

Guilty Greenie Bonus Episode

Sleigh What? A Very Merry Sustainable Christmas

Cait: A couple of quick notes before today's show. Sarah and I cannot thank you enough for joining us on this sustainability journey and sharing your own good, the bad and laughable. And we truly appreciate you sharing these episodes with family and friends. However this episode may not be appropriate for everyone.

As we approach the holiday season, we want to keep the Christmas magic alive. And therefore a word of caution, this may not be an appropriate episode for younger children. Also, I know, we know, and we promise season two is coming. Unfortunately, sometimes life just gets in the way, but we are currently in post-production and we'll have it out to you in the near future.

In the meantime, we are going to be including a few bonus episodes such as this one. We hope you enjoy. And look forward to coming back in the new year.

Cait: Hello and welcome to Guilty Greenie. We are your imperfect host. I'm Cait Bagby.

Sarah: And I'm Sarah Ferris.

Cait: And today we have a very special bonus episode. Sarah, what are we gonna talk about today?

Sarah: One of my favorite things in the world. That's Christmas I love Christmas.

Sarah: New Zealand Christmases, all of Christmases upside down. You are having a hot roast dinner and , ridiculous bikini kind of heat situations and then when we moved to the UK I just loved the fact that we were having proper winter white Christmases and all the traditions make sense. So yeah, I just love Christmas.

Cait: I spent one Christmas in Hawaii and I will say it does feel a little bit upside down.

Sarah: Weird.

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: Nothing makes sense, I remember also spoiler alert, we would put icing sugar for Santa Claus's footprints through the house what in God's name , what child would make sense of that, that there was even snow in the middle of summer in somebody's house in New Zealand.

Cait:At what age did it dawn on you that there was no snow in the house?

Sarah: I can't even remember. But we did have this thing in our house that Santa Claus only came if everybody in the family believed so we made our youngest brother believe in Santa Claus till he was like 12, 13. We were like, don't, don't give it up, Matt.

Don't give it up yet. We're not ready for Santa and to go.

Cait: I'm trying to think of like what age I was and I don't know. And I'm sure I learned like on the bus or something to school. Because you reach a certain age and certain kids are becoming a bit cynical

and then you have the other group of kids that are like very excited, like, oh, I can't wait for Santa. And you have that one, that one child who turns around and goes, well, you know.

Sarah: this episode's gonna come with an explicit warning so no children listen to this episode that we ruin their Christmases. Yeah That'd be awful. I hated if the, but Oh, no, take the magic Sarah and Cait.

Cait: All right Well, I'm gonna rob a little bit more magic from this very wonderful holiday. Wanna talk about some fun facts first.

Sarah: Yeah, go for it. Yeah.

Cait: Okay. It's gonna be a Christmas quiz for you.

Sarah: I I'm in.

Cait: What percentage? I feel like I need the, I need the music.

Sarah: Oh, no, no. Listen, you said this was gonna be a fun quiz, and you immediately ruined that by saying what percentage?

Cait: I said it's going be a Christmas quiz. I, there was no fun in front of that.

Sarah: Okay, suck it up What percentage of Brits celebrate Christmas? Oh, 60%.

Cait: No.

Sarah: How far off

Cait: What percentage of Americans do you think celebrate Christmas?

Sarah: Oh, quite a Christian bunch. , gonna go higher and say 75,

Cait: 86 and 85 respectively.

Sarah: Oh, so who's higher? US or uK?

Cait: U.K. But a lot of people don't necessarily celebrate it for religious reasons.

Sarah: , true. So that's true. I mean we certainly don't.

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: Okay.

Cait: How many people in the United States are sent to the ER every year from Christmas decorating related accidents?

Sarah: Oh my god, I can't even imagine what that is. What a tinsel choking incident?

Cait: I think like falling off a ladder. Like, lights.

Sarah: Yeah. That makes more sense. Okay. Oh God. Actually, probably quite a lot. , I don't know how many people.

