ Reuse old wrapping paper

Do not forget that wrapping paper can be recycled. However, try to avoid using plastic cellophane or metallic wrapping because they cannot be recycled and will go to landfill (Ceranic 2018). And try to reduce the amount of tape you use or hold wrapping in place with a ribbon you can reuse (Eartheasy 2018).



## Christmas Feast

Christmas is not complete without a Christmas feast, regardless of the size and the amount of hungry mouths to feed. Make some green choices this Christmas when planning your feast:

- ◆ Choose Organic, Fair-Trade, Local and Free-Range where possible
- ◆ Food with minimal packaging
- ◆ Donate foodstuffs not used (packages not opened) to charity
- ◆ Avoid disposable plates, cups and utensils (or use bio-degradable choices)
- ◆ Reduce food waste. Don't overbuy or make sure you correctly store leftovers so that they can be used for the rest of the week.
- ◆ Wrap food in Beeswax wrap or store in reusable containers instead of plastic wrap.



In Australia, seafood is often a staple on many Christmas dinner tables. The Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) has an [online sustainable seafood guide](#) to help Australians buy ethical and sustainably sourced seafood this season. Check out the [guide](#) to find a list of “green-listed” seafood that has minimal impact on stocks and the wider marine environment (Ceranic 2018).

Remember to buy local to support the local economy.

There are many more ideas and ways to make your Christmas as Green as possible, it just takes a little bit of thought. Just remember to keep things simple as it is not all the abundance and consumerism that makes Christmas special. Rather it is the people you spend it with and the traditions you share, whether they are religious, personal or festive.

The team at Integrate Sustainability would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe, happy holiday season.



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■ environment ■ safety ■ community

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