

A guide for everyone who loves eating and wants to reduce their “foodprint”



Mastering the Art *of* Sustainable Cooking

With top stories crowd-sourced from a nationwide contest
and judged by culinary and conservation heavyweights

Foreword by Alice Waters

Introduction by Gary Hirshberg





Mastering the Art of Sustainable Cooking



Foreword

Food is something precious. It represents us, our health and our relationship with nature. Sadly, what we are eating is neither good for us nor is it sustainable for the land. Paying attention to the way we eat can help us appreciate where our food comes from and reduce our environmental impact.

—Alice Waters, chef; author; Founder, Chez Panisse Foundation



Many thanks

The average American's carbon footprint from food is as big as that of their car or their home. As I pondered the immensity of that, I considered what Brighter Planet could do to deepen the conversation on ways to reduce climate impact through food.

Voila - the Mastering the Art of Sustainable Cooking contest was borne. Thanks in no small part to “Julie & Julia” reminding us of the power of food. We tip our hat to Julia Child for her transformational cookbook, to Michael Pollan's provocative “In Defense of Food,” and to Alice Waters's revolutionizing the use of fresh, local ingredients.

Thank you to the hundreds of entrants who shared their personal stories. And to all those foodies and environmentalists who voted for their favorites. A special thank you to bloggers who spread the word as only they can about Mastering the Art of Sustainable Cooking. Thank you also to Stonyfield Farms, Guyot Designs, EatingWell Magazine and To-Go Ware for weekly prizes. And of course, to our expert judges who selected the winners.

We hope the practical stories in this cooking guide inspire you and that our [white paper](#) on food-related carbon emissions informs you. We welcome you to visit brighterplanet.com/conservation to share your experiences about sustainable living.

Bon Appetit!

—Patti Prairie, CEO, Brighter Planet



Mastering the Art of Sustainable Cooking



Introduction

This wonderful initiative promotes a message we believe in: that there is a connection between your health, healthy food and a healthy planet. Organic farming methods are better environmentally and better for us as well: recent studies show organic foods higher in beneficial antioxidants known to slow or prevent heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

Organic milk, fruit and vegetables contain more antioxidants and in the case of milk, more healthy fatty acids than conventional. Add to this news the fact that organic farming practices keep our water, soil and air free of toxic, persistent pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Thanks to initiatives like Brighter Planet's unique cooking contest, this healthy food-healthy planet connection can really hit home by helping people realize that their food choices protect the Earth as well as benefit their family's health.

—Gary Hirshberg, President and CEO, Stonyfield Farms



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“Brighter Planet Says”
bubbles will explain why the
action helps reduce your
carbon footprint!



Mastering the Art of Sustainable Cooking

Judging Panel



The stories, tips and recipes within this guide were crowd-sourced from a nationwide contest.

Judges chose winners from the 15 entries with the most votes. Winning entries are marked with an asterisk.

Alice Waters

Chef; author; Founder, Chez Panisse Foundation; Vice President, Slow Food International

Amy Trubek

Chef and local food pioneer, Vermont Fresh Network

Ana Sofia Joanes

Director & Producer, FRESH

Bill McKibben

Author and journalist, co-founder 350.org

Gary Hirshberg

Founder and CEO, Stonyfield Farms

Lisa Gosselin

Editorial Director, Eating Well Magazine

Patti Prairie

CEO, Brighter Planet

Zachary Cohen

Food television writer & producer, Farm to Table



The American Carbon “Foodprint”



America is starting to wake up to the realization that the food we eat is unhealthy for us and for the environment. The modern food system is complex and its impacts are far-reaching. The greater the gulf that separates us from the life cycle of the food we eat, and the more that food is treated as nothing more than a commodity, the greater the consequences. Fortunately, at a time when our food system is straining the sustainability of our planet, we’re also seeing a flourishing of examples proving the successes of eating sustainably.

The beautiful thing about food is that the solutions aren’t trade offs, they’re commonalities. The same approaches that reduce our food’s impact on the earth’s future climate will also enrich the vitality of our local communities. The same approaches that improve our children’s health will also help ensure the viability of our family farms. Our communities, our bodies, our environment, and our spirits are woven pieces of the same fabric, and their health is shared.

Sustainable eating is central to a sustainable future. Changing the way that we eat is a meaningful way to address the problems of our age, including the pressing challenge of climate change, which itself threatens our ability to feed ourselves. Each of us can make changes to eat more sustainably, and this guide helps to light that path.

Your carbon “foodprint” is the portion of your total carbon footprint that relates to food -- it’s the combined impact on climate change of everything that goes into making your meals possible, from cultivation and processing to transportation and cooking. The pages that follow outline ideas for reducing that impact, and real-world stories from folks who have put those ideas to the test in their real lives. For more fresh ideas about green living, and to share your own experiences with, join the conversation at brighterplanet.com.

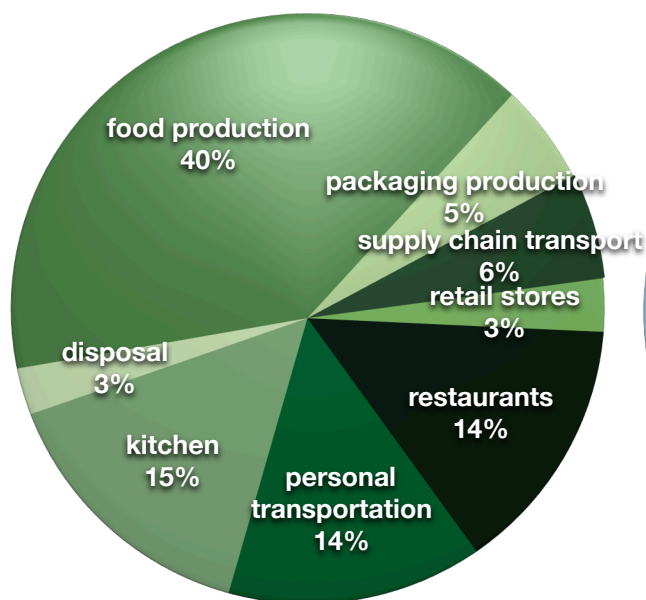
—the team at Brighter Planet

The Science of it All



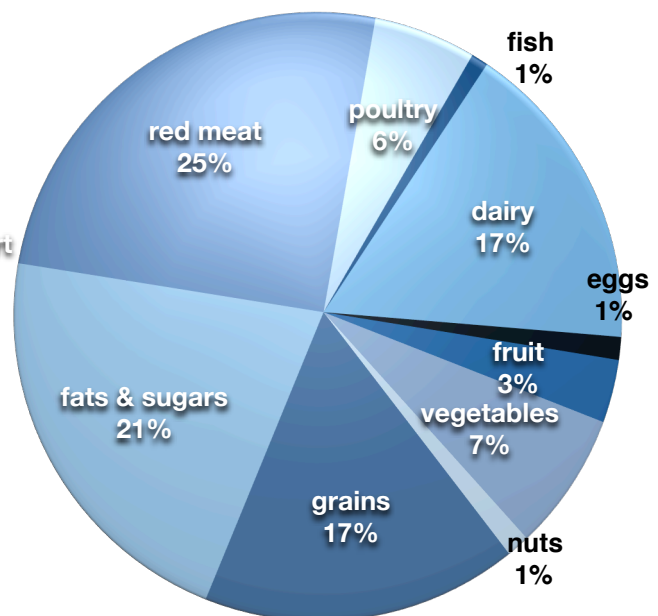
The average American is responsible for about 28.5 tons of carbon dioxide emissions every year, of which 20 percent, or 6.1 tons, is related to food. That's greater than the impact of all their driving and flying habits combined. This might be surprising, given that public discussions of carbon emissions focus heavily on transportation while discussions about the impacts of food are typically centered around non-climate issues. But what it means is that individually and collectively, there is huge opportunity to reduce our climate impact by changing how we eat.

American footprint by life cycle stage



Food production accounts for the largest share of your footprint. Personal travel to grocers and restaurants, as well as home kitchen energy and restaurant energy, also contribute a large share. Supply chain transport, or “food miles,” plays a smaller role than many people imagine.

American footprint by food group



Red meat causes more carbon emissions per calorie than any other food group, accounting for a quarter of the average footprint despite comprising only a tenth of calories consumed. Poultry, fish, and dairy produce intermediate emissions per calorie, while plant foods produce the fewest.

Many things can be done to limit your food-related climate impact, including changing what you eat and where it comes from. And these actions also have benefits well beyond fighting climate change. Reducing your footprint stands to improve environmental and social conditions in near and distant places touched by our food system. It also stands to increase your quality of life, by saving time and money, improving healthiness and tastiness of your diet, and building community connections.