Shitloads. That's my answer. That's the statistical number between a not such a big shit load and a massive shit load. There you go.

Cait: It's 15,000. Give or take.

Sarah: 15,000. That's not that many population wise.

Cait: No. Out of 300 you're doing, was it 320 million i'd? Yeah. I'm doing okay.

Sarah: Yeah. Oh, that's not too bad. Could be worse.

Cait: There's, uh, to follow up on Christmas related accidents every year in the United States there's around 15 15.7 million dollars in property damage due to fires caused by trees

Sarah: by trees?

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: And I guess at Christmas a lot more candles being lit. Oh, she says with the candle right beside her.

Cait: Oh, yes. That is one of my favorite things around Christmas time is we put candles in all of our windows. It's very New Englandy.

On average, how much does the consumer spend on Christmas gifts?

Sarah: It depends on the person, right?

Cait: Well, it's an average. Of course. There's gonna be.

Sarah: I know, but like an average that I would spend on gifts would be more than my kids. Uh, and oh, that's how an average works. Shut up.

Cait: Haha

Sarah: I just heard myself say it. Um okay. I'm gonna say, oh, \$200.

Cait: No.

Sarah: Plucking it here again,

Cait: around \$965.

Sarah: What? Hold on.

Cait: That's the average.

Sarah: The average in one Christmas one person spends is \$965 US dollars?

Cait: Mm-hmm. That's according to the National Retail Federation.

Sarah: Huge amount, more than I thought it would be. Yeah. I mean there's on average as well. Gosh, I guess some people go over the top, don't they? And then some people are down low.

Cait: Yeah. When we grew up, our gift tended to be one or two, but it tended to be a high value gift. Like something that would last my parents weren't very big on that kind of, you'll use it for a couple months and then that's it.

Sarah: And then it's done. I wonder if you looked at the statistics over time of how much people spend on Christmases, if it's just become so much more of a consumer marketed, gimmicky kind of thing. Like for us, Halloween is in the U.K. Which Halloween is not a thing that has been around when I was younger. Same in New Zealand. But now, you know, it's huge obviously in the US it's your thing. You could keep that.

Cait: Um, especially where I am, cause I'm not far from Salem, Massachusetts. So, you know, the whole Hocus Pocus and all of..

Sarah: Witch hunts.

Cait: Yeah, and you know, the witch trial, so it's very big here.

Sarah: Over here you know, the kids have drunk the kool-aid. Uh, and it's in every shop as well now.

Cait: There's a very funny, I know we're not, we're talking about Christmas, but there is a very funny, sustainable Halloween meme that says, don't buy plastic skeletons this year. Use sustainably sourced real ones,

Sarah: Uh, How very true crime you Cait.

Cait: But also don't, please don't do that. No one do that. That is a joke. Um, okay, what else? Oh, I have a fun Christmas fact about tinsel. Tinsel, as we know it today, is made from plastic, but that wasn't always the case. In 16 hundreds, early 16 hundreds, tinsel was actually made from real silver.

Sarah: What?

Cait: Mm-hmm. .

Sarah: Really? I thought you were gonna say woven flax or something. Gosh, that's a game for the rich.

Cait: Seriously. But then it, at some point it became, I don't know what exactly it was made out of, but it actually was banned in the United States because it contained lead and it was really toxic.

Sarah: But did you say the 16 hundreds?

Cait: Yeah, 16 hundreds for the real silver tinsel.

Sarah: That's interesting because the tradition of a Christmas tree only happened around the time of Queen Victoria. I do believe In UK that's how the Christmas tree became a thing. But obviously the Germans were doing it well before that.

Cait: Well, and before that, the Egyptians and the Romans actually decorated evergreen trees. to celebrate winter solstice

Sarah: Okay.

Cait: So the the history of decorating a tree goes back a long time but to your point right it was Prince Albert from Germany who gave gave his wife Queen Victoria the tree? And it kind of picked up from there.

