



Zero Waste Christmas



Zero Waste Canada

This guide aims at helping you reduce waste this holiday season and transition into a true, zero waste lifestyle.

A zero waste lifestyle is the first step in creating a better planet for generations to come.

Join the Zero Waste movement now.

www.ZeroWasteCanada.ca

ZERO WASTE RETHINK CHRISTMAS Reduce & Rejoice

Christmas Waste Facts

- Within 6 months, only 1% of everything the average person buys is still in use, the other 99% has been discarded.
- In Canada 545,000 tonnes of waste is generated from gift-wrapping and shopping bags each year.
- Household waste can increase more than 25% in the holiday season.
- Canadians use 6 million rolls of tape to wrap up Christmas presents every year.



Stuff-ing is for turkeys! Christmas is a time many of us like to give and sometimes we go a little overboard with stuff we bring into our lives. All these gifts we buy and give are not a gift to the planet.

This is a guide to help you reduce waste, unwanted stuff, and stress, while saving time and money. Celebrate the Christmas season with us, the Zero Waste way.

Remember to **K.I.S.S.:** Keep It **S**imple **S**anta!

Merry Zero Waste Christmas!



Rethinking Gifts

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

Psychologists, anthropologists, and marketers have found that giving gifts is a surprisingly complex and important human interaction that helps to define relationships and strengthens bonds between family and friends. Gift giving has been part of many cultures and rituals for thousands of years. First Nation's potlatches were a giving feast and in fact the word potlatch comes from the Chinook jargon meaning "to give away" or "gift." Giving is embedded in our celebrations, our history and our expressions of caring.

Psychologists often point out that giving to others reinforces our feelings to them and makes us feel effective and caring.

Many individuals today lament that Christmas has become too materialistic. Many of us have enough stuff already.

Instead of banning gifts perhaps it is time to rethink what we actually are giving. Instead of objects perhaps we focus on creating feelings, memories and experiences.

Rethinking Traditions not stuff

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

Traditions and rituals can provide a source of self-identity, and strengthen bonds between family, friends and community. Creating traditions and rituals can offer comfort and security. Values can be imparted and reinforced with traditions and rituals.

Traditions are not really about the stuff but the action or experience. Christmas traditions and rituals are about producing the outcome of peace, love and acceptance.



A paper published in the Journal of Happiness Studies by researchers Tim Kasser of Knox College and Kennon M. Sheldon of the University of Missouri-Columbia, found that people who emphasized time spent with families and meaningful religious or spiritual activities had merrier Christmases.

Traditions and rituals can be very simple like Dad making breakfast on Christmas morning or the family decorating the tree or the after-dinner walk.

Ellen Galinsky, co-founder of The Families and Work Institute describes a survey in which she asked children what they would remember most about their childhood. The majority of the kids talked about simple everyday family dinners, holiday get-togethers, and bedtime stories.

Christmas traditions and rituals do not have to be restricted to families. For those who may find themselves alone, it is about redefining traditions and giving the gift of self-love. Perhaps Christmas dinner becomes the potluck gathering at the church or community hall.

Remember that traditions and rituals can change and adapt to life changes.

Rethinking the trappings

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

High expectations can make preparing Christmas festivities a lot more stressful. If you worry about having the best decorations, giving the most presents, or hosting the most memorable dinner party, you could set yourself up for disappointment. Holiday stress has a particular impact on women, who take charge of many of the holiday preparations, particularly the tasks related to preparing meals and decorating the home. Isn't it time to simplify?



Rethink Shopping

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

Our planet simply cannot sustain our “shop ‘til we drop” mentality. It is time to rethink why we shop and how we shop. We all need to reduce the amount of stuff we buy. By reducing our shopping we will also have more time for family and friends. It’s a win-win, isn’t it?