For more details on food-related carbon emissions, check out our [white paper](#) on the subject.

Menu & Dining Planning

Like anything else in life, planning ahead means getting the most for your money and time while minimizing waste. Whether it's lunch for one, dinner for the family, holiday gatherings or large parties, being organized is an important way not just to save time and money, but also to reduce environmental impact.

Tips:

- [Plan a full week's worth of exciting, mouth-watering meals](#)
- [Plan dinners with creative use of leftovers in mind](#)
- [Plan communal meals](#)
- [When traveling, plan a picnic to eat on the road](#)

Top Entries:

*One Chicken, Two People, Three Meals ... Page 9

Regular Cooking Dates Page 9

Staying Healthy on the Road Page 10

Plan Meals Ahead and Save Money..... Page 12

* winning entry



***One Chicken, Two People, Three Meals**

Submitted by Jeffrey Thorp



brighterplanet.com/experiences/5633

Day One: Roast Breast of Chicken.

Roast a whole chicken and prepare a meal of sliced breast of chicken, roasted garlic and root veggies.

Day Two: Chicken Salad.

Use the chicken thighs in a garden salad.

Preparation for day three: Remove the meat from the legs and the rest of the bird. Use the bones to make a broth.

Day Three: Chicken Risotto.

Use the leftover chicken meat and broth.

Note: For energy savings, let your oven do double duty by roasting or baking other foods that can be reheated later in the week. Most modern ovens are very well insulated and will continue to maintain oven temperature long after they are turned off. So, let your food “coast” in the oven for the last few minutes by turning the oven off 10 to 20 minutes before removing your food.

“Baking large quantities or multiple dishes at once lets you cook more with the same amount of energy, increasing efficiency and decreasing carbon emissions.”

Regular Cooking Dates

Submitted by Ilinisa



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6938

A friend and I have a regular cooking date where we prepare two or three substantial dishes for the week ahead. One person is responsible for shopping. The other for hosting/cleaning. We have a lovely evening chatting and preparing some good, healthy dishes that will reheat easily for quick, healthy family dinners throughout the week. Extra points when the dishes pack up well for lunches.

This week we prepped sweet potato fries to bake later in the week (cut ‘em up and toss with olive oil, salt, paprika and cinnamon):

Another favorite... veggie enchiladas:

Here are some of our other favorite dishes that cook up well in big quantities and keep well for the week ahead:

Grain salads (wheatberry, quinoa, etc.)

Lasagna

Noodle salad with veggies and tofu

Vegetable curry or dal

We bring our own casserole dishes to cook in and for smaller items use old yogurt cartons and other recycled containers to bring home the food!

Staying Healthy on the Road

Submitted by Jules Clancy

brighterplanet.com/experiences/5479

There's something about travel that captures my imagination. Seeing exotic places, meeting interesting people, experiencing things you just don't get at home. And of course finding new taste sensations (chili fried grasshoppers with lime anyone?).

Even traveling for work can be fun. Takeoffs and landings. Fancy (and not so fancy) hotels. The security of a corporate credit card. Traveling to places that the average tourist wouldn't ever think to visit.

But there are times when the constant eating out and room service can make you feel a little bleeah.

Which is exactly what happened to me a few weeks ago when I was traveling for work. Four days into the trip, I found myself badly missing my kitchen and craving a big salad. Not those tiny mixed leaf room service options with bad dressing, floury tomatoes and exorbitant price tags – but a seriously big healthy salad – preferably made by my own hand.

And so it was that I found myself wandering though a supermarket close to the hotel, racking my brain as to what I could cook for dinner that would be:

- A. Healthy and involve salad and
- B. Able to be prepared with the cooking equipment in my hotel room – namely a teaspoon.

Lets just say thank heavens for pre-washed bags of mixed salad leaves. And for things in cans – with self opening lids. And that lemons can be persuaded to give out their juice with a teaspoon. Who would have thought?

Since then I've been experimenting with minimalist, low prep salads. The tuna chili is definitely a favourite. The chickpea and parmesan comes a close second. I had it for lunch at work the other day. One of the guys from marketing commented on my lunch saying 'That looks amazing – where did you get your salad?'

Do you think he would have believed me if I told him I made it with a teaspoon?

“Eating raw unprocessed foods and avoiding meat both significantly reduce greenhouse gases from producing the meal, and making your own food on the road avoids restaurant energy use.”

Tuna chili salad

serves 1

Tuna with chili oil is my new favourite thing, but feel free to choose plain tuna if you aren't up for a little spice. I like to use the oil from the tuna as a bit of dressing for the salad. By all means use tuna in spring water (drained) if you have a low fat fetish.

1 bag pre washed salad leaves
1 small or medium can tuna in oil with chili
1 lemon

Open salad and pick out few leaves to make room for the tuna. Flake tuna and chili oil into the salad bag and shake a little. Punch lemon with the handle of a teaspoon (see image below) squeeze lemon juice over salad through the hole.

Enjoy.

Staying Healthy on the Road (cont.)

Submitted by Jules Clancy

brighterplanet.com/experiences/5479

Chickpea & parmesan salad

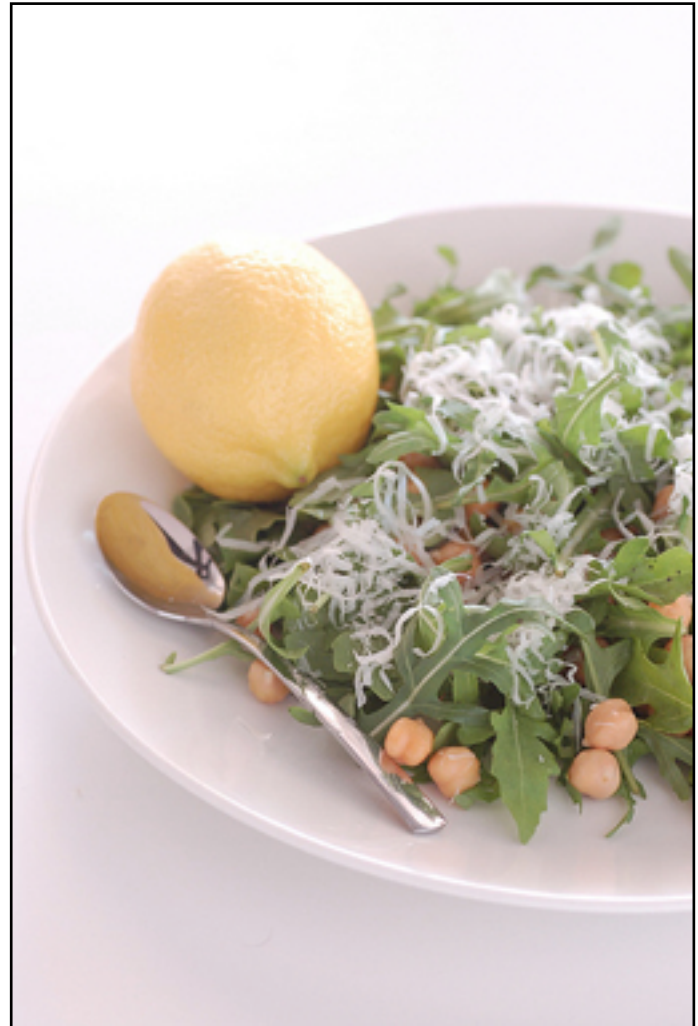
serves 1

The tricky thing with this salad is that a whole tin of chickpeas can be quite a big eat. If you're not super hungry feel free to ditch some of the chickpeas. I was also a little worried about not being able to properly wash the chickpeas but they tasted lovely with a little canning juice left on.

It's been a long time since I last used pre-shredded cheese. If you are preparing in the luxury of a kitchen – or somewhere with a cheese grater handy at least – I'd recommend going with better quality parmesan. But the pre shredded stuff was surprisingly good.

1 bag pre washed salad leaves
1 can 400g (14oz) chickpeas, drained
1 lemon
1 small handful shredded parmesan cheese, optional

Open salad and pick out few leaves to make room for the chickpeas. Add the desired amount of into the salad bag and shake a little. Punch lemon with the handle of a teaspoon (see image below) squeeze lemon juice over salad through the hole. Sprinkle over cheese if using.



credit: thestonesoup.com

Alternative traveling salads on my list:

- canned red salmon and lemon,
- cottage cheese with smoked salmon
- canned lentils, yoghurt & pine-nuts
- ricotta with canned baby beets

Plan Meals Ahead and Save Money

Submitted by Bettina Stern



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6438

“Advance planning and a well-stocked pantry eliminate last-minute grocery store runs, which means less gasoline consumption.”

Step One: Plan

Meal planning is the foundation of all other cost-saving strategies. Planning your meals at least one week ahead can save you so much. You no longer buy ‘convenience’ foods (prepackaged, processed). You can purchase in bulk more often than not. You can take advantage of sales and seasonal surpluses.