Sarah: Yeah. And then there was a photo. That's why, because there weren't very many photos taken back in the day of Queen Victoria. And it was the family photo of them

underneath the Christmas tree. And then everybody was like, jeeppers, I need to get myself a tree.

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Cait: Here's another Christmas fun fact. It was illegal to celebrate Christmas in the colonies from 1659 to 1681, and it didn't even really become a holiday holiday until the 18 hundreds in the United States, ?

Sarah: Was that because of the Puritans? This has turned into quite the bloody history podcast.

Cait: It's fun history though. It's Christmas trivia. let's move on I wanna talk about food waste and then just general waste. Do you eat Brussels sprouts?

Sarah: I mean, it's not what I would choose to eat the tiny cabbage, but yeah, I've eaten them.

Cait: Oh, I love them.

Sarah: I think that's a weird thing when people say they love them. I can't get to that point. No.

Cait: Little balsamic vinegar and oil salt and pepper roast those. So good.

Sarah: This is like a recipe show as well today. it turns History, recipes. What else do you need?

Cait: It turns out quite a few people in the UK really, really like Brussels sprouts. So much so especially around Christmas, that 25% of the entire year's sprout sales happen the two weeks before Christmas, but only half of them are eaten.

Sarah: That makes so much sense. Especially if you've got kids in the house, they're never gonna eat those damn brusselsprouts.

Cait: They're so good though. Okay, so Americans throw away about 25% more trash, between Thanksgiving and New Year's. . So it's an extra 25 million tons or about 1 million extra tons per week during that time frame.

Sarah: That's a lot. Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm.

Cait: In the U.K. the GWP group found it's 3 million tons of general waste. That does not include food waste, plastic packaging, Christmas tree, cards or clothes. Now let's talk about some of the more specifics That does not include the 300,000 tons of card packaging. And card packaging, I think is like cardboard. Yep.

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Cait: I did not, GWP is very helpful in putting this into a visual for you.

Sarah: Aww you know I love a visual.

Cait: Yeah. It's enough to cover Big Ben 260,000 times.

Sarah: 260,000 times good luck unwrapping Big Ben after that.

Cait: When it comes to plastic packaging, it's about 114,000 tons or the weight of 650,000 reindeer. Turkey packaging alone is the equivalent to 30 blue whales. Foil like tin foil. Actually, I'll give you guess. If we're calculating in rhinos

Sarah: Mm-hmm

Cait: how many rhinos make up for the food? Waste foil. Not food foil.

Sarah: A lot of tonnage in a rhinos. Um, so I'm gonna say it is 100,000 Rhino os Oh,

Cait: I feel like I threw you off because everything else was in the hundreds of thousands. That was my bad.

Sarah: Okay, two Rhino os

Cait: Two thousands thousand So close

Sarah: I see. This is why this is just a shot in the dark every time. Imagine if one day I get it exactly right. I should win a prize. I would win a prize.

Cait: Here's, here's another question for you then. If every American family saved two feet of ribbon. Saved two feet from their packages. Mm-hmm. of ribbon. How many times could you wrap the planet with said ribbon?

Sarah: Yeah. I've got no clue. Uh, I'm gonna say 800 times. 800,000 times. 800,00. This is just

Cait: One. It's just one.

Sarah: Is it just one?

Cait: Yeah. .

Sarah: Oh my God. But that's America I hope NASA calls me yeah, they're like this woman. She is a human calculator. I need to get her.

Cait: Oh my gosh. , well, moving on to present.

When it comes to presents, and I know you did this as part of your challenge, which is to, uh, reuse wrapping paper or upcycle material or a box, right. You did this season one.

Sarah: Yeah. That was one of my very first ones.

Cait: Yeah, that's right. I think that was your first challenge, wasn't it?

Sarah: , and having said that, it's one that I've carried on.

Cait: Good. So if every family wrapped just three presents using a reused material or an upcycle material, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.

Sarah: It's a lot.

Cait: Yeah, it is a lot. Moving from waste to presents . Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, the US Postal Service, so this does not include private couriers, the US Postal Service delivers an estimated 910 million packages.

