





Did you know that Canadians produce up to 25% more waste over the holidays? That's upwards of 540,000 more tonnes of trash into our landfills! The holiday season is a magical time where love, cheer and merriment is in the air — but that doesn't mean it has to be wasteful. We can connect better to the holiday season when we're mindful about how we celebrate.

Wasting Away the Holidays



Most of what we buy to celebrate the holidays is not recyclable. Think about the wrapping paper, packaging, discarded decorations and even the tape used for wrapping. All of that winds up in landfills.

Convenience Comes at a Cost



Buying online makes holiday shopping easier than ever. However, there are a lot of excessive byproducts from shopping online like boxes, bubble wrap and packing peanuts, not to mention the package the product already comes in.



Falling into the Shopping Trap

Black Friday and Boxing Day sales make impulse buying very appealing — but it also creates a lot of waste. When we impulse buy, we don't often buy anything of real value, and that creates more waste.

Let's Diversify Our Gift Giving

Being much more thoughtful and intentional with your gift giving can not only show your love and appreciation for your friends and family, but help with the mass amounts of waste produced this time of year.

- **Give an experience:** How much would your loved ones enjoy a movie night? Or a cooking class? Maybe a day at the spa? Give them an experience they'll never forget, rather than a thing they'll forget they have.
- **Give a gift to pay it forward:** Make a donation on their behalf to charity that means a lot to them. Is there an initiative they really believe in? Helping others is a great way to feel the holiday spirit.
- **Make a gift:** A homemade gift like a hand-knitted scarf, a photo album or a piece of art make for an unforgettable present. Even a tray of home baked cookies or cupcakes will leave a smile on everyone's face.
- **Invest in their future:** Helping loved ones with future investments is a thoughtful approach to gifts that shows you care about their futures. Open a savings account, make an investment or buy some bonds and they can watch their gifts grow.
- **Buy a pre-loved gift:** Maybe your loved one's vintage style just screams for a thrifted jacket you saw. Or their love of retro sci-fi books calls for a pulp classic printed years before they were born. Sometimes, secondhand gifts can be the best gifts.

Let's Change How We're Wrapping Gifts

Gift wrap accounts for more than 500 tonnes of waste during the holidays. And worse, most of it can't be recycled! When you find that perfect waste-free gift, keep these wrapping tips in mind:

- Avoid wrapping with materials that can't be recycled, like glittery or foiled paper and plastic-based ribbons. Often, wrapping and ribbon packaging will tell you if it can be recycled.
- Tape is one of the worst culprits for waste over the holidays. Try securing your wrap with (reusable) ribbon or string instead of using tape.
- Gift wrapping and bags can be bought secondhand. In Edmonton, stores like the Reuse Centre and Find often carry pre-loved gift wrapping and bags that would have ended up in a landfill.
- Repurpose other paper products that can be recycled. Find some free community newspapers or old calendars that you can use to wrap your gifts.
- Save the wrapping paper you used before for future gifts. If the paper isn't torn or shredded, it will be completely reusable. Or do it the old fashioned way—wrap your gift in fabric or a tea towel.
- Maybe the gifts don't need to be wrapped. Your loved ones will still enjoy their gifts, with or without a fancy covering.

Let's Change How We Decorate For The Holidays

We all love seeing lights illuminating the night, Santa printed on napkins and festive trees lining the yard. The problem is, many of these decorations are only single-use and are discarded before the New Year. There are ways of decorating for the holidays that don't add to the waste:

- Instead of using disposable dishes and cutlery, use your existing set of dishes. Or, if you're hosting a large event, consider renting a set of dishes to avoid the extra waste.
- Resist the urge to buy new decorations every year unless it's a timeless piece that you'll use for decades to come.
- Secondhand decorations are a great option when it comes to buying new decor. Best of all, there's a charm to vintage holiday decor that's hard to find with new decorations. Check out online marketplaces like Kijiji or visit your neighbourhood thrift shop to see what holiday treasures you can repurpose.

We can create more meaningful holiday seasons by being more thoughtful and deliberate with how we buy and gift. Not only does this make for more fun and thoughtful holiday seasons, this helps the overall waste we produce that's damaging our planet.





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