

Seasons Greetings 2018

#seasonsgreetings
@mamalinak



INTRODUCTION

Can you believe it's that time of the year again? The clocks have gone back, the days are growing shorter, our knitwear is out, candles lit, hot chocolate on tap and we're starting to think ahead to the festive season. There are so many wonderful and meaningful rituals associated with this time of the year but it's also come to be a period synonymous with pressure, excessive consumption and waste. In fact, an alarming 30% more rubbish is produced during the festive Season (1), and given that each year we dump a massive 2.12 billion tonnes of waste, that's a problem (2).



The good news is that, celebrating, just like parenting, doesn't have to be any one way; there are plenty of ways we can respect Earth's natural resources and celebrate

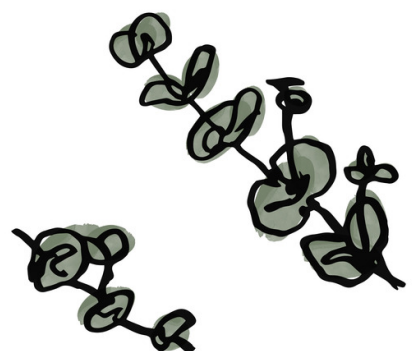
The goal of Seasons Greentings is to offer a different, less wasteful approach to festive celebrations. It's time to challenge some of the conventions out there, embrace Nature and share with our children a more mindful, equally joyful, way of giving, living and celebrating.

It's not a Christmas or a religious campaign - it's a campaign for people, of all backgrounds, celebrating at this time of year whether it's Christmas, Chanukah, Divali or the Winter Spiral festival. This guide will lay out some simple, sustainable switches and mindsets we can adopt to celebrate just a little more consciously.

Enjoy the campaign, and don't forget to join in with your own thoughts and ideas - just tag #seasonsgreentings.

xxx

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All artwork by @themossyhill



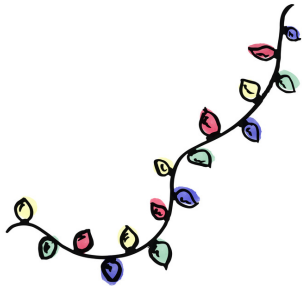


OVERVIEW

THE CAMPAIGN IS DIVIDED INTO 4 WEEKS
- EACH WEEK FOCUSES ON A DIFFERENT
AREA OF THE FESTIVE SEASON

WEEK 1: DECORATIONS
5 NOV - 11 NOV

WRAPPING PAPER
TREES
LIGHTS



WEEK 2: : GIFTS
12 NOV - 18 NOV

SECOND HAND
DIY
LOCAL



WEEK 3: FOOD & DRINK
19 NOV - 25 NOV

EAT LESS MEAT
LOCAL / PLASTIC FREE VEG
REDUCE FOOD WASTE



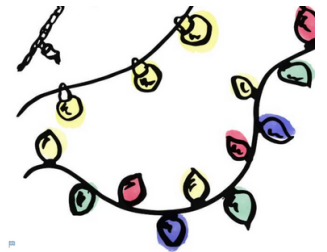
WEEK 4: ACTIVITIES
26 NOV - 2 DEC

ZERO PLANS
EMBRACE NATURE
PEOPLE FIRST



WEEK 1: DECOR
5 NOV - 11 NOV

WRAPPING PAPER
TREES
LIGHTS



I. WRAPPING PAPER

In the UK alone, we go through an estimated 108 million rolls of wrapping paper during Christmas (3), and given that wrapping paper is often impossible to recycle as it contains plastic, that's a colossal amount of waste. Wrapping paper can only be recycled if it passes the scrunch test - if it stays scrunched up then you can recycle it, if it doesn't, you can't. You'll need to remove all bows and ribbons and tape and check your local recycling centre accepts it.

Sound like a faff? Consider using newspaper, fabric or brown paper instead. Grab the kids and go on a Nature walk to find cones or leaves to adorn the paper or jazz up some plain paper with festive stamps. Don't forget to use paper tape, not plastic tape or even simpler, use twine or raffia (made from bark which regenerates). And don't forget to save any gift wrap you receive to reuse.



II. CHRISTMAS TREES

An estimated 6 million Christmas trees are bought in the UK alone (4) and most of these are thrown out just weeks later. Indeed, the government estimates that the nation's dumped Christmas trees generate 160,000 tonnes of waste every year. (5) Transporting and disposing of cut trees has an impact on the environment and most are intensively farmed on an industrial scale and are sprayed with potent fertilisers.



Fake plastic trees are not a great solution either (unless you already own one) - they're mostly imported from China, are incredibly energy intensive to manufacture and create more waste to dispose of at the end of the day as they cannot be recycled.

Consider renting a tree or if you want to buy one, find one that's been grown responsibly and / or locally - look out for the FSC certification logo or find one that is Soil Association approved as pesticide free. After Christmas, if you can, plant it in a pot and bring it indoors every year, switching it for a bigger pot each year. If you do get rid of it, do so responsibly by finding your local recycling location (trees are shredded to use for mulch or compost). Another option altogether - go 'rogue' and decorate a house plant!