That was 2019. So that was even before the pandemic.

Sarah: Oh. It'll be so much worse now cuz people have got so used to it. Yeah, not going out and shopping.

Cait: Mm. It's also about 15 billion pieces of mail. So think about all the Christmas cards.

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Cait: and If I remember correctly, if you took all of the Christmas cards in the UK I think, it's enough Christmas cards to cover a football field 10 stories high.

Sarah: Wow. That's why you should use electronic cards.

Cait: Tip number one of the day.

Sarah: Oh, the other thing that you can do, is the seed cards, which are very popular now. You can plant the card and it turns into something, which is quite cute. But then I thought the other day when I was looking at those, you can't possibly send a card from the UK to the US that's a planted seed card because then you are sending non-native seeds. So you'll be getting an e-card is the point.

Cait: Hey, at least I'm getting something.

Sarah: Well, I'm terrible at Christmas cards. Expect nothing.

Cait: All right, let's talk about presents gifts and wrapping. So we talked a little bit more in depth on this on the, uh, episode three challenge of the season when I was talking about children and toys. So I'm not gonna repeat those numbers other than we know that about 80% of all toys end up in landfill.

This isn't just Christmas, this is just across the board. About 80% and 90% of toys on the market are made of plastic. So just keep that in mind when we're talking about gifts and Christmas season.

Sarah: One thing I was thinking about with gifts is a homemade gift if you give it to somebody who's not sustainably minded.

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: You're not read the room and you look like you're just being cheaper, nasty, you've gotta pick and choose knitted nipple warmers regardless.

Cait: Actually doesn't sound like, didn't, that doesn't sound like a bad gift. Um, I dunno. So I grew up in a family where it wasn't uncommon to get handmade gifts specifically for my grandparents. So that's always kind of been my upbringing. I'm trying to think about it like with my husband's family. Yeah, it's definitely different. But I will say over the years,, my mother-in-law, she, she likes to give clothing and my mother-in-law has wholeheartedly made the switch.

Originally it was just for me, like she might give me a sweater from a sustainable company, but she's actually made that switch for all of the females in the family now. So any clothing she gets from comes from sustainable companies. And so I'm happy to see that, you know, next year, the men.

Sarah: That's great.

Cait: I think.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cait: But let's talk about what happens when someone gets a gift that they don't like, which happens.

Sarah: Little re-gifting me thinks.

Cait: That would actually be the solution to this, um mm-hmm but some experts estimate that retailers throw away about a quarter of their returns. It essentially works out to about 5 billion pounds of landfill waste. And 15 million tons of carbon emission per year just from items that end up in the landfill like like new items that are returned. And that's, , more than the estimated economy of Austria.

Sarah: What? Yeah, they throw them away?

Cait: Mm-hmm.

Sarah: Is that because the packaging's broken or they just, so can't put it back out on the shelves?

Cait: There's actually a couple of reasons. One is yes, there could be damage not necessarily to the packaging, but that certainly can play into it. But to the item itself, if it's clothing, if it's been stained, electronics sometimes will get put on shelves as like an open box sale.

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Cait: But think about it, if you are shopping on Amazon, right, and you wanna buy Beats headphones or something like that, that retailer is not going to sell, in most cases an open box. The other reason too is with the cost of, cleaning, restocking, all of that, A lot of times it is actually cheaper for these companies to produce or buy new to then sell than it is to restock.

Sarah: That's just completely wasteful.

Cait: Yeah. I think people would be amazed like how much clothing ends up in landfills that is returns.

Sarah: Horrific. I think. Yeah.

Cait: And actually, we'll, we're gonna talk about that in season three, right? The thrift industry and returns. Mm-hmm. Yeah. It's a lot of waste. The other thing when it comes to waste and gifts around the holidays is wrapping paper. There may be an assumption that because it is paper, it can be recycled. Oftentimes, and actually specifically in the UK, they advocate for you to just throw it in the trash bin and not even to attempt to recycle it.