Step Two: “Build” a Pantry

Taking advantage of seasonal surpluses and store sales you can shore up on supplies. When our local market has a sale, we bulk up on healthful goods.

Step Three: Buy Seasonally, Buy Locally

Plan your meals to take advantage of seasonal surpluses. You’ll be wealthier and healthier for it.

These three steps will save you time and money and will have the benefit of increasing the nutritional value of your diet. By living these three steps you will also be contributing to the global solution: less driving, less packaging, less shipping, less waste.

Ingredients

Choosing foodstuffs based on where they come from, how they're grown, and how they're packaged can make a big difference in the fight against climate change. On average, eleven percent of the carbon footprint of food in the store comes from transportation, and another eighty-four percent comes from production. But those impacts vary drastically depending on the type of farming, and they type of food—for example, red meat has 4 times the impact per calorie as grains, whereas poultry and fish have an impact twice that of grains.

By changing what the types of food you buy, aiming for local in-season ingredients, and reducing packaging wherever possible, you can make significant cuts in your impact on climate change.

Tips:

- [Eat foods you already have – especially leftovers](#)
- [Eat less meat – and when you do, make it climate-friendly](#)
- [Eat local, organic, in-season foods](#)
- [Eat foods with less packaging and processing](#)
- [Choose your drinks](#)

Top Entries:

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* winning entry



Winter Garden Harvest

Submitted by Thomas

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6827

Eat local, organic, in-season foods – that’s a mantra that may be difficult to follow year round, especially if you live in an area located within climate zones 1 through 7.

A Harvest of winter carrots

Where I live, in zone 6 northern Massachusetts, our winters often prove long and frigid. Those wishing to buy organic locally grown produce in November will find that most of our farmers markets have closed for the season at the end of October. And the few farmers here who do choose to grow vegetables during the winter months may not always practice sustainable methods, since adding supplemental lighting and heat (which consumes significant amounts of fossil fuels) to a commercial greenhouse operation may be perceived as the only viable means to ensure a timely harvest. The alternative would be to buy organic produce at a supermarket. But in the dead of winter, this would not be considered local, in-season or sustainable.



credits: growingtradition.com



My winter garden this year

This reality begs the question – as someone who wishes to follow this “eat local, organic, in-season” mantra year round, am I limited for 6 months out of the year to what’s stored in a root cellar, processed in a jar or bagged in a freezer? Or is it possible to add some fresh variety to my local diet during the lean months by starting a low-tech, low-energy consuming, organic winter garden, while at the same time lessening my family’s dependence on produce that is shipped in from California and foreign countries? (Packaged organic salad mix, for instance, is one of the most energy-inefficient and costly veggies that one can buy at the supermarket.)

I will admit that I have a fascination with growing and harvesting food during the winter months beyond just the need to eat local, organic and in-season food all year round. For starters, I appreciate the fact that this practice has had a long and rich history, particularly in Europe, and the stubborn Luddite inside of me wishes to preserve this tradition. Ultimately though, for the die hard locavore (which I am not), it does not get any more “local” or “in-season” than growing your own winter crops. Nor do you have to rely on a governmental agency to tell you whether the carrot that you are consuming is organic. And finally, using low-tech winter gardening techniques ensures that your practices are sustainable.

Winter Garden Harvest (cont.)

Depending on where you live, your winter veggies may require an extra layer of protection during the coldest months. An inner layer of fabric row cover can help to increase the nighttime temperatures inside of your hoop houses by a few critical degrees.

I am a huge fan of farmer and guru Eliot Coleman, best known for his writings on winter gardening. His Four Season Farm in zone 5 Harborside, Maine specializes in growing food year round using only low-tech, non-heating (and in some cases, minimal-heating) elements. Coleman's technique relies upon, among other things, choosing the right varieties of winter crops, succession planting on specific fall dates, and a couple added layers of protection during the harsh winter months. The goal here is not to create an high-tech artificial environment in which to grow anything and everything, but to use low-tech and sustainable methods to give traditional winter crops the added protection they need to survive all winter long in zones 5, 6 and 7 and to extend the season by at least a couple more months in zone 4.

Hoop houses must be strong enough to withstand the heavy snow storms and winds of winter.

So grow a winter garden if you'd like to add some fresh variety to your local, organic and in-season diet during the cold months.

Here are some tips on how to get started:

1. Read about Eliot Coleman's Winter gardening techniques. Coleman offers a great deal of information on which winter crops to grow, when to sow them and how to protect them from the elements. His book, "Four Season Harvest: Organic Vegetables for Your Home Garden All Year Long" is a great place to start.
2. You will need to offer your winter crops some form of protection from the elements. There are many hoop house designs available via the internet that practically anyone can build. Personally, I utilize mini hoop houses.

3. Familiarize yourself with the hardiest of winter crops. Here are a few (some varieties are harder than others): leeks, carrots, green onions, lettuces, bull's blood beet, a wide variety of Asian greens, spinach, radishes, chard, kale and wild greens like wild arugula, mache, claytonia and minutina. You will be surprised by the amount of fresh greens you can produce during the winter months.

4. Finally, just because none of your neighbors grow a winter garden doesn't mean it can't be done! Believe that it can be done and seek advice from local gardeners and bloggers who do! Practice makes perfect and soon, and eventually, your lean winter months will seem shorter and shorter.

A picture is worth a thousand words so here is a photo of some of my zone 6 winter veggies:



credit: agrowingtradition.com

"Growing your own food not only eliminates transportation emissions, it can also eliminate production and grocery store emissions -- all told, the vast majority of the meal's carbon impact."

“Meat is a major source of greenhouse gases, so finding ways to reduce those impacts by reducing transportation and supporting sustainable farms can make a big difference.”

Ways To Buy Better Meat

Submitted by Beth Bader



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6976

I gave my name to the man behind the counter. He nodded, jerking his head sideways, “Around back.”

At the back of the building were just three unmarked doors. The first two were locked. The entrance at the very back consisted of gates only. You don’t go in that entrance. Not if you want to come out again. I pulled open the unlocked door. Just inside a man stood waiting. He had blood-spattered shoes and clothes and a knife at his hip. This may sound like a tale from a scary movie, but it is not. I am just grocery shopping.

The man takes my name and goes into the freezer. When he comes back, he has 50 lbs. of beef in hand. Each package is marked with my name and the number of the cow the meat came from. Should an animal be given antibiotics for any reason, that animal is removed from the herd. The farmer knows the history of each of the cattle, hence the number, and knows what it has (and has not) been fed. This beef has only been given grasses, no grain. It was raised on well-managed pasture using sustainable practices.

It is the only ground beef I feel is safe enough to feed my child and my family in the wake of millions of pounds of meat recalls each year and tens of thousands of consumers are gravely sickened from beef contaminated with E. coli O157:H7 each year

This kind of bulk buying may not be the easiest approach to shopping for food, but I feel it is the right way for us and for the environment. We’ll store the meat in the freezer, and eating less but better meats, this purchase will last us up to a year. I’ll use the same approach, finding a trusted farmer who raises healthy, sustainable meats, for our lamb, pork and chicken as well.

It takes a bit of adjustment and a up close and personal view of a meat locker — leaving no doubt about the source of your food. But it is well worth it for exactly those reasons.

Ways to Buy Better Meat (and be more green)

- Find ranchers/farmers who raise their livestock in a sustainable way (localharvest.org)
- Visit the facility where the meat is processed and ask to see the locker and how the process is done — ask about safety record
- Visit the farm and see the living conditions for the livestock
- Ask the farmer if the animals have been treated with antibiotics or hormones
- Ask the farmer what the animals have been fed, grass-fed is the most sustainable and safest beef
- Share a cow with other families to save costs by buying in bulk
- Skip meat one or more days a week to lighten your carbon footprint, eat less, eat better

Cook with a Local Wine

Submitted by Catherine Hylas



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6411

Don't cook local meats and/or vegetables with a wine from California! With all the Julia Child rage right now, people are cracking open their dusty cookbooks and using more wine in their cooking. It's really easy to forget to cook with a local wine.

If you're an east coaster, Southern New Jersey and Long Island both have great local wines – check them out for drinking and cooking. Think of the carbon differential between a California or European wine vs. a wine from the NJ or NY.

I recently concocted a local wine recipe using Red Table Wine from Hawk Haven Vineyard, in Cape May, NJ. It was tasty – if I do say so myself. The wine was a 75% Cabernet and 25% Chambourcin blend. Chambourcin, which is a Native American varietal, really brought out some strong fruity and spicy flavors. Pork is often prepared with both spicy/salty and sweet foods like a spicy sauerkraut and fruity applesauce. So I paired it with the Red Table Wine to try and match that range of flavors.

