

GOING GREEN IN THE KITCHEN

I found some excellent tips from a variety of sources on going green in the kitchen. I know some are repeated from previous tips, but it doesn't hurt to be reminded of some of the simple things we can do to help the environment.

1. Ditch the Bottles

Bottled water is pricey and uses a lot of fuel to transport, as well as to make and store all those bottles. Use what comes out of your tap instead with a filter.

2. Buy Local

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, most produce in the United States travels an average of 1,500 miles before being sold. Reduce shipping by rediscovering the fresh bounty of your surrounding area. In the summer, we can shop at farmer's markets, but all year round, check where your produce is from. Opt for produce and even groceries that are produced closer to us rather than buying something that comes from New Zealand, etc.

3. Dispose of Disposables

Instead of relying on single-use containers, get real dishes, and wash them! The resources saved will really add up.

4. Banish Excess Packaging

Buy things in larger sizes if you know you'll use them. Try to select items that have less plastic and extra filler stuffed with them.

5. Eat Less Meat

Modern meat is energy- and resource-intensive, and factory farms are huge polluters. Eating lower on the food chain reduces those problems.

6. Oven

- Don't open the oven door to check on a dish - use the oven light instead (20 percent of the heat can be lost each time you open the oven door).
- Keep preheating to a minimum.
- Turn the oven off before cooking is complete (depending on the dish, up to 15 minutes). The heat in the oven will continue to cook the dish until finished.
- If you need to self-clean the oven, plan to do it after cooking a meal while the oven is already hot, requiring less energy to raise the temperature to a higher level.

7. Stovetop

- Match the pan size to the element size.
- Use the least amount of water and the smallest size pan possible. Otherwise you're wasting energy to heat up excess metal or excess water.
- After you've finished baking, turn off the oven and open its door to let the heat into your kitchen. You'll be amazed by how long the extra warmth lasts.

8. Dishwasher

- Run the dishwasher when full; it requires the same amount of energy for a full load as it does for a half load.
- Use the "no heat" drying option.
- Don't wash dishes twice. Although it depends upon the age of your dishwasher, most dishwashers can get your dishes clean without rinsing them first by hand

9. Refrigerator

- Let hot foods cool to room temperature before putting them in the fridge. Otherwise the fridge works even harder to bring the temperature down.
- Keep the freezer full. The more air you displace with food and beverages, the less cold air you lose when you open the freezer door.

10. Other Appliances

- Plug countertop appliances into a power strip that can be turned off after use, saving the energy that would be used by the appliances when in "standby mode." (Depending upon

how often you use your microwave, the microwave's digital clock could use more energy than the microwave oven itself.)

- You can also simply unplug appliances when you're done using them.