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For the Full Festive Feeling, nothing beats getting a homemade Christmas card. It's simple to do too. Grab some card, a few reindeer stencils, maybe a litre or two of mulled wine (they don't write themselves you know) and you're good to go.



Photo by Christin Hume

The smell of pine, the sharp bristle of the needles, the absolute *shag* of all the vacuuming in January: we all know, deep down in our Christmas cortex, that a plastic tree isn't the real thing. Get a real one this year if you can. Maybe even buy a potted tree so afterwards you can stick it in the garden ready for next year. Or, ultimate hack this, dig one up from the local park \* late at night. Put it back after Christmas of course - we're not monsters. \*Joking obv. Unless it's a really good tree.





Photo by Bella Bunce

All I want for Christmas is yooooou...to give me a reusable coffee cup. Here at the SAS Grotto we've got everything from water bottles to bamboo toothbrushes. So if you get tagged as a Secret Santa and you want a simple present that won't break the bank and will last and last...\*, you know where to come. Check out the link to our shop in our bio.

\*...and last and last and last and last. We're not even kidding. These things are basically heirlooms.



Art by Michelle Costello @smartie\_lids\_on\_the\_beach

If you've got a Turner Prize in you then what about giving art made from plastic found on a beach, river or community clean as a present? You can give a totally unique present, get your creative genius recognised by jealous mates \*and\* save yourself a few quid - it's a win-win!



Photo by Nathalie Jolie

If you're a dab hand in the kitchen why not give friends and family something they can (literally) get their teeth into this year? Homemade jams, gins, cordials, fudge, biscuits, cakes, pickles and oils all taste as good as they sound and hit the spot. The glass jars can be re-used endlessly. Stuck for time? Head to the local market or deli to see what they've got, or skill swap with a friend who's a whizz in the kitchen.



Photo by John Mark Smith

Nothing says Christmas like dozens of flickering little lights round your house. If you've ever wanted to make your own candles-in-jars then a quick search on the internet will give you tons of creative waxy ideas how you can-dle do it. #sorrynotsorry



Kiss goodbye to lots of landfill-loving crackers and say hello to these little homemade bad boys. Best bit? If you've got kids it's a lovely way to spend a few hours at the weekend. Even better bit? You get to vet the cracker jokes before they go in.





Photo by Annie Spratt

Keep your shopping local this Christmas if you can. Everything is less likely to be wrapped in plastic, you can get inspiration from the shop windows and lots of towns lay on Christmas events and markets full of great atmosphere and a chance to bump into friends. Not only do you get the glow of ticking off presents but you also get to help make Christmas special for local businesses and their families. It's a no-brainer! Or technically (and we're so sorry about this) a ho-ho-brainer.



Photo by Alexandra Kuser

Everyone loves a bit of tinsel, but the old ways to decorate are pretty great too. Why not decorate your home with natural gems like holly, mistletoe, pine cones and cinnamon sticks. You can head outside and collect locally or search out local markets\* and florists.

\* Proper ones, not the posh ones where everyone's wearing wellies even though it's in a gastropub car park, and you'd have to flog a kidney in order to buy a Christmas wreath.



Photo by Rawpixel

Present tags are lovely but they get chucked so quickly. Try making them from old Christmas cards or even luggage tags from journeys you've made. If they are tags you really love then why not keep them for next year? That way you get the warm glow of being both environmentally friendly \*and\* get to put your feet up for once. Not often those two go together.





Photo by Shutterstock

Kids love brightly coloured plastic toys. It's practically a scientific fact. They're also brilliant at breaking plastic toys pretty easily. Avoid a festive feelbad fiasco this year and buy them the odd wooden toy. Far more beautiful, less toxic, last a lifetime and can be passed on with love. We're talking FUN presents though mind. A wooden top is NOT AN OPTION unless you were born in 1912. Think swords and xylophones and castles and tea sets and dolls hou..... well, you get the picture.





Photo by Rawpixel

If you care about where your meat comes from, then you're much more likely to like the answer if you shop at your local butcher's. Not only are you putting your money where your mouth is and keeping it local, but you can book your meat in advance to make sure you're not involved in the supermarket scrum for a turkey on that last weekend before Christmas (nothing like that 'End of Days' feel to put a downer on your pre-Chrimbo vibe). For extra brownie points take your own container for the meat and make it a plastic-free fowl this year.