In the US it's about 4.6 million pounds a year of wrapping paper, and 2.3 million pounds of that ends up in landfill So it's about, it's about half of it. The reason for that is because wrapping papers specifically, you're looking for, the sturdier ones can have coatings on them. They can contain plastic. So if it has glitter, if it's glossy, , you can't recycle that. It's a plastic.

Sarah: . So if you were gonna buy wrapping paper, if that was your non-negotiable, I still wanna wrap my presents,

Cait: yeah.

Sarah: It's the brown paper or the recycled eco paper that you need to be looking for, right?

Cait: Yes. there is wrapping paper out there that you can recycle. You just really have to look at it, see what it's, what's in it. And again, if it's number one, just stay away from anything with glitter or metallic glossy mm-hmm. And then from there, you know, if it's a really thick paper and shiny, like, definitely look at the label and be a bit cautious.

I know that ribbons and bows. First off, we've had this conversation that my mom used to make us save them, which is great. I still do it.

Sarah: And I've started doing it because of your mom.

Cait: It's great. I have ribbons from, I think when I was a kid that are still in circulation.

Sarah: I love that.

Cait: Yeah. Some of 'em can be recycled, some of 'em can't. Again, it all depends.

Sarah: Now, here's a question I've got for you because I was thinking, if you're going with the natural recyclable paper sometimes people will try and pimp it up and I've seen people put stickers on it. Does that not automatically make it non-recyclable?

Cait: That is correct. It automatically makes it non-recyclable. I mean, if you're putting like a sprig of pine tree on there, fine.

Sarah: Oh, that's cute. Yeah, I like that.

Cait: A dried orange, you know, or something like that, fine.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cait: When my nieces were living with us, we had a rather large gift for, I don't remember who it was for, but anyways, it was like impossible to wrap it and honestly why? So we just left it in the box cause it was also very heavy and we took brown paper bags, like grocery store bags that we had covered it with the brown side you know, no logo facing up, and then just had my nieces draw all over it. Like draw Santa Claus or snowflakes and it was really cute.

Sarah: So can you reuse it if it's got coloring in felt on it? Can that be recycled?

Cait: Yes. Because you can recycle regular paper that has been written on with markers, with crayons, the whole deal.

Sarah: So you can pimp it up if you're very artistic?

Cait: Yeah. Or in a joke way, not artistic.

Sarah: That'll be me.

Cait: Let's talk about energy use because it's not something that when it comes to Christmas, that's discussed very often, but it's...

Sarah: No, that's true. I didn't think that was gonna be on the list. Yeah, let's go.

Cait: So, obviously during the holidays, energy usages spike. Contrary to popular belief, it is not the day before or even the day of Christmas, although there is a massive spike at 5:00 AM across the UK in the morning, Christmas morning cuz kids get up earlier. Interestingly enough, the day of tends to be a little bit lower because people don't have the TV on. Um

Sarah: okay.

Cait: But leading up to it, we see it a spike in tv, energy usage because people are watching , their holiday movies.

Sarah: Yeah

Cait: In the US we use more electricity on Christmas lights than some countries such as Ethiopia or El Salvador use in an entire year.

Sarah: Wow. That's crazy.

Cait: We use a lot. It's estimated around 6.6 billion kilowatt hours.

Sarah: That's the comedy of Christmas lights in New Zealand that they are put up for the children to see. Yeah. But for the kids to go around and see, you have to keep them up about three hours past their bedtime because it's the middle of summer and it doesn't get dark till about 10 o'clock. Oh, that's a, it's a completely wasted.

Cait: so one calculation did find that the holiday lights and displays use enough energy to power 400,000 homes for an entire year.

Sarah: Wow. And you think about we're going into an energy crisis in the UK and Europe. You probably are as well, I'd imagine. Are you?

Cait: Energy prices are skyrocketing.

Sarah: Right. Exactly. Yep. So, and Christmas is coming.

Cait: Yes. So let's go back to the olden days of candles. Just don't burn down the house.

