

## The Unwanted Holiday Guest: Food Waste

It is hard to think about the holiday season and not have food front of mind.

Did you know that approximately **40 percent of all food produced in the U.S. never gets eaten?**

In fact, **between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, Americans waste 25 percent more than during the rest of the year.** This means that during the holidays, millions of pounds of uneaten turkey, gravy, green beans, mashed potatoes and other seasonal trimmings end up in the trash.



What is the harm in putting wasted food in the trash?

**Source reduction (wasting less) provides the biggest environmental benefit.**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency states: ***source reduction of food waste provides more than 20 TIMES the greenhouse gas reduction benefits than composting food waste.*** Food waste reduction also saves money, conserves energy and resources and prevents pollution!

Some easy ideas to incorporate for reducing food waste in your home over the holidays:

- **Shop your fridge first!** Cook or eat what you already have before shopping.
- **Take a head count** - Have an estimate of how many people you will be hosting. During the holidays, we tend to over prepare food out of excitement. If you find yourself trying to give guests several containers to take home, you bought too much.
- **Inventory** your refrigerator and cupboards to avoid buying food you have on hand.
- **Make a shopping list** and stick to it: buy only what you need and no more than you expect to use
- **Store food properly** - Keep your meats, drinks and vegetables in the right areas of your fridge.
- Search the internet for **recipe suggestions using leftovers**; plan an “eat the leftovers night” each week
- Don't forget about your **freezer!** Leftovers can come in handy when you have no time to cook.

**'Tis the season ... to have a sustainable holiday!**

You may know this from looking at the bins in your home, but from November through February trash and recycling volumes increase by as much as 25%. It's no secret that we use – and waste – more during the holiday season than at any other time of the year.

There are many easy ways to reduce, reuse and recycle that will lessen that impact and insure your family will have less to put to the curb this year:



- ❖ **Give an experience!** Outdoor trips, lessons of all kinds, tickets and gift certificates will make a memory - while making less waste.
- ❖ **Give the gift of time!** A trip to a movie theatre or attraction, a certificate for a walk in the park, babysitting for a harried parent, or homemade meal for a family will be appreciated after gifts are opened.
- ❖ **Give an investment!** Contribute to a 529 plan or buy Savings Bonds. Even a small amount each year really adds up over time. Make a card from recycled materials to reveal your gift.
- ❖ **Give a gift that keeps on giving!** Wrap gifts in items that can be reused, such as a reusable bag, a scarf, or a backpack. Reuse cardboard shipping boxes for gifts – and then recycle curbside.

**Need more information to help your family Recycle Right over the holidays?  
Request a packet of materials, including a recycling magnet at  
[www.monroecounty.gov/recycling](http://www.monroecounty.gov/recycling).**



The Monroe County /  
Waste Management  
**ecopark** will be **CLOSED**

**Saturday, November 27**  
**Saturday, December 25**  
**Saturday, January 1, 2022**