Rye Breaded Pork Roast with 2007 Hawk Haven Red Table Wine Marinade

1 glass (5oz) of Hawk Haven Red Table Wine
1 3/4 lb pork loin
Chervil and rosemary to taste
1 tbsp chopped garlic
1 tsp whole grain mustard
2 tsp olive oil
1 whole onion chopped
1 whole lemon squeezed
3 pieces of toasted rye bread

Pierce pork all over with skewer and pound with mallet. Combine the wine, chervil, rosemary, garlic, mustard, oil, onion and lemon juice (and rinds to increase acidity) in a zip-lock bag with pork. You can hand wash and reuse your zip locks. Put in refrigerator for 45 minutes to one hour (or longer).

After the pork finished marinating, I put the pork in a baking pan and put the bits of torn up rye bread on top. I baked it at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about an hour.

Next time, to make this dish more eco-friendly, I will try to use something other than lemons because the lemons came from all the way across the country. Lemons or no lemons, my grandparents, who I was cooking for, loved it.

“Transport to the store causes 11% of grocery emissions and the average meal travels 4200 miles, so buying local specialties can have a positive impact.”

The Freezer is Your Friend!

Submitted by Rachel



credit:racheldornhelm.net

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6536

One way we've cut back on processed, packaged foods is by doing more bulk cooking. Here are two particular foods where we've been able to cut out a lot of packaged items.

One: making our own freezer waffles. On the weekend we make a big batch of waffles. Then we freeze the extras in a ziploc bag. During the week we simply pop them in the toaster and have a fast, healthy, convenient breakfast. They've replaced processed cold cereals and boxed frozen waffles in our diet.

Two: It seems like there's always a last minute social obligation where you need to bring a little treat. Rather than running out to the store to grab a bag of cookies or chips and salsa, I've started making large batches of cookie dough at a time. I roll some of it into long logs and wrap it in plastic wrap. Then I freeze them. When I suddenly need to bring food somewhere on short notice, I just preheat the oven, slice some cookies off the logs and in the time it takes to bake them I have a fresh baked offering for book group, kid's friends, etc.

"Packaging food has almost as great a climate impact as transporting it from farm to factory to store, so eliminating packaging has major environmental benefits."

A few other **freezer tips** that cut down on processed foods and make cooking more convenient:

- + When LEMONS are in season, find someone with a tree and squeeze the bounty into ice cube trays, freeze the lemon juice cubes in big bags for the months ahead.
- + If you like spicy food, try ROASTING up a big batch of JALAPENOS and then freeze the peeled, individual peppers on wax paper on a cookie tray. Once they're frozen you can throw them in a bag and then individually defrost them later to add kick to your dishes.

And in the **refrigerator...**

- + Consider making your own non-stick spray. It saves countless spray bottles and I've found it faster and more effective than greasing pans. I've always followed a recipe my mom used when I was growing up to make nonstick cooking "spray" from lecithin and vodka. It works like a charm.
- + Refrigerator bread dough – a big basic recipe you can have on hand for pizza crust, baguettes, loafs, pita, etc. The one I use works well and you can quickly make as much or as little bread or pizza crust as you need on a given day so it cuts back on processed foods as well as stale bread.

These all save packaging, processing, and transportation energy. If you use locally sourced or bulk bin ingredients it goes even farther towards reducing greenhouse gasses.

PLUS these cooking techniques also save money, taste great and are not too time consuming. Everyone probably has a different packaged staple that they could do away with by making a big batch for their fridge/freezer: canned beans, buttermilk pancake mix, frozen French fries. The possibilities are endless.

Enjoy creating your own convenience foods!

“Planning ahead and bringing along fresh food and cooking supplies can save lots of energy by obviating the need to visit a store or restaurant.”

Ingredients

What to Pack for Lunch

Submitted by Bettina Stern

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6449

Good olive oil and vinegar – fruity extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling over almost everything summery and a balsamic or sherry vinegar (you can always find decent red wine vinegar at most supermarkets). A large sauté pan – why is it rental houses always seem to have lots of little pans?

Good coffee – ground for a drip maker – there is never a grinder, much less an espresso maker.

Good wine and a proper corkscrew

A peppermill – for freshly ground black pepper. (Yes, it does make a difference.)

A vegetable peeler – there is so much good produce at farm stands now.

Good chocolate for nibbling late in the afternoon or after dinner.

Pure vanilla extract – For making crisps, cobblers, cookies, or pies.

Ice cream maker – this is the time to use it. Add fresh berries or peaches while they last.

Dry spices – a few bay leaves, cinnamon, cumin, ginger, red pepper flakes. (Parsley, basil, dill, and mint are some of the fresh herbs that you can buy when you get there).

Cheese - If you can pack a cooler, bring: Parmigiano-Reggiano, a good blue (a little goes a long way), and your favorite goat cheese (if you haven't already, try Cypress Grove's Humboldt Fog).

Nuts – pistachios or almonds eaten with sips of wine or slurps of beer or pine nuts toasted and scattered in a salad or over sauteed greens or endive, topped with goat cheese and a splash of balsamic vinegar and olive oil.

Lastly, raid your kitchen cabinets and include anything you think might save a trip to the grocery store.

“A depressing amount of food goes to waste. Throwing out leftovers not only wastes all the energy that went into producing that food, it also ends up in the landfill where it rots and produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas.”

Use Up Leftovers

Submitted by Annette



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6710

My neighbors and I swap leftovers. If we have enough food left over from a meal we put in reusable containers (usually recycled container, I save all my sour cream, margarine etc. containers) and give them to our neighbors and they do the same. That way our families will not have to eat the same old leftovers and we do not waste food.

Food Sources

Today, whether we live in a city, a town, or a rural setting, we have unprecedented diversity in where we get our food. Restaurants, stores, markets, farms, gardens, and even websites offer an enormous range of choice in where to source your next meal. And that diversity brings with it many possibilities for reducing your culinary footprint. Adjust your food sources to reduce your impact on climate change, and share your ideas and experiences here!

Tips:

- [Get in touch with your hunter/gatherer roots](#)
- [Grow your own food](#)
- [Support grocers with sustainable practices](#)
- [Shop at the farmers' market and join a CSA](#)
- [Support restaurants with sustainable practices](#)

Top Entries:

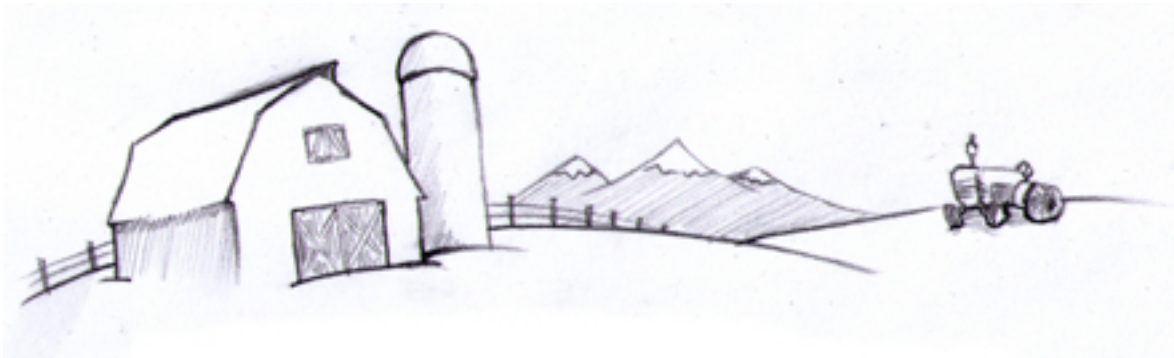
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* winning entry



Know Your Farmers' Market

Submitted by Bettina Stern



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6451

Enter a busy farm market on their peak day, wandering about shoulder-to-shoulder with other shoppers, and it is not uncommon to feel overwhelmed by the choices. Here in DC, we are lucky to have a number of thriving fresh farm markets (the largest in DC is Dupont Circle's FreshFarm Market). But the fact remains, it can still feel like we need a guide to help us choose from all the glorious seasonal offerings. Remember this: as busy cooks, we need to shop farm markets more than ever because the fresher and tastier the raw ingredient, the easier it is to prepare a delicious meal.

Here are a few tips to help:

Your List – Keep it loose with a few key items. A “market cook” looks first at what’s available and then at a recipe.

Learn the Market Layout – It can be frustrating to shop when you don’t know your way around, but after visiting the market a few times, you will learn the lay of the land as well as you know your regular grocery store – and better yet, you will actually know where and who your food comes from.

What’s Available – If it is not there, it is not in season or is not locally grown. One of the best things about shopping at the farm market is discovering and seeing new crops as they appear throughout a season. It is time to undo our years of “seasonless” shopping!