Sarah: I feel like the best Christmases even visually that make you kind of get those warm cockles in your heart are the olden day Christmases. And that's why I love going to Christmas markets, the old fashioned Christmas markets where they sell whittled little wooden, ornaments for your tree.

Cait: That's not something we do well here; christmas markets, we really don't. I know in recent years they just started opening 'em up in Boston. But you'd think with that kind of New England vibe, you know, the snow cover, yeah. You would think that that would be something we'd excel at. And we do not. Okay. Trees, the great debate, fake or real. What do you use?

Sarah: Well, I thought I was doing the right thing and I went artificial.

Cait: Mm-hmm.

Sarah: because we use it over and over and over and over again. And it seemed wrong to be cutting down a tree and then come 12 days after Christmas as a tree graveyard on our street and that didn't seem like something I wanted to be part of, but I think doing a little of the old Google.

They're not that great.

Cait: No, they're not.

Sarah: Am I right?

Cait: So, right. So fake trees are made from PVC. In the United States there's around 10 million artificial trees that are purchased each season. So it's a lot. And one estimate puts that at 90% of them come from China. So we are shipping them on top of making them plastic. Of course we know the plastic cannot be recycled. It ends up in landfill. All that good stuff.

Sarah: I mean, and round and round we go.

Cait: Yeah, exactly. Not recyclable, unfortunately. And you know, of course it doesn't smell like a Christmas tree. That's personal preference, but I've seen people buy, then the plastic scent sticks you can put on the tree. Anyways, that's off subject.

Sarah: Which again, is kind of like, . Consumer, on top of consumer.

Cait: Yeah, exactly. so that being said, When it comes to real trees, because right, the concern is you're cutting down a tree, you know you're clearing a natural habitat. It can be mono cropped. When I say mono cropped, you know, it's just, it's a tree farm. So out of the estimated 350 to 500 million, trees growing on tree farms in the United States, only around 30 million of them are harvested each year for Christmas. And if it is done sustainably, it's done in a, what's the word I'm looking for? Essentially, if you're a good business person, you're not cutting all your trees one year. So that's good. When it also comes to the breakdown of like once you're done with the tree, if it ends up in a landfill, not great. Some people burn 'em. One of the better things you can actually do, and we're seeing an increase of this, is you can donate them to farms. So for instance, goats love pine trees. Uh, a lot of animals do So especially during the winter months when they may be looking for natural forage anyways, you can donate to a farm or there are different, uh, horticulture garden centers and even city programs that are now taking them and chipping them down to use in projects, which is good.

Sarah: Okay. Well, Can I tell you, I think you already know this, but I was very excited when I googled this little puppy today that you can, in the UK hire a Christmas tree and it gets delivered to you for 20 pounds. And this is the bit that really I'm kind of stuck on, that

you'll be able to help me with when they deliver it, you get it for whatever period, you decorate it, da, da, da, they then come and pick it up afterwards, and then they replant it...

Cait: mm-hmm.

Sarah: in January. How can, what the?

Cait: Yeah. , this is actually a massively growing sector. My understanding of this is that they come in pots and these are specialized pots that allow them to put it back in and allow a natural root growth. That is my understanding of them.

Sarah: That makes so much more sense than sawing it down I'm like, that's not gonna grow .

Cait: No, that's that. You're not resprouting that . But yeah, that's, I mean, that is an option. And there are some places I read there, you rent the same tree and over every year and you can essentially, you buy your tree and then you have your rental fee and every year you get to watch it to grow. And that's your family tree. And then once it's too big to be in your home, it gets retired on the tree farm.

Sarah: That's a sweet idea.

Cait: That's an option. So then let's, oh, the short of that is a real tree is better than a fake tree. But that being said, if you have a fake tree, best thing you can do is just keep reusing it, using it, you know, take care of it.

Sarah: Mm-hmm.

