

## Easy Tips to Make Reducing Food Waste Your New Holiday Tradition

**D**elicious food shared with family, friends, and coworkers is a hallmark of the holiday season. Our favorite foods have the power to bring back warm memories and build new traditions.

Unfortunately, a lot of that food goes to waste this time of year, and the impacts are significant. For starters, food waste takes a big bite out of our budgets. Studies show the typical American consumer throws out about 30% of the food purchased every year, adding up to a whopping \$1,300 per person! Imagine how many holiday-concerts, sports, or airline tickets that would buy. That's why the nonprofit earthday365 has launched the Too Good To Waste campaign to show the links between food waste, climate change, and saving your family money.

In landfills, decomposing food harms our planet by producing methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. All



the labor, water, land use, and fuel required to grow and transport the food goes to waste as well.

"There are so many reasons why we go overboard during the holidays. As the weather turns cold, food signifies warmth and comfort. We want our tables to feel bountiful," says Dr. Jess Watson, Executive Director of earthday365. "But many of us don't know the best ways to properly store certain foods, how long leftovers can be kept, or what that 'use by' date on the label real-

ly means. We're trying to help provide that education."

Fortunately, making just a few small, easy changes in our shopping and cooking habits can add up to big personal savings while reducing our global footprint. Start with one or two steps, then gradually add others. Here are some ideas:

**Plan meals:** How many people are coming to dinner, and how many does each recipe feed?

**Make a shopping list—then stick to it!** Don't shop when hungry to avoid impulse buys.

**Understand labels:** "Best If Used By" does not mean the food expires or is unsafe to eat on that date, only that peak flavor or quality may start to decline.

**Plan what to do with extras:** Label and freeze leftovers and/or send them home with guests.

**Get creative with leftovers:** Line ramekins with leftover mashed potatoes, then fill with meat, vegetables and gravy for shepherd's pies. Add rice or noodles to beaten eggs to make a

breakfast frittata.

Save those scraps! Make broth for soups out of veggie trimmings, a turkey or chicken carcass, and even hard parmesan rinds. It's so much more delicious and nutritious than broth from a carton or can!

**Compost:** Give those spent fruit and veggie scraps new life, along with eggshells, used coffee grounds and tea leaves.

Want to learn more? Take a free class from food and lifestyle writer Pat Eby called "Got Abundance? Making the Most of Food"! Just in time for the holidays, you'll get tips for finding imperfect yet perfectly good foods at bargain prices, best storage practices, and delicious ways to repurpose leftovers. The class goes from 10am to noon on Saturday, November 12 at the Thomas Dunn Learning Center, 3001 Gasconade Street.

For more information, please visit our website [www.earthday-365.org](http://www.earthday-365.org). This holiday season, remember: Good food is #TooGoodToWaste!

## Home Sweet Home Furnishes Hope For Families and the Environment

**I**n 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency reported that Americans generated over 12 million tons in furniture waste, and over 80% of it unfortunately ended up in landfills. This commonly overlooked problem wreaks havoc on the environment, as furniture often cannot be recycled, and the "fast furniture" trend encourages consumers to purchase inexpensive pieces that just aren't built to last.

However, the local nonprofit Home Sweet Home is doing its part to keep as much furniture and household items out of area landfills as possible.

Home Sweet Home was founded in 2015 after its Executive Director Betsy Reznicek realized the great need for a community furniture bank in the St. Louis area. She witnessed people transitioning out of homelessness, escaping abusive living situa-



tions, and immigrating to the United States without the basic furniture and household items they needed for a fresh start.

Reznicek envisioned a warehouse of donated items where clients could shop in a retail-like experience, choosing couches, bedding, dishes, and more based on their personal tastes, preferences,

and needs. Over the last seven years, Home Sweet Home has served over 3,800 families, and it continues to expand its reach each year.

When furniture is donated to Home Sweet Home, clients benefit, but so does the planet. In fact, 600 tons of donated furniture and household items were re-honed and kept out of landfills in just 2021! The nonprofit is on track to re-hone more than 700 tons in 2022. In fact, since Home Sweet Home started tracking data in 2017, the number totals more than 2,200 tons!