Judge What You Need – Produce is usually sold by weight such as ½ pound or 1 pound. For herbs, a small handful yields about 2 tablespoons, a small onion will yield about 1 cup chopped, and a generous handful of nuts is about 1 ounce and yields about 1/3 cup. Know how to distinguish between something fully-ripe and something that needs a few days on the counter (buying some of both is a good way to extend your purchases through the week).

Know What You Want to Spend – Placing yourself on somewhat of a budget will help you select and make choices. We can’t tell you how many times we have been to the market and have bought way more than any family could eat for the week.

Caution: Don’t, however, underestimate, there are always treasures to be found and you want to have enough if you find something amazing.

Terminology – The terms variety and cultivar are often used interchangeably (cultivar is short for cultivated variety). Heirlooms and hybrids are categories within a variety.

Heirloom refers to open-pollinated varieties (pollinated by wind, or insects and capable of reproducing consistently for generations).

Hybrids are crosses between two varieties to create a new variety. For example, Celebrity, Early Girl and Brandywine are all tomato varieties or cultivars, but Celebrity and Early Girl are hybrids, while the century-old Brandywine is an heirloom.

“Fresh, local, in-season foods can’t be beat for their low carbon footprints, and there’s no better place to find them than at your local farmers market.”

Bow Hunting and the Cycle of Life

Submitted by Paul Barnwell

brighterplanet.com/experiences/7025

Perched 17-20 feet up a silver maple in a climbing tree stand, the raindrops peppered leaves overhead, making it difficult to distinguish between squirrels bustling about creating their nests and the sound of approaching Whitetails. Woodpeckers continued their work. I soon twisted my body around to check for approaching deer coming up the ridge. It was close to twilight, prime time for deer movement and feeding.

When I turned back towards the grove of white oak trees, three does sauntered about, cracking on acorns and clearly unaware of my presence roughly 20 yards away, 20 feet up.

Within seconds, I felt like I had just downed a shot glass full of adrenaline. But I needed to rapidly calm my nerves, stand up on the roughly two square foot metal platform, draw the bow, aim for the vitals, and release a shot without spooking the shy, beautiful creatures.

Bow-Hunting has been a personal revelation. Upon leaving New England to teach middle school in Kentucky in 2004, hunting culture finally seeped its way into my blood last year, when a student and his father brought me out to hunt during open rifle season in November. I saw plenty of deer during that trip, but they were on a cranky neighbor's property, and it is illegal to kill deer on private property without permission. Disappointed that his English teacher wasn't successful, the student brought me some massive hunks of his own frozen venison meat the following week. The meat was delicious.

This year, I came to the conclusion that gun hunting for deer doesn't give the animal a fair chance, when you can sit undetected without too much care, up to several hundred yards away with a high-powered rifle. So I enlisted Randy, the husband of a colleague at school and a longtime bow-hunter, to show me the ropes. He was more than happy to be my tutor.

"I consider it a successful year if I get close enough to a deer to pee on it," Randy told me upon starting my training. I knew right then that my mentor took his craft seriously. At that point, I couldn't imagine being stealthy enough to get a deer within 50 yards of me.

Back in the tree stand, I managed to stand up, worried that the crinkling of my clothes, or a slight shift in wind, would reveal my location. It didn't. I drew an arrow, and aimed for the largest of the three deer. She was near a stick I had speared into the ground at roughly 20 yards, but she seemed to be looking at me. "If a deer seems to be looking at you, don't move," Randy had told me, "their vision is bad, but if they detect unusual movement, sound, or smell, you're done." My heart raced faster than when I used to endure wind sprints at the end of two-a-day football practices in August.

Too many of us are far removed from the cycle of life, and the fact that animals die for us to live. I wanted sustainable meat, and I wanted to appreciate the life of a creature who might perish due to my efforts.

"Harvesting food from the land can eliminate nearly all its climate impact, and this is an even bigger benefit when it comes to meat, which is normally the most heavily emitting of all the food groups."

I released the arrow and heard the distinct thump of metal penetrating flesh. In a flash, the deer sprinted towards me, beginning to zigzag. I saw blood. I watched the animal race down the ridge line, then crash into some thicket roughly 75 yards away. One of the smaller does, perhaps the offspring of my kill, charged hesitantly towards the thicket, then stopped and ran off away from the danger.

Bow Hunting and the Cycle of Life (cont.)

I was all at once scared, proud, excited, and overwhelmed. And I still needed to find the deer, field dress it, hang it in a barn, skin it after a few days curing, then butcher it. I managed to find and gut the deer (a bit crudely, in retrospect), and with Randy's help the animal was skinned and butchered within a week, several months worth of bounty neatly bundled in freezer paper and bags.

I've come to believe that if you eat meat, you should experience hunting, slaughtering, or butchering what you eat at some point in your life. The process is part of what makes us human.

Someday, I hope to mentor young bow hunters as Randy has done for me. In the meanwhile, there is no doubt I'll continue the ritual and hobby of bow hunting, enjoying the swapping of stories, sharing the meat, the environmental advantages, and all the positives that emerge when you engage in the challenging process of killing what you eat.



Meyer Lemon Marmalade

Submitted by Thomas

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6669

I harvested my first 3 Meyer lemons from my potted tree this past Friday. I did so in part because they had shed their last bit of green a few days ago and felt soft to the touch. Their shade of color was not quite the deep golden yellow hue that I'd associated with Meyers I've seen in photos. I guess I could have let them ripen for another week or two to see if they would reach that shade of perfection but alas, after 10 months on the tree, I couldn't resist any longer and had to taste them finally.



This is my first citrus tree and I have to admit, it feels really good to be able to grow something that is normally shipped in from 3000 miles away. I also like the fact that I've grown a variety that cannot be found in most supermarkets in our part of the country as Meyer lemons do not ship well. I guess you could say that for me, this is a small lesson in sustainability. And by preserving these Meyer lemons, I can hopefully savor their goodness all year long.

These lemons were pretty hefty. The marmalade recipe I was using called for 6 Meyer lemons or an equivalent of 1.5 lbs. I had 3 and collectively they weighed 1.7 lbs. I began to wonder whether or not the plant nursery had given me the right

variety of tree. Their color and size deviated from what I'd been expecting. However, like Meyers, they did lack the "nipple" found on conventional Eureka lemons you find at the supermarket. My concerns were put aside when I finally sliced one open and took a big whiff. I wish I could adequately explain to you the deeply wonderful scent associated with this lemon, a citrus fragrance unlike any other I'd come across before – maybe best described as sharply mandarin with hints of lemon and lime. These were definitely Meyers. I hadn't been this excited in the kitchen in a long time.



To make this marmalade, I began by halving the lemons to remove the seeds, which were deposited into a small bowl lined with cheesecloth. I quartered the halves and cut the sections into thin slices, which were then placed into a large non-reactive stockpot filled with 4 cups of water. Also, I tied the cheesecloth into a little pouch of seeds and placed it into the pot as well. I left this mixture to stand covered at room temperature for 24 hours.

Before doing so, however, I did manage to taste a couple of lemon slices. The juice was sour, but not nearly as sour as conventional lemons. What I found most surprising was that the outer white membrane was not bitter at all, again unlike conventional lemons. I could see how Meyers would be an excellent ingredient in many recipes. If you've ever made chicken piccata, you'd know

Meyer Lemon Marmalade (cont.)

that if you left the lemon slices to cook in the sauce for too long, you might end up with a dish that tastes incredibly bitter. Meyers, I'm sure, would make for an interesting substitute in these types of recipes.

Twenty-four hours later, I brought the lemon slices to a boil and simmered the pot for approximately 45 minutes until the mixture was reduced to about 4 cups. I then added 4 cups of sugar and brought the mixture back up to a boil. Maintaining the heat at a moderate temperature, I skimmed any white foam that surfaced and stirred the pot occasionally. When the mixture registered 212-214 degrees F on my candy thermometer, I tested a bit of it on a cold plate to make sure it jelled (which it did). I then ladled the hot marmalade into sterilized half pint jars and processed them for 10 minutes. (If you'd like more information on water-bath canning, [click here](#).)

I ended up with 5 jars of marmalade, which I left to cool at room temperature overnight. Since the stockpot I used to process the jars could only fit 4, the 5th jar went straight into the refrigerator after it cooled. Also, I noticed that according to the recipe I used, I was supposed to end up with 6 jars of marmalade. I guess I'd reduced the lemon/water mixture for too long.

