

Thanksgiving: Ten ways to reduce food waste

The Worldwatch Institute gives ten simple tips on reducing food waste.

Jordan Helton *November 23, 2011 12:46*

Families enjoy free Thanksgiving meals in downtown Los Angeles, Calif., on Nov. 26, 2008. (Jewel Samad/AFP/Getty Images)

With many families in the United States celebrating Thanksgiving this weekend and other holidays just around the corner, it's inevitable that some of the food enjoyed will end up as waste in the garbage can. According to [Worldwatch Institute](#),

Americans generate at least 5 million tons of waste between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day each year.

In an attempt to change some of the practices that lead to the overwhelming amount of leftovers and waste, the organization has released a list of their top ten tips on reducing food waste this holiday season.



1. Be realistic.

"Plan out how much food you and your guests will realistically need, and stock up accordingly," the institute wrote in its tip list.

2. Plan ahead.

The institute suggests creating a shopping list for the farmers' market or grocery store to make impulse buys less likely.

3. Go small.

A few tricks like using smaller serving utensils or plates encourages people to take less food and reduces the amount of leftovers on plates.

4. Encourage self-serve.

Simply put, allow guests to pick and choose what they would like to eat.

5. Store leftovers safely.

Preserve food by storing them in smaller containers, which makes them more convenient for easy meals. The US Department of Agriculture recommends storing hot foods right away if they have already been out for two hours.

6. Compost food scraps.

Composting can be quick and easy, and the extra food scraps can be great fertilizer for garden soils.

7. Create new meals.

If composting doesn't work, browse Love Food Hate Waste's creative recipes to make use of your vegetable peels.

8. Donate excess.

"The charity group Feeding America partners with over 200 local food banks across the United States, supplying food to more than 37 million people each year," according to Worldwatch Institute.

9. Support food-recovery programs.

Look up food-rescue organizations in your area, like New York City's City Harvest.

10. Give gifts with thought.

When giving good, try canned or dried foods that aren't highly perishable.