

Holiday Sustainability Tips

From uneaten leftovers to discarded wrapping paper, the holidays come with a lot of waste. In fact, from Thanksgiving to New Year's, Americans produce 25 percent more waste than average. But with a little planning and intention, we can reduce our footprint while still experiencing the joy of coming together with family and friends.



When Cooking and Eating:

- **Use this [Guest-Imator tool](#)** to adjust your ingredients and portions accordingly to help plan your shopping trips and avoid wasted food.
- **Send guests home with leftovers.** Everyone appreciates having the next day's meals ready to go, and it ensures all that delicious food gets eaten! Have guests bring empty containers, or reuse empty food containers you've saved and cleaned.
- **Remember to compost your food scraps.** Keep a small tub near your cutting board to collect vegetable trimmings, then simply dump into your curbside compost bin. Go one step further and save those onion peels, carrot skins, and celery tops in the freezer for a [delicious veggie stock](#).

When Giving:

- **Try second-hand first.** Shopping at vintage or thrift stores, or your local buy-nothing group, not only saves money, but keeps stuff out of the landfill.
- **Shop from local stores if possible,** and support ones that focus on sustainable, long-lasting goods. Try to avoid buying online which creates additional packaging and transportation waste.
- **Give experiences,** like a gift card to a museum or a favorite local restaurant, or give home cooked meals, baked goods, or home made treats to share with neighbors, family, and friends.
- **Give back.** Along with reducing our own wasted food over the holidays, there are also many ways to support essential local food organizations that help nourish our communities throughout the year. [Here is a list of local organizations to get started.](#)



When Wrapping:

- **Skip the store bought wrapping paper,** and get crafty with repurposed materials you probably have around the house. Paper bags, newspaper, and fabric make beautiful options.
- If you're giving the gift of homemade goodies this year, [repurposed glass jars and containers](#) work wonderfully.



When Tidying Up:

- **Recycle correctly** by only putting what is allowed in your bins. Many common items like metallic wrapping paper and ribbons do not belong in the recycling bin. Visit our [RE:Source guide](#) to find out what goes where in your city.
- If you celebrate with a tree, be sure to remove all decorations, stands, and artificial snow before composting. [Check with your city](#) to find out curbside pickup times and instructions.
- If it's time to move some things on, do so with intention: many items like clothing, furniture, and toys can either be [repaired or donated for reuse](#).