So how did the marmalade taste? Really really good. It doesn't have any of the bitterness that the English love in their Seville orange

marmalade, but the Meyer lemon flavor definitely makes this marmalade extra special. I'm planning on making another batch to hand out as Christmas gifts. I guess I'll label it, "Thomas' New England Homegrown Meyer Lemon Marmalade." :)

As far as first canning experiences go, I found the process to be relatively straight forward and quite fun. Since my canning kit had not arrived yet, I used a stockpot lined with a towel. I'm happy to say that all of my jars sealed properly. Hopefully, this will be the start of a very long canning career!



"Growing and canning your own food reduces the environmental impacts of industrial food production, and eliminates an average of 4200 food miles per meal."

Taming the Dandelion

Submitted by Bettina Stern

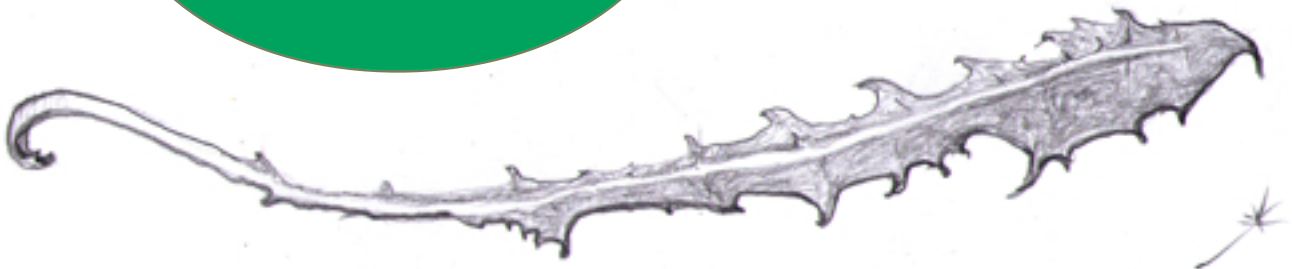
brighterplanet.com/experiences/6442

Dandelions—so much more familiar in the lawn than in the kitchen. Bright green bunches are at markets now fresh from local growers and are potent with vitamins A and C. Make peace with the world's most common weed: such a rugged survivor is worth getting closer to.

You can tame the “lion’s bite” by wilting and tossing the leaves with grilled sliced lamb, skirt steak or even crisp cooked bacon and blue cheese. Dandelion’s slight bitterness can stand up to strong flavors. If you don’t eat meat, you can make the greens more tender by dropping them in boiling water for a minute and then chopping them with sardines, olive oil, lemon and salt. Or just toss in a few pretty saw-toothed leaves raw with other field greens.

Once you have conquered the dandelion, you might want to experiment with other locals: *A City Herbal – A Guide to the Lore, Legend, and Usefulness of 34 Plants That Grow Wild in the Cities, Suburbs, and Country Places* by Maida Silverman is filled with stories and uses of the most common edible native plants.

“Harvesting wild edibles from your backyard is the ultimate in carbon-neutral dining: they take no energy to grow, process, transport, package, or sell.”



Techniques

The “how” of cooking—the techniques you use—can guzzle even more energy than producing the food. The environmental impacts of storing, preparing, serving, and disposing of food add up to an impressive sum.

Changing the techniques you use in the kitchen—how you rethink meal preparation, when you use or avoid appliances, and what you do with the waste—can make a big difference in reducing the climate footprint of your diet. Work to lighten your impact by tweaking your tactics, and tell us about how you’re doing it!

Tips:

- [Reduce energy use while cooking](#)
- [Reduce energy use while cleaning up](#)
- [Preserve summer’s bounty](#)
- [Reduce refuse](#)
- [Experiment with “found” ingredients in your pantry & fridge](#)

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* winning entry



Efficient Barbecuing

Submitted by Dave

brighterplanet.com/experiences/5630

In Florida one of the most common things people do is BBQ! I know, it makes a heck of a footprint and the most efficient way is propane but the most flavorful is carbon (ie: charcoal).

I admit it, I do BBQ on occasion and through experimentation I have walked into a very efficient way to use charred hardwood, or natural briquettes (not the fuel soaked ones) with a minimum of burn off. Where I would normally use 2 quarts of coals to get a good cooking fire going I now use less than 1 quart, or less than even that. I found that by lining my Weber kettle grill, which is very efficient at recirculating existing heat energy, with heavy gauge aluminum foil I can significantly increase the heating potential with fewer coals for a longer time.

This method will cook the food to completion then completely break down into fine ash that I use as a soil amendment for my trees and plants. People are going to cook outdoors so they may as well do it efficiently and cleanly while recycling to boot!

“Many appliances, grills included, aren’t designed with efficiency in mind. So simple home retrofits can often have a big impact! Plus, burning biomass like hardwood (as long as it’s sustainably harvested) is way better for the climate than burning fossil fuels.”

Pickling

Submitted by Molly



brighterplanet.com/experiences/5846

A few weeks ago, Hands On Gourmet hosted an Urban Peasant Pickling Workshop. It was led by expert picklers, Michelle Fuerst of Homemade Cook and Ingrid Pankonin of Miel Cooking.

What I learned is that **pickling is all about experimenting**. There are so many variations and ways to pickle, it's best just to give it a try, experiment, and see what you like. The class opened with the questions, what to pickle, how to pickle, and which process to use? The answer? It depends.

A good first step is to assess your vegetable and then determine your process based on the type of pickle you want, whether it is crunchy, loose, soft, salty, or sweet. Other considerations: Do you want them to be shelf stable? Or, do you want them to be ready to eat in a week or a month?

In general, the harder the fruit or vegetable is before it is pickled, the crunchier the result. If it has loose seeds in the center, it won't be as crispy. Slicing cucumbers are loose and seedy versus pickling cucumbers that have less seed bed and tighter seeds. Pickles can be refreshed by putting them in ice water. This will drain the cucumbers of some of their water and make them crunchier. Seedy = not crispy.

Next we talked about the variety of different ways to pickle. Do you want to use cold brine or hot brine, what is the ratio of vinegar to water, what are the right sugar and salt levels. Cold brines are for more delicate vegetables, hot brines soften so they are right for crunchier or harder vegetables. Heat softens.

Note that brine is a liquid with salt, not necessarily vinegar. The more water you use, the less strong the brine and the pickles. Also, chlorine messes up fermentation so it's best to use purified water.

Which vinegar to use? Consider both the flavor and the cost. Cider vinegar is fruity, white wine vinegar results in a cleaner more pronounced taste and is good for garlic and dill pickles. This is another area where experimentation is key to determining what you like.

If using canning jars, when sterilizing them put a towel in the bottom of your pan, heat the water up to 180 degrees to 200 degrees F. Process the jars for 10 minutes and they will be sterilized. Fill them with your pickles and pour the brine over the top. Leave at least 1" head space at the top, wipe the rim of the jar for a good seal, and close the lid, finger tight. If you process more than one jar at a time, you can keep them sterile in a 200 degree F oven while you work.

There are three classic recipes that we discussed: Fermented Dill Pickles, Quick Dill Cucumber Pickles and Bread and Butter Pickles. The quick dill and fermented pickles are pickled in a crock or pottery container, as opposed to in canning jars for the bread and butter pickles.

We also touched on food safety. This is an area where you will have to assess risk and make a decision about your comfort level. I tend to err on the side of crazy according to the USDA's safety guidelines.

But then again, I'm not imposing my comfort zone on the general public.

Ready to give it a try?

Michelle recommends the Ball Book of Preserving as a great resource. Below are two basic recipes to start with.

Pickling (cont.)

Fermented Dill Pickles

recipe for one gallon crock

4 pounds of fresh and firm pickling cucumbers
3 to 4 heads flowering dill or a large handful of fresh dill
2 heads garlic
a pinch of black peppercorns
a pinch of coriander seeds
a handful of fresh grape, cherry, horseradish or oak leaves

Wash cucumbers gently and remove blossom ends. If necessary, refresh cucumbers in ice water for up to 24 hours.

for the brine:

1/2 gallon water
6 tablespoons sea salt

Mix salt and water and stir until dissolved. In a clean crock or plastic container, place, garlic, dill, leaves, black pepper and coriander. Add cucumbers to the crock and pour brine over them. Weigh cucumbers down with a plate to make sure they are fully submerged. If you need more brine, make and add more. Cover crock with a cloth to keep out undesirables and store in a cool place.

The Next Few Days of Fermenting: Check crock everyday and skim any surface mold. If there is mold, rinse plate and replace. Skimming for mold is important because you don't want your brine to pick up any unwanted flavors. Continue to check the crock and taste the pickles.

After one to four weeks, pickles will be fully sour. Once desired sourness is achieved, move them to the refrigerator to slow down fermentation.

Adapted from Sandor Katz

Bread and Butter Pickles

makes about 12 quarts

4 gallons + 4 cups sliced pickling cucumbers
6 gallons water
4 cups salt
1 gallon thinly sliced onions

Wash and slice cucumbers into 1/8 inch disks.