Photo by Shutterstock

If you're looking for present inspiration why not make it home-made this year? Anything from quilts to knitted hats, from bottle covers to phone socks. As simple or as clever as you fancy. What's that? You don't have time to make a quilt\*? We said 'home-made' - we never specified whose home. Look for local makers or ethical producers online and give them your hard-earned cash in return for handmade loveliness.

\*Us neither. Have you seen the size of them?



Kiss goodbye to the recycling disaster zone that is tinsel and hello to the eco love-in that is paper chains. It's a great thing to do with the kids\* and you can be as inventive with the designs as you like. Best of all you can always box them up after Christmas for next year.

\*ideally your own otherwise it's a little odd



Photo by Rawpixel

Why not buy mixers and soft drinks in glass bottles this Christmas if you can, or make (or buy) homemade tipples in glass bottles? Mulled wine, sloe gin or blackberry vodka are all awesome DIY drinks that don't need plastic bottles. And big, deep ice cub trays save you a fortune (and the plastic) of ice bags.





Photo by Markus Spiske

Handmade, homemade or hand-me-down tree decorations can last a lifetime and tell a story each Christmas. You can make homemade decs like salt dough, felt or wooden shapes that look great and give little hands something to do once school has broken up. Also? The more decorations you have up there will distract everyone while you methodically guzzle up all the chocolate decorations in the first week of December...



Photo by Shutterstock

If you're someone who likes to get or give brilliant bathroom gifts at Christmas then try going plastic free in stockings this year with soap bars, shampoo bars, bath fizzers and more. There are some funky, fresh, fragrant finds out there that don't get wrapped in plastic. YAY for presents that make you smell good \*and\* feel good.



Photo by Prudence Earl

Here's the bad news we live in a disposable, throwaway culture where perfectly-good stuff is handed in to charity shops every day. The good news? HOORAY for perfectly good stuff that we can get our mitts on and give as gifts at Christmas! There are tons (literally - you ever seen the stuffed backroom of a charity shop?) of plastic-free, loved second-hand gifts out there just waiting to be found. So tell Black Friday to do one and let's make Charity Tuesday a thing.





Say goodbye to the eco-tastrophe that is most wrapping paper and say hello to being a badass at furoshiki, a much simpler, lesser-known cousin of origami and a lovely way to wrap presents with thoughtfulness, care and cloth. Brilliant if you're trying to be mindful this Christmas too. Get googling - everything you need to know is just a search away!





Photo by Julian Hanslmaier

Are you enjoying a gloriously plastic-free Christmas dinner this year? Whether you're filling your festive shopping bag up from the local grocer, farm shop, farm stall or veg box scheme\* we hope you've been able to enjoy that feelgood feeling when your carrots haven't been clingfilmed to within an inch of their lives.

\* or if you've enjoyed the gentle, friendly protest of unwrapping all the plastic at the supermarket till and politely handing it back for the supermarket to handle - WE SALUTE YOU!



Photo by Julian Rawpixel

Three days to go! Eek. If you've got your presents sorted then a) congrats you are **NAILING** this whole season of giving thing, and b) if you're stuck for wrapping ideas that don't feel like you're trashing the planet, try good old-fashioned brown paper and ribbon. Maybe jazz that bad boy up with some old-school potato stamp prints. Reindeer antlers? Christmas pud? The world's your oyster!



Photo by Kari Shea

While we love the idea of pre-bought supermarket party food so you can have a good time at Christmas rather than sweating in the kitchen, have you \*seen\* the plastic-tastic footprint that stuff brings with it? This Christmas if your nearest and dearest are coming over, share the love and ask to bring a plate and share. Then put your feet up. #winningatlife





Photo by Rawpixel

It's almost here! We hope a couple of our festive hacks have been handy. If you still haven't got a clue what to get the light of your lives don't rush out to the shops and splash out on some distress decision that you know isn't right. Why not make lovely little card vouchers for time doing awesome things as gifts, maybe for a meal out, a massage or spa day, or a day out in their favourite place. Go big, go small, go tiny - it's up to you. We hope you get chance to stop, take a breath this Christmas and enjoy the moment. Maybe see you in there for a cheeky Christmas Day surf?