Cait: Hopefully by the time it is, time for it to be retired, we'll have more recycling programs out there that can help with that. Okay. Other tips aside from reuse your tree or buy a real tree. L e d Lights, that helps to save energy for your Christmas lights. Upcycle or recycle both gifts and wrapping papers, bows and ribbons, if you can. Don't over buy food.

Shop locally if you can for both food and gifts from smaller stores to help cut the shipping, emissions cost of not only the gifts, but the transportation of them as well. Same goes for food if you have that option. And then e-cards, you touched on that. Christmas e-cards are a great way to go. And then lastly, we're seeing a really big shift away from material gifts or cutting down of material gifts into gifting experiences. So tickets to a musical or, you know, a pedicure or a zoo outing. Something that will build memories, especially for children, because we know, if we look at how long they actually use a toy before they get bored with it, experiences tend to be a better investment.

Sarah: |Yeah. Yeah. We're all about the experiences. We've also got another couple of little Christmas traditions that we've used in the past as a family that I think are quite good little hacks.

Cait: Ooh. Tell.

Sarah: So I'm one of six kids, , so it's not like we would give our brothers and sisters present. We've all kind of, you know, grown out of that.

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: But there was a stage that we realized that we were all gifting a voucher to each other and it was the same amount of money going around and around and around. And then all of us were like, well, we really would rather not do that. So we would all put in, , a certain amount of money and give it to a Red Cross one year, or we'd pick a charity ,

Cait: I love that. And actually, you reminded me of something, talking about families when they're larger or just any family. But as you get older, right, as an adult, siblings

Sarah: mm-hmm.

Cait: or cousins, when you get together, whatever it is. What we do with my husband's family is we pick out of a hat so you only get one person and then every year it changes. So instead of buying 12 gifts

Sarah: Yeah,

Cait: you're buying one gift and then every year it changes.

Sarah: I like that. There's an even bit twist on that. That is my favorite game at Christmas.

Everybody puts in one gift into the sac that's wrapped and then you pull out a number.

Cait: Yes.

Sarah: One through 10. And then the person who gets number one is the one that you wanna get. So they choose a gift, and then the next person chooses it, but number one gets last and then steal number twos.

Cait: What is that called? I've done that when we get together with friends for Christmas parties.

Sarah: I have got no idea. It'll come to us as soon as we hit stop record.

Cait: I love that. All right. What else?

Sarah: I should preface this by saying my language of love is not gifts.

■ And definitely Gareth is the same. . We deliberately give each other terrible gifts.

Cait: Do you?

Sarah: Yeah. And it's funnier that way. But what I have done in the past is do the ones where you can buy like an immunization for a child or give a goat.

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: So gift those kind of experiences that are paying it forward.

Cait: Yep.

Sarah: Because that feels even more in the Christmas spirit sometimes, which is what it's all about at the end of the day.

Cait: I think that's great, especially as you get older and you realize you just don't need

Sarah: No, you don't need stuff. No, and I mean, it is about the language of love. If that's the way that you feel people can show you, then you know, and that's your thing, that's fine. But for me, it's definitely not that. Mm.

Cait: So gifts are my love language.

Sarah: Oh, see, there you go. If you know that about someone, make sure you put some effort in. But I bit, and I'm just gonna put myself out on a limb here, that the thought behind the present is more important to you than the actual gift.

Cait: Yes. Like, it's not about quantity, it is quality. And for Christmas, we do maybe one or two gifts, but it's things that I would want, but I would never buy for myself.

And I think the other thing is when it comes to, first off, we never, as much as I love gifts, like we don't do anniversaries, we don't do Valentine's Day. Like we just don't. The only thing I really appreciate though, on those days, is he'll write a card and then put the dog's paw prints on them and say it's like from everybody.

Sarah: So I That there's a lot of effort. You've got a lot of dogs.

Cait: Yeah.

Sarah: He's gonna need to get himself a massive A4 card

Cait: One year for Christmas, he got me a, a really nice scrabble board, like a wood scrabble board that, that turns and stuff. And there's a little metal gold plate on the front of it that says, Like Merry Christmas from, and then all the dogs' names.