Dissolve salt into water and soak cucumbers in salt water for 24 hours. Drain and reserve.

for the brine:

5 quarts cider vinegar
5 quarts sugar
1/4 cup turmeric
1/2 cup yellow mustard seed
1/4 cup celery seed
1/4 cup cracked black pepper

Combine vinegar and sugar and let dissolve over low heat (do not boil). When sugar is dissolved stir in the spices. Add onions and drained cucumber slices.

Stir all the ingredients gently together and bring up to a simmer. Turn off heat and ladle into hot canning jars. Wipe the rim and softly tighten top. Place jars into boiling water, making sure the top is covered and the glass jars are lifted from the bottom of the pot. Boil for ten minutes, remove the jars from the water and let cool at room temperature. May be eaten immediately but taste best when allowed to age for at least two weeks. Will keep for 1 year or more.

Adapted from Linnton Hopkins

"Pickling lets you eat local in-season foods year round, meaning you can avoid shipping them from afar or growing them in a hothouse during winter."

Pantry Raid

Submitted by Daisy



brighterplanet.com/experiences/6808

Some months get incredibly busy, and we don't get to make our weekly grocery trips quite as regularly as usual. So when we do shop, we make it count, and make the Pantry Raid easy.

Leftover sloppy joe meat? Add red beans and tomatoes and make chili. Got the grill fired up? Cook a little extra for the freezer. One potato, a carrot, and some celery leftover? Feed the rabbit. Or maybe.... skillet stew!! The results of my latest Pantry Raid:

Skillet Stew

Please note: in the spirit of a true Pantry Raid, this could include just about anything. The "recipe" is really just a guideline.

Ingredients (this time):

- 3 potatoes
- 1 stalk celery
- 1/4 small onion
- a little garden spinach
- 1/4 cup frozen corn
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 4 cups of water, as needed, with chicken bouillion added proportionally (Chicken stock would have been better, but it was a raid. No time to thaw.)
- 4-5 chicken thighs
- lemon pepper and cumin to taste

Slice potatoes thin. Dice celery, onion, and spinach. Add to 2 cups water & chix flavoring in electric skillet on medium heat. Simmer until soft (about 20 minutes on low). Add cream of mushroom soup and refresh water/chix as the first evaporates. Place chicken thighs on top. turn heat to med-high. Cook covered for another 20 minutes. Add water/chix again, stir, and add corn and seasoning.

Optional: take chicken thighs out and brown them in a separate pan. Check with meat thermometer.

And if that's not vague enough, turn the main skillet to low and keep stirring the mixture until it's time to serve. Serve with a green salad (with garden tomatoes, of course) and zucchini bread.

After supper: use the chicken skin and bones to make chicken stock for a delicious soup or stew later.

That's one heck of an efficient Pantry Raid! Not only did it produce a decent supper, it yielded the starter for a future meal!

"The climate benefits of a meal like this are double, because it avoids wasting food and it avoids an extra trip to the grocery store."

Experimenting with Found Ingredients

Submitted by Bettina Stern

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6436

Seasonal Cleaning

Every once in a while it's good to prep the kitchen: clear it out and clean it up. If you look around your kitchen and feel the need to de-clutter, consider these tips. You will be happy with your new "pleasant-to-cook-in" space.

Toss or Give It Away

What has become useless is a matter of personal taste. If you haven't used a certain pot or a particular kitchen gadget in a few years, you probably won't use it again – ever.

Throw Out Old Spices

When you buy spices, try to buy small amounts in bulk. Most spices should be thrown out after six months, and certainly after a year. Use the smell test: spices should be fragrant.

Make Your Kitchen User-Friendly

Spend a little time reorganizing your kitchen (spices, utensils, pots and pans) so that what you use most often is close at hand.

Clean Your Fridge

Toss old aging food and condiments, clean anything stuck in the back and buy a new box of baking soda to trap odors. Same goes for the freezer too.

Keep it Clean

Yes, be a neat freak. Dirty dishes in the sink and an unorganized space will definitely not inspire you to start cooking a meal.

"Keeping your kitchen clean and organized can help you catch leftovers before they cross the line of inedibility and become wasted, and it can help you realize it's time to pass along unneeded supplies and appliances to folks who will make use of them."

Recipe: Quick Indian Chicken Korma (Serves 6)

Tonight's dinner is a good way to use a number of spices from your cabinet plus one of those cans too!

Braising (korma) is an important technique in Moghul cooking, the process of braising is very similar to the Western method, with one difference – the braising liquid used in korma is much thicker (it includes yogurt, cream and/or fruit and nut butters). It yields a rich, velvety sauce that heavily coats the meats and vegetables. Serve with basmati rice and salad of watercress and seasoned apple.

1 1/2 inch-piece fresh peeled, ginger
4 cloves garlic
6 Tbls. vegetable oil
2 bay leaves
1 2-inch cinnamon stick
1/2 tsp. cumin seeds
1 medium onion
1 tsp. ground cardamom
1 Tbls. ground coriander
1 Tbls. ground cumin
1 large can plum tomatoes, chopped
4 pounds skinless chicken breast
1 tsp. cayenne pepper (optional)
1 tsp. kosher salt
6 Tbls. heavy whipping cream

Chop ginger and garlic into chunks. Add to an electric blender with about 1/4 c. water. Blend to a smooth paste.

Chop onion. Put oil in a large frying pan. Turn heat to high. When it is very hot add bay leaves, cinnamon stick, and cumin seeds. Stir a couple of times and add onion. Cook for a few more minutes until onion softens. Add paste from blender and ground cardamom, coriander, and cumin. Stir and turn heat off.

Chop tomatoes and cut chicken into small cubes. Turn heat back on to high and add tomatoes, chicken, salt and cayenne pepper, if using. Give it a stir and then add 1 1/2 c. water. Bring to a boil. Cover, turn the heat to medium and let cook for about 25 minutes, stir once or twice. Remove the cover, add cream and cook on high heat for another 8 minutes or until sauce has thickened a bit. Serve with rice.

Spring Cleaning

Submitted by Bettina Stern

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6453



Here's a list of nine to help you keep things clean:

- to clean **water spots** from stainless steel, wipe with a paper towel dampened with vinegar
- to **remove citrus zest** from a grater, scrub with a vegetable brush
- to clean a **dirty sponge**, soak it overnight in bleach or run it through the dishwasher
- to remove food from a **burnt pan** (not that we have ever), douse the burnt bits with fabric stain remover, let the pan sit for a few minutes, then wipe off the food with a scouring pad or try soaking the pan in baking soda and water for 10 minutes before washing
- to clean a **spill in the oven**, sprinkle with salt as soon as possible and wipe away once the oven has cooled
- to remove gummy **price tag stickers** from glass, rub with the peel of a citrus fruit
- to **clean a blender**, add a squirt of dish soap, fill halfway with hot water, cover and pulse until clean.
- get a **pastry scraper** – perfect for pushing food from a work surface into a bowl or sink, scraping bits of dough or chopped herbs that cling to a cutting board, or removing burnt pieces from the bottom of a roasting pan
- **clear off counter space** and store any equipment that you use less than 3 times per week – put that bread maker away.

“Cleaning with natural products reduces the energy use and toxins associated with chemical cleaners, and taking the time to clean and maintain your kitchen increases the lifetime of your equipment.”

Appliances, Gadgets and Gizmos

We all rely on, and love, the tools that surround us in the kitchen. The cooking tools we choose to use make a big difference on energy use in the kitchen, and on energy use during the production and disposal stages of these products. Although on average kitchens occupy only an eighth of total household area, they use a quarter of all household energy. At 30 percent of kitchen energy, fridges and freezers are the biggest kitchen energy users, followed by stoves and ovens at 14% and dishwashers at 9%; the remainder is consumed by hot water, lighting, and smaller appliances.

Being conscious of efficiency, durability, necessity, and recyclability when you're outfitting your kitchen is an important way to limit your dining impacts. How are you making a difference in your choice of kitchen tools?

