The 12 Days of Christmas
How to reduce, reuse and recycle over the festive season
Wishing you a very Merry Christmas from the Waste Aware Team

An estimated three million tonnes of waste is produced in the UK at Christmas time. That’s 50kg per person, and all together weighs as much as 400,000 double-decker buses!*  

The 12 Days of Christmas is a step-by-step guide to help you reduce, reuse and recycle over the festive period.

Day 1: Christmas Cards

In the UK every year, up to one billion Christmas cards could end up in landfill. That’s 17 for every man, woman and child living in Britain!*  

Save paper and postage costs this year and send a virtual Christmas card. There are hundreds of free eCards online to choose from and many are available to customise.

Or get the cameras rolling and make your own video greeting to send to friends and family.

Acknowledgments:
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*Recycle for Cheshire

*BBC News
Day 2: Decorations

Instead of buying new decorations this year, consider a Christmas swap shop with friends. And remember, your local charity shop will have saved up lots of Christmassy bits and pieces over the year.

Or get creative with our Christmas craft ideas . . .

Painted Light Bulb Baubles
Even if light bulbs don’t work any more, they might have some life left in them yet! The older-style, non-energy saving light bulbs can’t be recycled but can be reused to make some sparkly decorations, so get your paint brushes and finest Christmas glitter out. Old light bulbs make perfect painted baubles for the tree!

Festive Flowers
You may need to look no further than your garden for decorations this year.
Day 3: Christmas Gifts

Consider the three Rs when Christmas shopping this year:

Reduce - avoid temptation when shopping for Christmas presents. Make sure you have planned what to get in advance so that you are not tempted to buy things you don’t need. Just like Santa - make a list and check it twice!

Reuse - always reuse your plastic bags, or better still use a reusable shopping bag. Take them on every shopping trip, not just to the supermarket.

Recycle - avoid over-packaged gifts and instead look out for gifts with a high recycled content or made from recycled materials.

TIP: Be gift smart – are you sure the person you are buying for would really want that gift?

Drink Can Christmas Star

Simply cut the top off the can, cut strips down top to bottom and fold outward. Decorate or let the aluminum sparkle on the tree. Please be aware that the edges of the cut aluminum are very sharp and should be kept out of reach of children.

Snow Globe Jar

Grab that empty jar of cranberry sauce (although any jar will do), fill with water, glitter and a drop of glycerin and you’re half way there.

Glue your Christmas ornament to the centre of the jar lid, leave to dry and screw back on. Shake and enjoy your recycled Christmas snow globe!
**Day 4: Wrapping**

Approximately 364,700km of wrapping paper is used in the UK each year - unbelievably, that’s enough paper to stretch to the moon!* Why not try something a little bit different this year? Newspaper and magazine pages are a great alternative to wrapping paper.

*Recycle Now

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**A Gift in a Gift**

Save on paper completely this Christmas and try wrapping a gift in a gift!

A scarf will work best but any fabric square will do. Try out one of our three step-by-step methods inspired by Japanese Furoshiki.

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**Get creative:**

Forget about ribbon this year! What can you find to use instead? The tape from inside old cassettes is a great alternative.

**Tip:** Cut up old Christmas cards to make perfect gift tags.

**Tip:** Store all the usable bits of wrapping paper you receive this year and reuse them next year.
Japanese Furoshiki Wrapping

Yotsui Musubi
Four Tie Wrap

Bin Tsutsumi
Bottle Carry Wrap

Sao Tsutsumi
Padding Carry Wrap

Day 5:
The Christmas Outfit

1 in 5 Brits admit to throwing out clothes after just one wear.

So remember over the festive period, an outfit’s not just for Christmas...

Have a look at our second-hand chic page for tips on how to get a new-to-you outfit on a budget. But if you are buying new this year, why not think about restyling clothing with accessories? You can have a different look at each festive event without buying a whole new outfit each time.
Second-Hand Chic

Look sleek in second-hand chic

Day 6: Setting the table

TIP: Borrow decorations from the tree to decorate the table. We’re sure the tree won’t mind!

Make your own Christmas Crackers

What you will need:
- Toilet roll tubes
- Cracker snaps (available from most craft stores)
- Spare wrapping paper (or you could use old magazines)
- Leftover ribbon
- Newspaper (for the party hats)
- Scrap paper (for the jokes)
- Prizes (small items can be found in your local charity shop)

Simply tape the cracker snap to the inside of the toilet roll tube, fill with Christmas cracker nick-nacks and wrap. You can decorate the Christmas crackers any way you want. You can even personalise crackers for your friends and family!

TIP: Get down to your local charity shop this Christmas - support a good cause and grab yourself a unique outfit for only a few pounds.
Table decorations

People in Scotland throw away more than £1 billion worth of food each year - that's about 566,000 tonnes of food, most of which could have been eaten.

Love your leftovers - it's amazing how many meals you can get from one turkey! If you're enjoying a roast this Christmas, remember that the remains of the joint would make a great curry or delicious risotto later in the week, and you'll always find enough meat for a sandwich.

If you have time, the carcass can also be boiled up for stock and soups.

Have you seen our ‘Love your Food’ recipe book yet? Pick up a copy for delicious waste-reducing recipes! Get a free copy from your local library, or download the book from our website www.aberdeen.gov.uk/wasteaware

Wine Bottle Centre Piece
This is a great way to make use of all those extra glass bottles at Christmas. All you will need is an empty bottle and some paint or glitter. Complete the look by showing off those festive flowers.

