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Green Gift-Giving Guide

Looking for ways to make the holidays greener and healthier this year? Eco-friendly gifts are a great way to make a bigger impact with a smaller footprint. Try these simple strategies to make your holiday greener:^{1,3}

- **Repurpose wrapping supplies.** Use newspaper or wrapping paper from past holidays as gift wrap, or skip paper altogether and choose a reusable gift basket.
- **Limit gifts.** Cutting back on the number of gifts you give is another way to reduce waste. Limit your gifts exchange to a certain dollar amount or number of gifts.
- **Give experiences.** Declare a “no gift” holiday and opt for experiences instead. Cooking classes, day trips, or volunteering can be more meaningful than tangible gifts.
- **Give subscriptions.** Online subscriptions or community-supported agriculture (CSA) memberships do not require shipping or packaging.
- **Gift your time.** In lieu of a gift, offer to help out with yard work, home repairs, or other odd jobs.
- **Make a donation.** You can also make a donation to a charity on someone else’s behalf.

If you prefer to give a tangible gift this season, here are some greener gift ideas:^{2,3}

- **Reusable anything.** Water bottles, produce bags, stainless or silicone drinking straws, shopping totes, or kitchen towels.
- **Edible gifts.** Honey, seasonings, tea, fruit baskets, nuts, baked goods, vitamins, kombucha kits, homemade jams or jellies, or a sourdough starter from your kitchen.



- **Plant-lover gifts.** Houseplants, watering cans, fermentation kits, or vegetarian cookbooks.
- **Homemade gifts.** Hand-knitted items, cleansers, hand-written poems or letters, artwork, or sugar scrubs.
- **Transportation & fitness.** Bicycle, scooter, athletic shoes, workout gear, or exercise equipment.
- **Everyday living staples.** Pillows, umbrellas, wool dryer balls, or fabric shower curtain liners.
- **Outdoor-enthusiast gifts.** Bird feeders, birdseed, gardening supplies, camping supplies, or wildflower seeds.
- **Books.** Digital or downloadable versions of books.

Go green this year and spruce up the holidays with eco-friendly gifts.

1. Small Footprint Family. [12 Ways to Have an Eco Friendly Holiday](#). Accessed Sept 20, 2023.
2. Well + Good. [38 Unique Eco-Friendly Gift Ideas for Earth Conscious Friends](#). Updated Oct 29, 2022. Accessed Sept 13, 2023.
3. Healthline. [9 Sustainable Ways to Celebrate the Holidays for Your Budget and the Planet](#). Oct 31, 2022. Accessed Sept 12, 2023.



Halting the Hustle

For many people, the holidays are a source of stress. Social gatherings, gift exchanges, holiday shopping, and travel can make the season feel anything but joyful.

If you are ready to halt the hustle this year and spend more time enjoying the season, you may need to make some changes to your traditional holiday routines. Slowing down and staying present can be challenging, but it is not impossible. With a few adjustments, you can learn to say no to what steals your joy.

Here are some ways to halt the hustle this year:

- **Protect your calendar.** Learn to say no with grace. Declining invitations helps protect your calendar, so you have time for what matters most.³ Blocking out space on your calendar also gives you a chance to recharge between commitments.
- **Practice deep breathing.** When you feel triggered by a stressful situation, press the pause button, and do a deep breathing exercise before you respond.¹
- **Protect your boundaries.** Be clear about what you will and will not allow from others. If someone violates your personal boundaries, remove yourself from the person or situation.²
- **Nourish your body.** You do not have to sacrifice holiday treats, but do not neglect healthy eating either. Your body needs nourishing foods all year long.¹

- **Set a budget.** Decide what you are able to spend on holiday gifts and entertainment in advance, and stick to your budget. This can prevent unnecessary debt and financial stress when the new year rolls around.^{2,3}
- **Carve out “me time”.** Neglecting self-care during the holidays can make it more difficult to manage stress. Do not put your own needs at the bottom of your holiday to-do list.²

Slowing down and protecting your boundaries are important steps you can take to be more present this holiday season. Prioritize what is most meaningful to you and release the idea that you have to “do it all.” Plan ahead and decide how you will invest your time and money in advance, so you can spend more quality time to friends and family.

