



Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

Resource Guide for Sustainable Living and Gift Giving

Useful for Residents of Monterey, CA and Beyond

General Sustainable Living Resources

Minimalist Living:

- **Becoming Minimalist:** Offers guidance on reducing possessions and focusing on what matters most. Accessible and free content for those looking to simplify their lives. www.becomingminimalist.com

Sustainable Fashion:

- **Good On You:** Provides brand ratings based on ethical practices and sustainability, empowering consumers to make informed choices without additional cost. www.goodonyou.eco

Eco-Friendly Living:

- **TreeHugger:** Delivers a range of articles on eco-friendly habits, many of which involve low-cost or no-cost solutions to everyday environmental challenges. www.treehugger.com

Zero-Waste Resources:

- **Going Zero Waste:** A blog offering zero-waste tips that can be tailored to any budget, focusing on reducing waste in a practical manner. www.goingzerowaste.com

Ethical Consumerism:

- **Ethical Consumer:** Provides tools and information for ethical buying decisions, supporting consumers to choose products that align with their values and budget. www.ethicalconsumer.org

DIY and Upcycling:

- **Upcycle That:** A collection of upcycling projects that can be done with items commonly found at home, preventing waste and saving money. www.upcyclethat.com

Sustainable Holiday Gift-Giving

The holiday season is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also be a time of excess and waste. This guide is designed to help you navigate gift-giving sustainably, ensuring that you can participate in the festivities without contributing to consumerism and waste.

Experiences Over Objects

1. **Gift an Experience:** Tickets to a local event, a cooking class, or a membership to a museum can create memories without clutter.
2. **DIY Workshops:** Offer to teach a skill you have, or gift a voucher for a local workshop, from pottery to gardening.

Handmade and Heartfelt

1. **DIY Gifts:** Home-baked goods, hand-knitted scarves, or homemade candles. These personal touches often mean more than store-bought items.
2. **Upcycled Crafts:** Create something new from something old. Upcycled gifts could include a personalized photo frame from reclaimed wood or a hand-painted vase.

Digital Delights

1. **E-Books or Audiobooks:** For the bookworms, an e-book or audiobook subscription is a perfect way to give dozens of books without the paper waste.
2. **Subscriptions:** Many news outlets require membership these days – give a loved one the gift of staying updated on current events! (NYTimes, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, The Economist, the Washington Post) ***MIIS PROVIDES ACCESS to many of these for your own personal use!*
3. **Online Courses:** Give the gift of learning with an online course in an area of interest, from photography to finance.

Eco-Friendly Products

1. **Sustainable Homewares:** Items like bamboo cutlery sets, solar-powered chargers, or biodegradable plant pots.
2. **Reusable Everyday Items:** Reusable shopping bags, beeswax wraps, or a quality water bottle can help reduce daily waste.

Gifts That Keep on Giving

1. **Charitable Donations:** Make a donation in the recipient's name to a charity that reflects their values or passions.

2. **Adopt an Animal or Tree:** Many conservation organizations offer programs to adopt wildlife or plant trees in someone's name.

Second-Hand and Vintage

1. **Thrift Store Finds:** Look for unique gifts at thrift stores, from vintage clothing to classic books.
2. **Antique Gifts:** Antique jewelry or furniture can often be the most unique and personal gifts.

Gifts for Self-Improvement

1. **Health and Wellness:** Gift a yoga class package, a massage voucher, or a subscription to a meditation app.
2. **Skill Development:** Tools for a hobby they enjoy or have wanted to start, like painting supplies or a new recipe book for an aspiring chef.

Packaging and Presentation

1. **Sustainable Wrapping:** Use recycled paper, fabric wraps, or reusable gift boxes instead of traditional wrapping paper.
2. **Edible Decorations:** Decorate gifts with ornaments made from cookies or candy that the recipient can enjoy.

Local and Community-Focused

1. **Support Local Artisans:** Purchase gifts from local artists and craftspeople, which supports the local economy and reduces shipping waste.
2. **Community Service:** Offer a 'coupon' for your time to help with chores, babysitting, or volunteering together.

By choosing one or more of these suggestions, you can give thoughtful, meaningful gifts that align with a sustainable lifestyle and contribute to a more eco-friendly holiday season.