Reuse old Christmas cards to personalise placemats and coasters.

Why not try making a Christmas card collage placemat?

Day 7: Food

TIP: Avoid buying disposable cups and napkins this year for your festive parties. Invest in reusable ones instead - save money and the environment!

The average Scottish household will throw away £20 of food and drink waste in a year. How much could you save?
Day 8: Food Waste

You can use your food waste recycling service to recycle any leftovers that cannot be used again.

Use your brown wheely bin or the food waste recycling bin on your street to recycle all cooked and uncooked food waste, including:

- Dairy and eggshells
- Meat and fish (including bones)
- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Bread, cakes and pastries
- Rice and pasta
- Tea bags and coffee grounds

The food waste you recycle is taken to a special processing plant where it will be turned into compost. So this year’s leftover sprouts could end up growing next year’s Christmas tree!

TIP: Get in touch with us to find out if you have a food waste recycling service in your area, or when you will be getting one.

Day 9: Unwanted Christmas Gifts

An estimated £42 million worth of unwanted Christmas presents are sent to landfill each year.

Don’t let the landfill eat a penny this Christmas!

For nasty knits or boring books, or Secret Santa gifts gone wrong, your local charity shop will be delighted to take your unwanted gifts this Christmas.

Or if you’re feeling the squeeze after Christmas (and we’re not talking about your belt) you might want to earn a bit of cash selling your unwanted gifts through re-use websites such as eBay and Gumtree.

TIP: Donating to charity is a great way to recycle. Although many charities only ask for good quality items, some will be happy to take broken or worn donations. Check with your local charity shop.
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

Christmas is often a time to get rid of the old and welcome in the new. If you get new gadgets from Santa, remember you can recycle old, broken ones in one of the special recycling bins for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE).

The bins are located at Morrisons on King Street and Sainsbury’s on Berryden Road. Here, you can recycle small electrical items such as:

- Phones, cameras and games consoles
- DVD players
- Irons
- Hairdryers
- Kettles and toasters

You can also take electrical items - large and small - to Household Waste Recycling Centres in Aberdeen.

Don’t forget that you can also recycle used batteries. Look out for our battery and light bulb recycling banks or take them along to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

TIP: Save money by investing in a battery charger and always choose rechargeable batteries that can be used over and over again.

Day 10: Recycling and Collections

Around 60% of all Christmas waste can be recycled. If it was, 352,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases would be saved every year. This is enough energy to fly Santa in a plane around the world on Christmas Eve 64,500 times, or the equivalent of taking 111,000 cars off the road each year!

If you have a kerbside recycling collection, it may get picked up on a different day due to bank holidays. Look on our website, www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/wasteaware for more details.

*1. BBC News  *2. The Guardian

Day 11: Christmas Tree Collections

We’ll collect your real Christmas tree for recycling. This service is usually available in early January, but check our website, Facebook or the local press for exact dates.

Christmas trees can also be recycled at any of the Household Waste Recycling Centres across the city. Please visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/wasteaware for directions and opening times.

TIP: After eating, drinking and buying more at Christmas, if you have an excess of waste, you can take it down to your nearest recycling point. Look on our website to find out where it is.

TIP: Check the dates for Christmas tree collections - if you miss them you’ll have to request a bulky uplift and there may be a charge for this.
Day 12: The Post-Christmas Pamper

It’s time to put your feet up after a busy Christmas and New Year but you needn’t visit the spa - just take a trip to the kitchen cupboard!

Follow our simple hints and tips and make your food go even further.

Ground oats make a great moisturising scrub. Stick a handful in the food processor, add a touch of water and there you have it - Ground Oat Moisturising Scrub! Simple as that!

Avocado is great for dry skin. Mix with a teaspoon of olive oil to create a rich paste and leave on skin for 15-20 minutes before rinsing off. Your skin will be left feeling smoother and your pores tighter.

Yoghurt is a wonder food - you can use it on your skin and in your hair. Your skin will be left feeling fresh, exfoliated and moisturised and your hair will be completely conditioned.

Beer makes fantastic shampoo! So if you haven’t already used your leftovers in Beer Soup (see our ‘Love your Food’ book for the recipe), try it out in your hair!

Olive oil might seem like a strange pampering treatment but it has in fact been used in beauty therapy for centuries. You can moisturise your face with it, condition your hair, or add salt to create a hand or foot scrub.

Go for organic olive oil if you can. This is higher in anti-oxidants and contains fewer chemicals - better for you and for the environment.
Waste Aware Fortune Teller Origami Instructions

1. Cut along the dotted line so that you have a square piece of paper with the writing facing downwards.
2. Fold the corners of the square across to meet the opposite sides. Press and unfold so you have two diagonal creases.
3. Fold down all four corners into the middle so that each triangle tip touches the central point.
4. Turn the paper over so that the recycling categories are facing downwards. Fold the corners in as in step 3 to meet the new central point. You will now see the recycling categories again.
5. Fold the square in half to hide the recycling categories.
6. Place thumbs and index fingers under open flaps and push up and inward to form a pyramid.
7. Your Waste Aware Fortune Teller is complete. Now have fun testing your recycling knowledge and learn some new facts!

If you have any tips for reducing, reusing or recycling at Christmas, we would love to hear them! You can get in touch with us by email, wasteaware@aberdeen.city.gov.uk or drop us a message on Facebook: www.facebook.com/wasteawareaberdeen