Slowing down and protecting your boundaries are important steps you can take to be more present this holiday season.

1. Psychology Today. [6 Tips to Maintain the Calm During the Chaos of the Holidays](#). Dec 14, 2019. Accessed Sept 14, 2023.
2. Huffpost. [10 Realistic Ways To Set Boundaries With Others During The Holidays](#). Dec 14, 2021. Accessed Sept 11, 2023.
3. Mayo Clinic. [9 tips to fend off holiday stress](#). Dec 3, 2021. Accessed Sept 5, 2023.

Managing the Holiday Blues

The “holiday blues” are temporary feelings of depression that tend to peak around the holidays.

These feelings may be triggered by memories of lost loved ones, unrealistic expectations of how the season should look, or being alone for the holidays. For many families, the holidays are a harbinger of uncomfortable gatherings where old arguments resurface. Family conflicts can drain your energy and leave you feeling depleted.

Here are some self-care strategies to help you prevent and manage the holiday blues this season:

- **Rest.** Getting enough rest can help you cope with stress more easily.
- **Create new traditions.** Consider creating new traditions if holiday routines are stealing your joy. If family gatherings cause you unreasonable amounts of stress, skip going home for the holidays and visit on the weekend before or after instead.¹
- **Nourish your body.** Eating well can strengthen your immune system and help you manage stress more effectively.
- **Scale back.** Scale back this season and focus on what brings you the most joy. Maybe you do not need to send out holiday cards after all.¹
- **Release emotional energy.** Find healthy outlets to release mental stress. Journaling, talking with a trusted friend, meditation, deep breathing exercises, and spending time in nature can all help you release strong emotional energy.²



- **Limit alcohol.** Alcohol intensifies emotions, especially negative ones. Limit or avoid alcohol when you are feeling low.²

How you experience the holidays is up to you. If your current holiday traditions are a source of stress, consider creating new traditions that better support your health.

Feelings of sadness and grief that linger past the holidays and into the new year may indicate you are dealing with something more than the holiday blues. If your symptoms last more than a couple of weeks, call or text 988 or visit [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org) to talk with a crisis counselor.

1. Cleveland Clinic. [9 Ways to Deal When Decking the Halls Doesn't Bring You Joy](#). Dec 17, 2019. Accessed Sept 8, 2023.
2. Verywell mind. [What Are the Holiday Blues?](#) Updated December 12, 2022. Accessed Sept 6, 2023.
3. Everyday Health. [Depression Is More Than Just the Holiday Blues](#). Nov 19, 2021. Accessed Sept 20, 2023.

GRAIN-FREE SOFT GINGER MOLASSES COOKIES

Ingredients

Cookie Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups almond flour
- 1/3 cup coconut flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt
- 2 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger**
- 3 tablespoon coconut oil, melted

- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 2 tablespoon molasses
- 1 egg or 1 flax egg (mix together 1 tablespoon flaxseed meal + 3 tablespoons. water, let set for 10 minutes)

Topping Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons coconut butter
- Sprinkles (optional)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Combine all of the cookie ingredients in a bowl and mix until just combined.

With a cookie scoop, drop dough onto baking sheet. Flatten slightly with a spatula or your fingers to form into a round cookie.

Place in oven and bake for 10-12 minutes.

Take out of oven and let set on baking sheet for 5 minutes.

Melt coconut butter and drizzle over cookies. *Tip: for a new jar of coconut butter, heat the entire jar in 30 second increments (or in a hot water bath on the stove) until able to stir. Stir well to combine all of the contents in the jar. This is important as oil separation may have occurred so you want to be sure that it's mixed well - just like natural nut butters.* Top with sprinkles if desired. Remove cookies from pan and place on wire rack to cool and allow for coconut butter to harden. Store cookies in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Prep Time	Cook Time	Servings
20 minutes	10 minutes	16



Nutrition Facts (1 cookie)

Calories	139
Total Fat	11g
Sodium	120mg
Carbohydrate	11g
Dietary Fiber	2g
Protein	3g