What's more, when Home Sweet Home receives items that are broken or otherwise unusable, staff members and volunteers make sure they are forwarded to area recycling centers. Currently, this list includes electronics, linens, metal, and cardboard.

Sometimes the nonprofit receives items it can-

not accept for clients. These donations are then forwarded onto other nonprofit organizations like The St. Louis Crisis Nursery or a resale boutique called Miriam Switching Post located right next door.

There's also an onsite warehouse where handy volunteers can refurbish broken furniture and make it usable again.

Home Sweet Home's goal is to have as little waste as possible, and you can help!

If you have unused furniture or household items, Home Sweet Home would love to receive them. You can drop off donations Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at 290 Hanley Industrial Court in Brentwood, Missouri. If you have items too large to fit in your vehicle, you can schedule a pickup.

For more information, including a list of accepted items, visit [www.homesweethomestl.org](http://www.homesweethomestl.org).

## Missouri Kids Unplugged Promotes Less Time With Electronics, More Time Outdoors

**M**issouri Kids Unplugged stands by its original mission we set out on 8 years ago with getting kids and families outdoors and unplugged. Our goal is to educate as many people of the physical and mental health impacts caused by the nonstop use of electronic gadgets, give them healthy alternatives and resources to assist them in changing the course of their future.

These alternatives will include offering seminars on fishing, hiking, building skills (thru a partnership with Home Depot), recycling, gardening, wildlife education, animals (interaction with Tales for Tails, World Bird Sanctuary, Jefferson County K9 Units), and more. Resources will include partnerships with St. Louis Science Center, CHADS (Communities Healing Adolescent Depression and Suicide), Conservation Dept., St.



Louis-Jefferson Solid Waste Recycling program, St. Louis Cardinals Cares program, and so many additional entities we don't have space for.

The past couple years, MKU has ... Bass Pro shops donates used fishing equip-

ment that is part of a trade in program to buy new equipment. MKU staff reworks this equipment and gives hundreds of free working fishing poles away to anyone that wants to try fishing. In 2022, MKU picked up nearly 1,400 rods and reels to be repaired and given away.

**MKU Recycling Road Show.** MKU staff travels to local schools, libraries and to events to make presentations on why you should and how you can recycle old electronics. We showcase old electronics that most children have never seen such as bag phones, rotary phones, Walkman's, cd players, etc. and explain how old technology that isn't used anymore can be properly recycled into new I-phones, laptops, cars etc. as opposed to being thrown away and polluting our earth!

St. Louis Science Center STEAM weekend at the science center, they did presentations on electronics recycling and how to get involved in the

outdoors.

MKU sponsored a special day for the local YMCA summer school and the St. Louis Science Center YES program (Youth Exploring Science), where they enjoyed a day of fishing, building, recycling, and outdoor education.

**MKU RECYCLED 9.75 TONS OF ELECTRONICS FROM MARCH 2021 to JUNE OF 2022**

For more information on MKU's programs and recycling, visit [www.missourikidsunplugged.org](http://www.missourikidsunplugged.org).



## America Recycles Day Is November 15 & Every Day

**A**merica Recycles Day was started in 1997 by the National Recycling Coalition to encourage Americans to commit to recycling.

We've come a long way since then. Let's take this day to reflect on what's been done, think about doing more, and do as much as we can! And if you are just beginning, there are many



ways we can do our part! Take a look around and see the possibilities.

We can recycle more, reduce the amount of waste generated, buy products made from recycled materials, and refurbish or repair when possible.

Maybe start composting, learn more about what can and can't be recycled, reuse what we can, encourage others to participate, and much more!

It's not just a day, it's everyday!

The St. Louis - Jefferson Solid Waste Management District is a regional agency that was created in 1993 to assist the public, private and nonprofit sectors in establishing and expanding programs for recycling and waste reduction. The service area includes the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, Jefferson County and St. Charles County. Funding for this program is provided by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. For more information visit [www.swmd.net](http://www.swmd.net) or call 314-645-6753.