

Five Ways to Make Black Friday Greener

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Now that the final crumbs of turkey and pumpkin pie have been consumed, the busiest sales day of the year is about to descend on us once again. The thrill of a bargain is sometimes hard to resist on Black Friday (Nov 26th) when you can save a decent amount of money by buying reduced items.

While the world has been on the edge of a precipice and pandemic lockdowns around the world forced many shops to close last year, consumers stayed safely at home and embarked on some serious armchair shopping instead.

This year the shops are open, however, we are constantly reminded not to make unnecessary purchases, to prevent more items heading for landfill. The message is confusing so the best solution is to strike a balance so that you can green-up Black Friday, support the economy but feel less guilty about the impact on the planet.

We've looked at five ways you can enjoy Black Friday and still be environmentally aware.

1. Take your own carrier bags

Don't get so focussed on the bargains that you forget to take your own bags, or you're adding to the plastic pollution crisis before you even enter the stores.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, Americans use 100 billion plastic bags per year, which uses 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture.

Narrowed down, an average of 365 plastic bags are used by each American every year, compared to people in Denmark who each use an average of four plastic bags per year.

Around 730,000 tons of plastic bags, sacks and wraps were generated in the States in 2015, but more than 87 percent of those items are never recycled, instead destined to end up in landfills and the ocean. The effect plastic pollution has on marine life is devastating. Sea turtles can't distinguish between jellyfish and plastic shopping bags in the water and are dying as a result. All because we can't remember to reuse our own bags when shopping.

2. Only buy what you truly need

So, a pair of must-have jeans caught your eye. The original price is way over budget but now they've been slashed for Black Friday, you are already visualising them in the closet. However, one way to be greener on this retail day is to be fully transparent and ask yourself whether you would have bought those jeans at the reduced price, had you not seen the original price and saving.

According to EthicalHour, one in 10 people don't use their Black Friday purchases which demonstrates how the sales day can entice us, perhaps even pressurize us, into thinking we need all the bargains. It's the fear of missing out (FOMO) effect but panic buying often leads to ill-thought-out purchases that will never be worn and the planet will just continue to drown in excess material unless we control what we buy.

3. Walk to the shops or use public transport

Driving to indulge in Black Friday deals will bump up those CO2 emissions that the world is trying to banish so travel wisely.

Walking to the shops, cycling or commuting by train are the best options in terms of lowering your carbon footprint and you'll avoid the parking lot chaos too.

And if you insist on driving, at least take people with you to make the journey worthwhile.

4. Prioritise products that will benefit the environment

Keep your eyes peeled for sustainable brands and retailers and make every purchase count. Disregard the Xbox and the latest mobile in favour of something practical and better for the planet. And if that's something as simple as a bamboo toothbrush, great. Bamboo toothbrushes are biodegradable, minus the bristles (which you can cut off/pull out and put in the bin), then use the handles in your garden to label plants.

All the plastic toothbrushes you've used in your lifetime are still out there somewhere languishing in landfill so this is a Black Friday purchase you won't regret.

Other options to consider looking out for include wooden kitchen utensils, beeswax food wrapping paper (so you can stop buying cling film), plastic-free wrapped tea or why not splash out on a bike? Then you can cycle to next year's Black Friday deals.

5. Spend your money wisely

Black Friday isn't an excuse to go mad. Why not invest in something you'll never regret – in the form of a charity donation?

Communities flourished and grew stronger, supporting one another as Covid-19 tore across the world and changed our lives in the blink of an eye.

Donating money to those who need essentials more than you need the latest jacket will continue to bolster the community spirit and perhaps influence others to do the same.

It can be as simple as donating to a local food bank or seeking out sustainable businesses that donate a chunk of their Black Friday proceeds to charities. Last year Adventurist Backpack Co provided 50 meals to families in need for each bag purchased on Black Friday through to December 1st.

How will you be spending Black Friday? In fact,

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