



How to Host a Sustainable Holiday Party

Description



It's the most wonderful time of the year, and your calendar is probably filling up with holiday parties and festive gatherings. While a time for enjoying food and sharing gifts with loved ones, the holidays are also a disproportionately wasteful time; between Thanksgiving and New Year's, it's estimated that Americans produce 25% more waste than any other time of the year. No matter what the occasion,

here's how to throw a holiday party that's both festive and better for the planet. Get Cooking – Instead of buying plasticized snack and dessert trays from the grocery store on unrecyclable platters – or pre-made meals and main dishes from the frozen section – make as much party food as you're able. The processing, packaging, and transportation of food all use energy and contribute to global greenhouse gas emissions. Consider a pre-made vegetable platter sold at a grocery store: the vegetables are prepared and assembled, the dish is packaged in plastic, transported by truck or plane, and then kept refrigerated until it's sold. According to FoodPrint, about two billion pounds of food are wasted during the processing/manufacturing stage alone, usually in the form of edible portions of food being trimmed off and not reused for animal feed or otherwise repurposed. By making the same vegetable platter yourself, you create no extra waste from packaging, have the option to choose local and sustainable ingredients, and can use those ingredients as efficiently as possible. Prepping food at home also gives you liberty to utilize ingredients you might already have on hand, rather than shopping for entirely new things. Not to mention, ultra-processed foods are generally much less nutritious than fresh, homemade dishes. Of course, you might not be able to make absolutely everything for a party – potato chips, crackers, and bread might not be up your alley – but think about what you can make. Instead of jarred salsa or packaged cookies, try your hand at making them yourself, or ask guests to contribute a homemade dish. Main dishes and appetizers are a good place to focus your energy.

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