What about attending a RSPB 'Pull a Pine' event - in some areas, young pines are invading the heathland and need cutting down. Spend a morning helping maintain a nature reserve and take a tree home that you've cut down yourself! A tree is a living, breathing crop so let's respect that.





III. LIGHTS

If you're using fairy lights, make sure you get either LED lights or choose solar powered or rechargeable battery lights – they're the most energy-efficient. Set them up on a timer so that they're not on all day. If every household in the UK swapped just one string of traditional incandescent lights for an LED equivalent over the 12 days of Christmas, we'd collectively save over £6 million and 57,000 tonnes of CO₂ (6).

And if you're lighting candles for Chanukah or Divali, beeswax, soy, and palm oil provide more natural alternatives to the paraffin candles. And why not opt for a traditional oil diya (you can even make your own) and go firecracker free which are polluting and also scare wildlife.

And another thing...

Instead of buying new decorations, why not recycle or make your own Christmas decorations? Look to Nature to incorporate natural elements – foraging and making is so much fun and a great way to keep little ones busy. Try making dried citrus fruit, paint pine cones, add a thread or wire loop and you've got the perfect decoration.



WEEK 2: GIFTS

12 NOV - 18 NOV

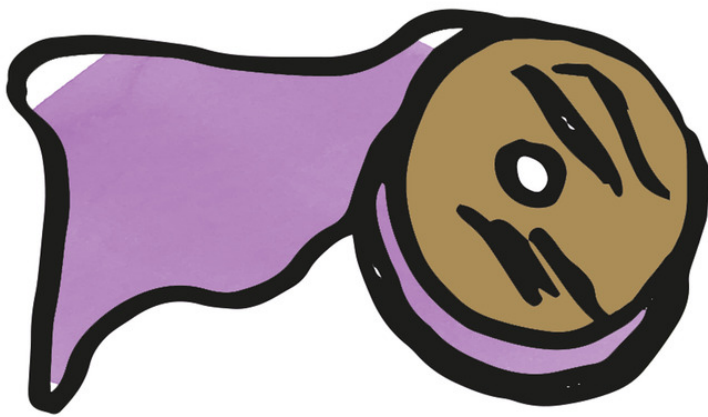
SECOND HAND
DIY

BUY LOCAL



I. SECOND HAND

It's time to radically disrupt gift giving. Shopping at second hand shops is by far the most ethical way to shop; preventing waste, giving to charity and super economical. Second hand does not mean a compromise on quality either - check brands and labels thoroughly before buying and if it feels strange buying second hand gifts for friends, why not make it a family only rule?



II. DIY

Gifting should be about time, effort and love and what could show you care more than creating a homemade gift? Pinterest is full of ideas from DIY candles to handcut cloth wipes and once you strike upon a good idea, go bulk and make it for everyone!



III. BUY LOCAL

Each Christmas, 4,000 tonnes of products arrive from China (7). Why not avoid importing gifts or buying from the giant that is Amazon and instead opt to buy gifts from your local high street / market. Buying locally mean you will be supporting small suppliers and the local community, while minimising your carbon footprint.

Gifting local experiences and eliminating the focus on material items is another idea, all the while promoting local businesses. Or what about removing gifting altogether and enjoying what we already have?

And another thing...

What's your take on Christmas cards? An unbelievable 1.5 billion Christmas cards are thrown away by UK households each year (8). What about sending an e-card or a homemade one? Or even just a spruced up brown tag? And if you're opting for a giftbag use a recycled one.



WEEK 3:
FOOD AND DRINK
19 NOV - 25 NOV

EAT LESS MEAT
PLASTIC FREE VEG
REDUCE FOOD WASTE



I. EAT LESS MEAT / SWEETS

Approximately 10 million turkeys are eaten in UK every Christmas (9) - that's a lot of turkey - and given that the meat industry is one of the biggest single contributors to global climate change, why not use the festive season as an opportunity to cut down on meat consumption and eat some of the wonderful produce that is available during the winter months. If you do choose to opt for meat, go for organic which has shown to be higher in nutrients (10) and lower in 'bad fats'.

If you're celebrating Divali, why not opt for an alternative to the sugary sweets or try making healthier ones at home. Honey hampers, exotic tea boxes, and whole grain baskets (with millets, brown rice etc) are all other tasty options.

I.I. BUY LOCAL PLASTIC FREE VEG

Winter is *the* root veg season and with root veg comes zero packaging - even in most supermarkets. Visit a local farmers' market, a farm shop or a local independent shop to find local, organic, delicious produce. Visit markets at the end of the day for the best bargains.

The shorter the transport distance from field to fork, the lower the carbon emissions. Indeed, by the time the ingredients that make up the average British Christmas dinner arrive on our plates, they have travelled a combined whopping distance of 49,000 miles (11) - turkeys from Europe, vegetables from Africa, wine from the southern hemisphere, cranberries from America...You get the idea, and it's not ideal.



