

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

Green Tip: Giving thanks to the planet



Thanksgiving may mark the beginning of the holiday season, but it isn't always just turkey, stuffing and pie for the planet. From Thanksgiving to New Years Day, household waste increases by more than 25 percent ([Recycle Works](#)).

So, start your holiday season off on the green foot by making a few small, eco-friendly changes this Turkey Day. It's easy to get the entire family involved, have fun and decrease the burden on your wallet as well.

Shopping for Food - When shopping for food, keep two words in mind: *organic* and *local*. These keywords will guarantee a fresh, more nutritious meal. If you **buy local**, not only can you enjoy fresh food, but you will also support your local economy. And of course, remember to bring your own reusable shopping bags to the grocery

store.

Crowd Control - At least 28 billion pounds of edible food is wasted each year – more than 100 pounds per person. To reduce your waste this Thanksgiving plan ahead and practice portion control. [Use Less Stuff](#) created a handy list of approximate per person food and drink portions:

- Turkey- 1 pound
- Stuffing- ¼ pound
- Sweet potato casserole- ¼ pound
- Green beans- ¼ pound
- Cranberry relish- 3 tablespoons
- Pumpkin pie- 1/8 of a 9 inch pie

Do Something Fun! - Instead of firmly planting yourself in front of the TV for the day, consider getting some fresh air or playing a board game. Take advantage of the time together with friends and family while decreasing your energy usage.

Traveling Tips - According to Use Less Stuff, if each family reduced holiday gasoline consumption by 1 gallon (about 20 miles), we would reduce [greenhouse gas emissions](#) by 1

Utilities Project Development • 55 Stony Point Road • Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Email: environmentalprojects@srcity.org

Website: www.srcity.org/environmentalprojects

Find us on Facebook: Environmental Projects & Twitter: SantaRosaGreen

million tons. Invite nearby friends and family and neighbors to your house for Thanksgiving dinner and encourage them to do the same.

If you must go over the river and through the woods to Grandmother's house for Thanksgiving, turn down the thermostat and turn off the lights to save energy while you're gone.

Setting the Table - There are many options when it comes to [table setting](#), all dependent upon how many guests will be present at your Thanksgiving celebration. If it is going to be a small gathering, get out your nice china for the occasion. Cloth napkins are also a plus.

If you're expecting a big crowd, organize it like a potluck and ask your guests to bring dishes and silverware for themselves. If disposable place settings are your only choice, opt for compostable napkins and plates. The average dishwasher uses between 7 and 15 gallons of water per cycle. After the meal, be sure to fill the dishwasher to capacity before running it to save water and energy.

Crafty Decorations (Yes, You Can Do It!) - Add a little extra elegance to your table with homemade decorations. Most materials can be found in your craft cupboard or backyard. Here are some ideas:

- Acorn napkin ties
- Dried leaf place cards
- Corn or leaf print place mats
- Pinecone turkeys
- Painted gourds
- Festive fall arrangements of pumpkins or corn cobs
- Make your own [cornucopia](#)



Lose the Leftovers - Once the party is over, it's time to decide what to do with all that leftover food. Don't forget to donate your leftovers to a food bank or nearby homeless shelter. And remember to [compost your food scraps](#).

If you decided to buy your Thanksgiving supplies in bulk, the containers from your various products are perfect for storing large quantities of leftovers. Make sure your guests leave with a portion of extra food to take home. After all, one of the best Thanksgiving traditions is noshing on leftover turkey sandwiches and mashed potatoes for lunch the following weekend.

Recycling Isn't a Chore - Last, but not least, [get back to the basics](#) and recycle. Encourage your guests to pitch in and clearly mark recycling bins. Recycling all packaging, as well as any beverage containers, will significantly reduce the number of times you have to take the trash out, as well as the amount of garbage you send to the landfill.

*This article was adapted from [8 Easy Green Thanksgiving Tips](#) by Lauren Hasler

Utilities Project Development • 55 Stony Point Road • Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Email: environmentalprojects@srcity.org

Website: www.srcity.org/environmentalprojects

Find us on Facebook: Environmental Projects & Twitter: SantaRosaGreen