I'm like, that is like, that's me. You know?

Sarah: That is very cute.

Cait: Should we talk about our highs and lows?

Sarah: Right? Go then.

Cait: I'll start with my low. So recently, well, a little while ago, reorganized the office, cleaned it out, you know, and I had quite a few electronic boxes, like just things, you know, from my iPad that I never got rid of. And it didn't dawn on me until I was getting ready for this show that I should have saved them to put my Christmas presents in.

Sarah: And then everybody's really excited that they're getting a new iPad and then they open it up and you've like, hand spun them some milk bottle warmer.

I dunno where I'm coming up with these gift ideas today. But no, I think that tells you...

Cait: I'm gonna, I'm gonna talk to your kids after the holidays and see what they, what your actual gifting. .

Sarah: Exactly.

Cait: What was your low.

Sarah: My low is one of my cats got really sick had lost a lot of weight. , and we've recently done a pet food episode and I'd changed all the food to be sustainable packaging, , try and be far more eco about that. But turns out he was just getting summer cat body ready, um, and being very picky about his food. And so I ended up having to buy the one brand that he will eat because he was wasting away. You know, guilty greenie fail, but the cat's alive.

Cait: The cat's still alive. It's funny you mentioned that because I did the same thing. I switched to all of our dog's food and I tried to do it gradually. I did not do it incredibly gradually though. , it resulted in a lot of upset stomachs.

Sarah: Yeah.

Cait: And finally I thought, nope. Back to the old back We go back, we go. So

Sarah: yeah, I can, it's hard. I mean it's very hard when it's your, your pets. So what was your high then?

Cait: My high was also part of my office clean out. I had some extra box lights that I'm not using anymore. So I put them on my community page and now someone has two box lights for their studio, photo studio.

Sarah: Well done. That's a beautiful one. Yeah.

Cait: What was yours?

Sarah: Neighborhood swap. So mine is food related. So we've been doing, , these meal kits because just time and trying to get the kids to cook and all be part of it and make the household run a bit smoother. And I had a tiny little bit of , yogurt that hadn't been used in it and I was like, I'm not gonna waste that. So I made myself flat bread out of the yogurt and used every single item that was in the food thing that week without anything going to waste, which I was super proud of.

Cait: Sorry, you gotta clarify one thing for me. Hold it yet. You made bread out of the yogurt.

Sarah: Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm.

Cait: That's new.

Sarah: Why are you looking at me like that?

Cait: I don't, I've just never heard of that. That's great.

Sarah: No, it's too, it's so simple. So you just add flour. I can't even remember if it was self raising. I don't think it was. So you make , , a dough out of it and it's super light and super silky texture. You don't need to work out measurements or anything. However much yogurt you've got, you just put, keep adding in the flour and then you put it in a pan, maybe with a bit of olive oil and just it bakes in the pan so you roll it really thin. It's a flatbread.

Cait: So it's just yogurt and flour. That's it?

Sarah: Just yogurt and flour.

Cait: What kind of yogurt are we talking? Like a Greek yogurt?

Sarah: Greek, yeah. You definitely don't wanna be using like a tuty, fruity summer of fruits mix. That's gonna be

Cait: a whole different actually. I bet. I bet that could be good.

I'm just thinking like vanilla's not really gonna hit ci. Oh, cinnamon maybe. I don't know.

Sarah: . Anyway, I haven't got any more recipes for you, but that's the one that I did make, so I felt quite good about that.

Cait: Your high definitely trump's mine this week. That's awesome. And I get a recipe outta it, so I'm gonna try it.

Sarah: There we go. Another episode down,

Cait: another one down. Join us next episode for more of the good, the bad, the laughable as we tackle our own sustainability journeys.

Sarah: And if you've enjoyed the show, do you remember that you can help us spread our sustainability babble by going to Apple Podcasts and leaving a five star review or whatever your platform allows you to do that you'll listen to this podcast on.

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Cait: And until then, stay curiously green.

Sarah: Bye bye.