Tips:

- [Choose quality, sustainable kitchenware](#)
- [Buy secondhand, and pass on unused gadgets](#)
- [Choose efficient appliances](#)
- [Change how you use and run your appliances](#)
- [Choose reusable instead of disposable](#)

Top Entries:

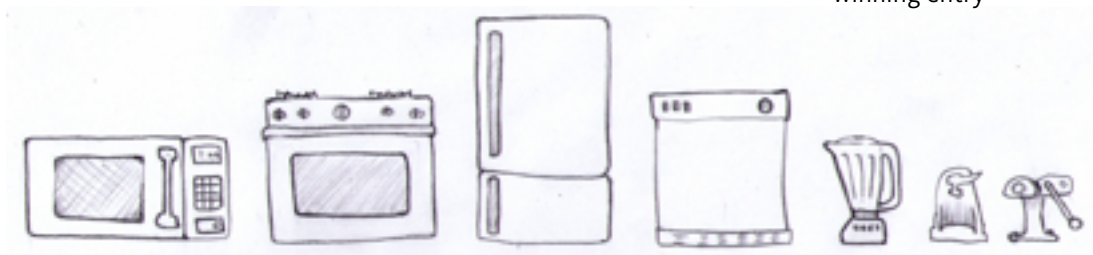
*Create a Gadget Co-op Page 35

Old Fashioned Appliances Page 35

Choose Reusable Page 36

Reusable Lunch Boxes Page 36

* winning entry



Create a Gadget Co-op

Submitted by Cynthia

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6665



Create a gadget co-op with your friends. Each of you make a list of the unusual kitchen items you have such as a juicer, pasta maker, cake decorating sets. Then, when you want to try something new, borrow from the co-op instead of investing in an item that you may use only once yourself.

“All the stuff we buy makes up a huge portion of our footprints, and a seldom-used appliance may actually take more energy to produce than it actually uses over its lifetime, so minimizing these purchases is a sure bet to reducing emissions.”

“Durable kitchen supplies like cast iron pans save energy because they last forever, whereas flimsy hardware has to be thrown out and replaced much more often.”

Old-Fashioned, but Not Out-of-Fashion

Submitted by Bettina Stern

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6445

Cast iron pans – our grandmothers swore by them and cooked everything in them, from bacon to polenta, and we do too. They are an inexpensive kitchen essential.

A good size to have is a 12-inch pan. It must be seasoned by rubbing with oil and heated in the oven at 375° for a couple of hours. This prevents it from rusting and creates a “natural” nonstick finish that gets better each time you use it (unlike that old Teflon pan).

When cleaning a cast iron pan, never use soap. A simple rinse with hot water and scrub with a brush will do the trick. Then immediately dry it by heating it over a stove until all the water evaporates, otherwise it will rust.

We have found a number of well-loved cast iron pans at yard sales and thrift shops and we’ve recently noticed them for sale in department stores, big-box retailers, and cooking shops. Tennessee-based Lodge Manufacturing, founded in 1896 and still family-owned, is perhaps the most well-known brand in the U.S.

Appliances, Gadgets and Gizmos

Choose reusable instead of disposable

Submitted by Labella

brighterplanet.com/experiences/5722



We recently purchased reusable sandwich bags from Dajo bags. We all have reusable lunch boxes and we always use actual flatware and never plastic. Plus, we each have a reusable water bottle and I have a cup at work that I use with the water cooler to avoid bottled water.

We almost always take bags to the grocery and even have reusable/washable produce bags.

Recently, I've really been trying to notice packaging and work towards buying items with the least packaging. We buy the large containers of yogurt (most of the time) rather than the small containers, fruit and veggies without packaging.

My husband loves sun chips and even though it would be convenient to buy the individual bagged items, I only buy the big bags. I still admit to using paper towels, but we wipe up spills or dry our hands with washable towels.

I pay attention to what we put in the recycle bin and trash. It helps to pay attention to what you are throwing away and might give you ideas of better things to buy the next time. We get rotisserie chicken sometimes but I stopped buying it because of the over-packaging. My grocer recently changed to bags rather than plastic trays and covers.

My next idea is to find bags to bring home the deli items that we buy – mostly sliced cheeses and my favorite Boar's Head turkey.

“Producing the food packaging consumed by the average American household emits nearly 1700 pounds of carbon dioxide every year. Reducing the amount of waste we send to the dump avoids energy from producing wasted materials, and it reduces landfill gas emissions.”

Reusable Lunch Boxes

Submitted by Cinella

brighterplanet.com/experiences/6014

I ban plastic from my house, but it is somewhat difficult because almost everything is wrapped in plastic. When my daughters school asks for plastic bags I send reusable bags. You can find them online and are totally worth it because they are so cute and can be washed. I use them to keep foods warm and cold too.



credit: Cinella

Author Profiles



Annette
Use Up Leftovers

Annette has been living near Houston, TX for the last 25 years, though is originally from North Carolina. She is a stay-at-home mother of two sons, ages 21 and 16. She enjoys volunteering at her son's school, gardening, walking her dogs and spending time outdoors.



Bettina Stern
Plan Meals Ahead and Save Money
What to Pack for Lunch
Know Your Farmers' Market
Taming the Dandelion
Experimenting with Found Ingredients

Bettina Stern grew up in Manhattan and has been lucky enough to dine adventurously all her life. Having worked for a number of summers during college as a chef in the Hamptons food shop, the Barefoot Contessa, Bettina was inspired to share her passion for food and cooking with friends and family. [Loulies](#) was launched in early 2007 to inspire home cooking, with a focus on using the best and freshest ingredients, working through cookbooks, lessons learned and testing recipes. The Loulies' mantra is: Cook more at home, eat in-season, know your food, and share your kitchen.



Beth Bader
Ways to Buy Better Meat

Beth Bader is the blogger behind Expatriate's Kitchen (expatriateskitchen.blogspot.com) and an author for the Eat Local Challenge site (eatlocalchallenge.com). She is also co-author, with Ali Benjamin of Cleaner Plate Club, of a new guide and cookbook for healthy, "real food" eating for families. The book will be published by Storey Publishing and is due to be published in the coming year.



Catherine Hylas
Cook with a Local Wine

Catherine Hylas graduated from Middlebury College in May of 2009; she enjoys cooking even if she doesn't always like following recipes.



Cinella
Reusable Lunch Boxes

Cinella is a 25 year-old mom of two girls, married to a wonderful man for 6 years. Her family started going green after her husband was laid off and now it has become a hobby. Living in deep south Texas she is a leader by example as she recycles, upcycles and uses [Freecycle](#). Cinella uses reusable shopping bags (for everything), shops at her local farmers' market, makes home-cooked meals, and much more.



Cynthia
Create a Gadget Co-op

Cynthia Boris is a "going green" newbie who is enjoying the process of making the world a better place one reusable grocery bag at a time. She works as freelance writer and editor from her home in Orange County, California.



Daisy
Pantry Raid

Daisy read *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver and resolved to dramatically improve her family's food supply by making it more localized and sustainable. She teaches fourth grade, incorporating frugal and eco-friendly practices into her classroom whenever possible. Daisy's blog, *Compost Happens* at compostermom.blogspot.com is a personal blog: part family, part garden, part book review, and part crunchy-green eco-writer.



Ilinisa
Regular Cooking Dates

Ilinisa lives in Northern California with her family, where she does work in public health. She takes full advantage of year-round gardening weather, and enjoys growing food for her friends and family in her backyard.



Jeffrey Thorp

One Chicken, Two People, Three Meals

Jeffery Thorp is a chef, photographer and web developer living in Redding California. He is a classically trained chef and a self-taught photographer and web developer. His culinary passion is baking rustic hearth breads, multi-grain pan breads and pizza.



Jules Clancy

Staying Healthy on the Road

Jules Clancy is a food scientist, photographer, writer, runner and aspiring minimalist. Her writing & recipes can be found at her blog thestonesoup.com.



Molly

Pickling

Molly is the co-founder and president of Hands On Gourmet (handsongourmet.com). Hands On Gourmet offers private cooking classes for team building and other celebrations.



Paul Barnwell

Bow Hunting and the Cycle of Life

Paul teaches middle school in Shelbyville, KY. After Wendell Berry initially inspired Paul to engage in more sustainable eating practices, he has created an urban garden at his home in Louisville, butchered locally raised rabbits, and has become an avid bow-hunter. In his spare time, he also likes to challenge the status quo in education. His writing can be found at questionsforschools.org.



Rachel
Use Less Packaging

Rachel grew up in Eureka, CA and now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has her parents and grandmother to thank for her interest in sustainable cooking. Her grandmother did almost all of her cooking from scratch, even plucking her own chickens from the live poultry market. Rachel's dad taught her about tending a successful vegetable garden in the foggy Pacific Northwest (lots of rutabagas). Rachel has fond memories of regularly baking bread and making muffins with her mom. She enjoys recreating these traditions with her own family now – except for the chickens.



Thomas
Winter Garden Harvest
Meyer Lemon Marmalade

Growing up, my dad instilled in me a sense of cultural identity by way of the vegetables we grew in our modest urban yard and the feasts we prepared and ate together as a family. My dad and his garden are gone now, but I will carry on the sacred food traditions he began so long ago. You can read more about my efforts on my personal blog, agrowingtradition.com, where I keep a gardening journal.



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Mastering the Art of
Sustainable Cooking