

Don't Trash the Holidays

Did you know that the amount of trash we create between Thanksgiving and Christmas is 25 percent more than normal? Also, more edible food is wasted during the holiday season than during any other time of the year. For example, if every American throws away just one bite of turkey with gravy, 8 million pounds of food will be wasted. (Facts courtesy of the Use Less Stuff Report: <http://www.use-less-stuff.com>)

The holiday season is a wonderful time to get together with friends and family, overindulge just a little and have a good time. But, just because it's the holidays, don't let down your environmental guard. Do your best to reduce waste through the holiday season.

Holiday Recycling and Waste Reduction Tips

- Planning ahead is the key to a less wasteful holiday season. Start now!
- Don't let your eyes get bigger than your belly. Take a little bit of food at a time and then go back for seconds. This way you will make the cook feel good and you won't waste food.
- Buy durable decorations for the holidays. There are plenty of Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations that will last for many seasons.
- Plan ahead for holiday gifts. Find out what people really want before you buy. Get gift certificates so that people can pick what they like or make sure you get a gift receipt from the store so that the gift can be returned instead of thrown away.
- Buy holiday cards printed on recycled paper. Or send holiday postcards; they use less paper than a card and envelope.
- Use the Sunday comics, old magazines or an outdated map to wrap gifts in. If you use a magazine try to match the article to the person you are giving the gift to.
- Get a durable product to wrap gifts in like a bath towel, sheets or canvas bags. They also double as useful gifts.
- Purchase a live Christmas tree that can be planted in the spring. You can dig it up each year and then replant it. If you have a fresh, cut tree that cannot be replanted, recycle it through local holiday tree recycling programs.
- Put out a recycling bin for bottles and cans at your holiday parties.
- Use cloth napkins while entertaining. They are reusable and can be festive.
- Rent or borrow extra place settings instead of buying disposable plates.
- Give reusable gifts, such as coffee mugs, refillable pens, or canvas shopping bags.
- If you buy gifts that require batteries, also get that person some rechargeable batteries and a charger to go along with it.
- Make a financial contribution or volunteer your time to a favorite charity in honor of a friend or family member.
- To avoid waste and excess buying, make a budget and a shopping list and stick to them.
- Remember, it's the thought that counts.
- As a New Year's resolution, pledge to recycle more and to buy recycled products.

Happy Holidays!