If you're celebrating Chanukah, source organic, loose potatoes for the tastiest potato latkes in town.



III. REDUCE FOOD WASTE

We already waste about a third of all food produced for human consumption (12) but with the increased intake over the festive period, this rises even more. Approximately 2 million turkeys, 74 million mince pies and 17.2 million Brussel sprouts are thrown away every Christmas.(13). Wasting food is not only an ethical and economic issue, it also drains the environment unnecessarily of its natural resources. So love your leftovers - or freeze them! Turkey sandwiches / soup / curry are all delicious or use apps such as Olio to share your leftovers with neighbours. And don't forget to compost!

As well as the meal itself, 4,200 tonnes of aluminium foil are thrown away over Christmas (14). When thoroughly cleaned, you can recycle aluminium foil at many recycle points or some councils will also accept it as part of their recycling collection.



And another thing...

If you're hosting a meal over the festive period, consider buying in bulk to avoid packaging and save money, Also why not clear our your larders and put together a food bank parcel of food you're not eating and donate it to a local charity.

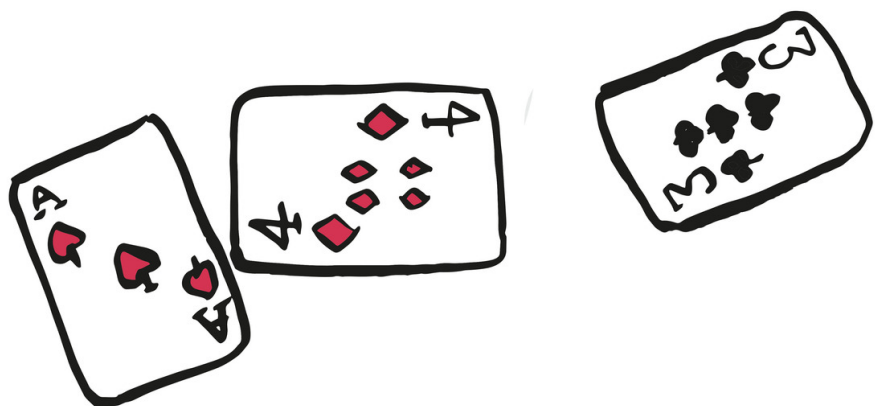
WEEK 4:
ACTIVITIES
26 NOV - 2 DEC

ZERO PLANS
EMBRACE NATURE
PEOPLE FIRST



I. ZERO PLANS

We are entering the darkest days of the year - the sun is down by the afternoon and it's no coincidence that so many festivals are planned for these dark days. The Jewish celebration of Hannukah, the remembrance of the rededication of the Temple and of the miracle of lamps whose oil should have lasted one day and lasted for eight, falls at this time of year. The Hindu festival of lights, Divali, has just passed. Many earth-based traditions honour the winter Solstice with special joy, lighting fires and candles and exchanging gifts. It's time to slow down, celebrate light and community, and embrace the art of doing very, very little. Watch movies, light fires, play boardgames, read, light candles. Make no plans. Stay in pyjamas all day. It's so easy to rush around - don't miss the memories by trying to do too much.





II. SPEND TIME IN NATURE

Come the festive season, there's even more pressure placed on parents than normal to do 'fun' activities with their kids. Expensive theatre tickets, big days out at the ballet can be lovely but can also be expensive. Instead, find joy in the season - wrap up warm and head to your local Woods. Take a basket and a magnifying glass and see what you stumble upon. Check out The National Trust for activities and events.

III. PEOPLE FIRST

The festive season should be a period where the most important factor of all is not what we're gifting or eating or doing; it's the people we're spending time with. Being with family and friends is surely one of the best gifts there can be, and if you can, what about giving up some of your time and volunteering at a local homeless shelter? The Steiner Winter festival also focuses very much on the inward personal journey which can be very powerful too.





CONCLUSION

I hope you've enjoyed the Seasons Greentings 2018 guide and delving into the seemingly small decisions and the big impact they can have: how to decorate our home, which gifts to buy, what to serve for the family meal and how to spend our all important time. These are all conscious decisions we are responsible for as individuals.

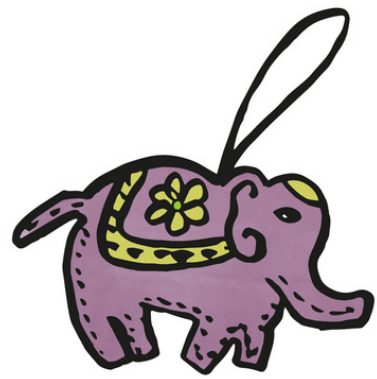
If there's one message you take from the campaign, it's that celebrating does not have to be about consuming and gift-giving. It's time to stop putting pressure on ourselves and on the environment and to reclaim what we love about this time of the year: Nature, good food, and people. We know that each year, £2.6billion is wasted on unwanted Christmas gifts (15) - can a wrapped up carefully chosen library book constitute a gift? Or a much needed duvet cover?

However you choose to celebrate, here's to a meaningful, sustainable and wonderful festive season.

Emma xxx







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