Ideas for Giving

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Creating memories can start with joining family and friends to prepare for the season. Baking cookies with mom may be a memory children remember long after any memory of shopping. Creating memories is about moments of togetherness and caring.
- Sharing memories with parents and older relatives reconnects that past and present. Sharing family stories connects children with their family history.
- Giving the gift of time enriches the lives of children and perhaps the neighbour who is alone. Reading a Christmas story with a child or inviting a neighbour for tea is about giving your time and attention.
- Giving the gift of your services by volunteering with a community group or cause is another way of gifting the spirit of Christmas. Christmas is a time that food banks, charities, rest homes, animal shelters and hospitals are most in need of volunteers.
- Donating money or needed items to a charity is a gift that can help to create positive change.
- Offer to help someone.
- Give a hug.
- Give a hand.
- Give love.



Ideas for Sharing

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Host a cookie swap.
- Host a food swap.
- Organize a pre-Christmas swap of items that could be used as gifts.
- Donate warm coats, gloves and blankets to homeless shelters.
- Donate excess Christmas decoration to senior homes and volunteer to put up decorations.
- Make up a care package for an elderly neighbour.
- Create edible decorations that feed wild birds.
- Donate edible nutritious food to food banks.

Christmas Party Tips

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Use reusable plates, glasses and cutlery. Borrow or rent if you do not have enough.
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper.
- Use servings guides to help you determine how much food or drink is needed.
- Supply bins that are clearly labeled for recycling, compost and waste.
- Plan for left-overs and have containers ready.
- Keep candles in the freezer until using to extend burning time.



Food and Drink

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Plan meals and take an inventory of what you have on stock.
- Share ingredients that you only need a dab like spices with neighbours.
- Plan to use left-overs.
- Organize your refrigerator so items you need to use are in the front.
- Check out serving size guides and cooking times before shopping.
- Plan your menu and be realistic about portion sizes. When planning on how much food is needed take into account if guests have been snacking, children, picky eaters and a variety of other factors. If you are not sure of how much food will be required, check out this handy serving calculator on the [LOVE FOOD Hate Waste](#) site.
- Give guests a “doggy bag” container for dinner they do not finish. Better yet, ask them to bring their own containers.
- Use peels and bones to make stock.
- Use your freezer as a lifeline to rescue leftovers for another time.
- Enlist a cleanup team. Make clean up part of the celebration as socializing can still happen as you put leftovers away. This is a great time for kids to teach adults about recycling and adults to teach kids about reducing food waste.
- Instead of serving all of the food at once, replenish dishes so perishable food is not sitting too long.



Gift Wrapping

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Wrap gifts in newspaper.
- Use fabric to wrap gifts. Try furoshiki.
- Learn how to wrap presents without tape.
- Reuse string, wool and ribbons.
- Avoid glitter.
- Opt for reusable gift wraps and bags.
- Have a container ready to pick up wrapping on Christmas Day.

Clothes

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Consider renting an outfit for the special occasion instead of buying it.
- Get creative with what is in your closet.
- Check out thrift stores.
- Plan your wardrobe so you have interchangeable pieces.
- Buy natural fibers.



Greetings

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- Send emails and make phone calls instead of sending cards.
- Reuse envelopes for note paper.
- If you must buy a card choose a card made of recycled materials that can be recycled again.
- Avoid glitter, plastic, ribbons and noise makers in cards.

Do It Yourself Projects

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

Gift bags



Pallet tree



Recycled Sweater Stockings





[CD wreath](#)



[Giraffe sock puppet](#)



Recipes For Leftovers

Suggestions from Zero Waste Canada

- [Leftover Turkey Soup](#)
- [Leftover Cranberry Sauce Muffins](#)
- [Leftover Brussel Sprout Soup](#)
- [Crispy Mashed Potato Pancakes](#)
- [Holiday Leftover Sweet Potato Cake](#)



Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. The team at Zero Waste Canada wishes you a Merry Zero Waste Christmas.

To find more ways you can create a Zero Waste household, connect with us by [subscribing to our newsletter](#).

You can also join the Zero Waste movement by [becoming a member](#) of Zero Waste Canada.

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