



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Tim Goncharoff

Resource Planner

831-454-2970

### Go Green for the Holidays

Wednesday, Nov. 15, is “America Recycles Day,” an opportunity to renew efforts to build a greener, more sustainable planet. As we head into the holidays, the County of Santa Cruz would like remind residents of simple, easy steps to make your holidays green.

#### **Buy Local and Organic**

When heading to the store, think about where food comes from. Organic food is raised without harmful chemicals and is better for you and the environment. Buying local means getting the freshest possible food and helps support local farmers, producers and grocers. Don't forget your local farmer's market!

#### **Avoid Unwanted Leftovers**

At least 28 billion pounds of food is wasted in the U.S. each year — more than 100 pounds per person. One of the best ways to reduce waste this Thanksgiving is to plan ahead and cook only what you need. Store any leftovers in reusable containers.

#### **Get Outdoors**

Instead of spending holidays in front of the TV, take advantage of time together with friends and family while decreasing your energy usage by getting some fresh air or playing a board game. A walk by the ocean or a hike in your favorite state park is a great way to burn off that second slice of pie!

#### **Reduce Driving**

According to Use Less Stuff, if each family reduced holiday gasoline consumption by 1 gallon (about 20 miles), we would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1 million tons. Invite nearby friends and family and neighbors to your house for



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Thanksgiving dinner and encourage them to do the same. If you must go over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house for Thanksgiving, turn down the thermostat and turn off the lights to save energy while you're gone.

## Set the Table

Instead of paper plates, use dishware (or, if it is going to be a small gathering, get out the nice china). Cloth napkins are a plus. For big crowds, organize a potluck and ask guests to bring their own dishes and silverware. If disposable place settings are a must, opt for biodegradable and compostable utensils, napkins and plates.

## Crafty Decorations (Yes, You Can Do It!)

Add a little extra elegance to the holiday table with homemade decorations. Most materials can be found in your craft cupboard or backyard. Have the kids chip in with a pre-Thanksgiving craft day. The following ideas will get the creative juices flowing:

- Acorn napkin ties
- Dried leaf place cards
- Corn or leaf print place mats
- Pinecone turkeys
- Painted gourds
- Festive fall arrangements of pumpkins or corn cobs
- Make your own cornucopia

Make sure any new tablecloths or other decorative items will be reused in the future. Some decorations can even become family traditions.

## Donate Leftovers

Once the party is over, donate leftovers to a food bank or nearby homeless shelter. And remember to compost food scraps. Not composting yet? There's never been a better time to start. It's easy!

## Recycling Isn't a Chore

Last but not least, get back to the basics and recycle. Clearly mark recycling bins, and encourage guests to pitch in. Recycling all packaging, as well as any beverage containers, will reduce the amount of garbage sent to the landfill.

For more information, go to [www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org) or [www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org).