

## MAKING THE FESTIVAL GREEN

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While it is usually less than sustainable, you can have an eco-friendly Diwali, too.



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While Diwali is time for food, fun and festivities, you also need to care for the environment. Here are some tips.

### Avoid Food Wastage

Prepare the menu and guest list in advance and limit the number of food options. Do not serve all the food and drink at once. Provide additional food only if required.

According to Dr. Malini Saba, environmentalist, and founder and chairman, Anannke Foundation, we should prepare storage containers in advance for leftover food. Consider serving food to kids or limiting the items each may take from a buffet. Additionally, request guests to bring food containers. Immediately after a celebration, freeze leftover food for later use, and donate to food pantries and homeless shelters. She suggests composting as a good option for leftovers that are no longer edible.

### Save Electricity

For this Ankit Ojha and Anand Ojha, principal designers, Anand Atelier Associate, suggest mixing the traditional with the modern when decorating your house. They discuss doing up your house with hand-painted terracotta diyas surrounded by lanterns that play the beautiful effect of shadows. You can also create cozy corners with the soft glow of lights, wall lamps, and lanterns will help in setting the vibe. Also remember to turn off decorative lights at night.

### Gift Experiences

Diwali is all about gifting. However, when you buy products that one may or may not want, you add several carbon emissions from delivery and wastage. Instead choose gift experiences. Maybe you can gift a salon visit or a massage service. It is even better to head to an old age home or orphanage and spend time with people who are less privileged. This is a great way to give back, and the best gift you can give yourself.

### Avoid Gift Packaging or Recycle

Instead of gift wrapping use repurposed fabric, glossy old newspapers, jute string, and dried flowers to create a more elegant package. If you buy something from the market, take your own containers. Many things you already have can be used to package gifts. In fact, by doing something different you can also add a personal touch your guests will appreciate. Put handmade notes on the packaging so your guests will know you have made the effort to go beyond.

### Buy Local

Instead of imported food, reduce your carbon footprint by going local. Buy fresh local produce, given that will also support the community. Falling back on tradition, serve food on banana leaves, and use steel cutlery, glasses, and bowls. Sort biodegradable from nonbiodegradable waste. After the festivities are over, clean up your community. It is the most effective method to save money and reduce waste.

Diwali is all about lights. With small changes you can be sure that you have added light in the metaphorical sense, too. So have a fun-filled green Diwali.



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