

# Vintage Green Review

## Zero Waste Holidays & Entertaining Guide



### Party Planning Tips

*Reduce the amount of waste you create with a party*

- Send invitations through email or make a personal phone call for added touch
- Plan meals according to the number of guests to avoid additional food waste
- Use reusable tableware: dishes, napkins, tablecloths, glasses & silverware. *If you don't have enough, borrow from friends or rent*
- Don't turn on every light in your house during your party. *Use candles to illuminate & add fun vibes!*
- Turn down the heat before guests arrive. *You'll save energy while the extra body heat of your guests warm up the room.*
- Cut up last year's holiday cards or calendar pages and use as place cards
- Decorate with photos from past holidays and celebrations. *Keep & reuse decorations like pine cones, garland, bows from year to year*
- Place clearly marked recycling containers so guests can opt for aluminum vs. glass or plastic.
- Aid guests in setting up carpools. *Or carpool with friends when attending an event*
- Send leftovers home with friends, donate to local food banks, or use in meals throughout the following week
- Compost vegetable, fruit scraps, and unbleached (brown) paper towels, napkins & plates if they were used
- Discuss your fav zero waste ideas with guests if they ask!
- You can also politely request in your invitation that guests bring reusable dishware, glass, or metal (instead of plastic) if they'd like to bring something to share

### Greening your Celebrations Top 5 Tips:

- 1.) Give gifts that conserve natural resources
- 2.) Use reusable tableware
- 3.) Buy LED lights
- 4.) Recycle
- 5.) Reuse gift wrap supplies

On a single day, a typical Louisianan creates roughly 7 pounds of waste. But from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, household waste increases by more than 25 percent. Additional food waste, packaging, wrapping paper and decorations add nearly 1 million tons a week to the nation's garbage piles.

It's time to rethink our holiday habits & celebrate a cleaner city throughout the year!

### When shopping for gifts & parties

#### **Avoid:**

- Disposable products
- Gadgets & toys that have limited use
- Something your recipient can't use very well. *Like kitchen tools for someone who rarely cooks or bakes, unless they're creating a new hobby!*
- Products with excessive packaging

#### **Bring with:**

- Your own shopping bags. Not just to the grocery store, but also to Target, Walmart, the mall, independent stores, etc. *Paper, plastic, and cloth all work as reusable!*
- A shopping list. Think of gift ideas ahead of time to make careful gift choices.

#### **Plan:**

- Coordinate a route of stops on your shopping trip to save time & gas
- Research local art & holiday gift markets to buy local and package-free
- Buy baked goods or snack foods in bulk/package free or larger volumes when possible
- Rent seldom worn formal party clothes or shop secondhand *ie Rent the Runway, Poshmark, ThredUp, Buffalo Exchange, consignment shops*

#### **Shopping online:**

- Order early enough so you can have items shipped in fewest number of boxes & truck makes fewer delivers to your house
- Shop great variety of natural, organic, and eco-friendly products online, including small businesses
- Cancel or opt out of any catalogs you don't want

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### Holiday and String Lights

Holiday lighting can add up to \$50 to your December lighting bill. You can have a festive display for much less:

- Invest in LED lights, they'll pay for themselves in one season:
  - Energy efficient → 0.08 watts per LED C7 multicolor bulb vs 6.0 watts for standard
  - Long life span → up to 100,000 hours or more indoors
  - Safety → bulbs are cool to the touch
  - Sturdy → epoxy lenses are hard to destroy
- Use timers to turn off lights during overnight and daylight hours to reduce energy consumption

### Christmas Trees

Artificial vs. real tree can be as big a debate as paper vs. plastic. Here are some tips to help, no matter which you choose:

- Artificial trees can be reused each year
- Real trees can be picked up for coastal restoration
- Use trimmed branches for decorating around the home or making wreaths
- Use an old quilt as a tree skirt
- Instead of plastic tinsel use popcorn & cranberry strings
- Reusable glass icicles instead of disposable tinsel

### Gift Giving

More than 1 in 3 (35%) of adults say they return gifts after the holidays. Here are ways to reduce the need for returns & be eco-friendly before you even start shopping!

- Talk with those you exchange gifts with. Do you really want to exchange gifts?
- Draw names instead of buying for everyone
- Share the cost of a gift with a sibling or friend to buy a better quality item
- Don't be afraid to ask the recipient for a wish list!
- Know proper sizes
- Evaluate gift for simplicity, usability, durability
- Know the store's return policy
- Include original packaging & tags
- Attach gift receipt for easier return

### Greener Gift Ideas

#### Family:

- Book of your family history or scrapbook of memories
- Family recipe book
- Refurbished tricycle, toy, rocking chair, etc. to pass along as an heirloom
- Savings account, college 529 plan, or Education IRA for children
- A wish list of activities you want to do as a family over the holidays, then give those experiences as a present

#### Experiences:

- Bus passes, state park permits, movie tickets
- Registration to classes/camps,
- Music lessons or cooking classes
- Tickets to sporting event, theater, concert
- Zoo or museum memberships
- Free babysitting
- Personal "coupons" for free massage, chores, breakfast in bed, etc.

#### Energy Saving:

- Programmable thermostat
- Solar or LED yard lights
- Bicycle, accessories or bike trailer
- Fluorescent light bulbs

#### Waste Reducing:

- Gift cards—try local shops first!
- Durable toys made of wood
- Solar watch
- Rechargeable batteries for toys
- Durable, quality hand tools or rechargeable tools
- Gift basket with nontoxic household cleaners
- Cloth shopping bags, placemats, napkins, facial rounds, aprons
- Donation to nonprofits in their name
- Gifts from antique stores, estate sales, or flea markets

#### After any celebration:

- Reuse gift wrapping material for the next celebration or for art projects
- Recycle your tree—check city dates for pickup for coastal restoration
- If you can't return an unwanted gift, regift it or give to a local charity!
- Don't be afraid to donate decorations you don't use anymore or trade with friends!



For more tips & ideas follow @Vintagegreenreview on Instagram!