



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE:

Practical, Plant Friendly, and (Almost) Plastic Free

This year might have us feeling socially distant from family, friends, and colleagues, but hopefully still close in spirit! A jar of homemade granola could be the way to your loved ones' hearts. Or maybe you've perfected your sourdough skills. Despite these unusual times, there are plenty of thoughtful, affordable, and sustainable gift choices that people will actually use. So, whether you venture out to the store or purchase from the comfort of your couch, here are some ideas for consuming consciously. Consider these questions:

How can I buy less, but better?

The issue of what is truly essential is perhaps more relevant now than ever before. Instead of stuff that will clutter someone's home, opt for gifting an experience or activity. If you do choose to buy a physical item, seek out good-quality, well-made gifts that will last.

Can I make it myself?

Try cooking, baking, crafting, sewing, repurposing, or upcycling.

Can I find it secondhand?

Gone is the stigma against used goods. Hit the thrift shops, flea markets, yard sales, consignment stores, swap groups, Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, Kijiji, Etsy, or eBay.

Can I find it locally?

Now may be the best time to support

small, local businesses. I like this reminder by Toronto designer Ave Mariabell Designs (@avemariabell.designs): “#shoplocal because Toronto needs you more than Amazon.”

Experiences (in person or virtual)

- Classes: art, cooking, dancing, etc.
- Memberships: Bike Share, cinemas, etc.
- Subscriptions: TV, movie, and music streaming services; magazines; etc.
- Tickets: comedy, concerts, films
- Tours: botanical gardens, etc.
- Wellness: Massages, spa treatments
- Gift cards: restaurants, gaming
- Charitable donations (the options are endless)... Animal protection groups, Arts and culture organizations, Environmental protection groups, Food banks, Health care organizations, Human rights groups, Racial and social justice groups, Tree-planting initiatives, Animal, child, or landscape sponsorships

On the go

- Reusable face mask, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Reusable water bottle, coffee cup
- Reusable produce bags
- Reusable cutlery and serviettes

Eating and drinking

- Bulk grocery items presented in simple glass jars: coffee, tea, cocoa, spices, seasoning salts, chocolate, candy, popcorn kernels, crackers, oats, nuts, raisins, seeds, lentils, beans, baking ingredients, soup ingredients
- Olive oil, vinegar, marinated olives,

- artichokes, sundried tomatoes
- Sauces (e.g., pesto), spreads, etc.

Lounging at home or staycationing

- Aromatherapy, candles, essential oils
- French coffee press, stovetop moka pot (no filters or plastic pods needed!), tea strainer
- Plants, planters
- Secondhand books, e-books
- Secondhand board games, card games

Home organization, cleaning, grooming

- Bamboo toothbrushes, nonplastic floss
- Bar soap, shampoo and conditioner bars
- Food wraps, bowl covers
- Reusable facial rounds
- Shave soaps, brushes
- Stainless steel food containers
- Wooden soap dish
- Wool dryer balls

Gift wrapping

Whenever I receive a gift, I save the wrapping materials (paper, ribbon, and bows) that could be used again. I also like to wrap presents in a lovely vintage scarf or fabric, which itself makes a nice gift.

Pictured: a festive-looking tea towel cinched with an old ribbon.

Pictured: old holiday cards cut up into gift tags, plus kraft paper and twine. The foliage was picked from a bush in the park.