

A Greener, Leaner Thanksgiving

Reduce the impact of your family fun day with these money-saving tips

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to feel thankful for all that the year has brought, to share time with family and friends, and to gobble until you wobble. But this year, let's have a more sustainable holiday. Celebrating Thanksgiving without the excess will be healthier for you and for the planet and will save you money too.

100-Mile Meals

The traditional Thanksgiving fare consists of items that are in-season here in Canada, so stick to seasonal goodies that are locally grown. Focusing on food that is produced in a 100-mile radius will mean your food doesn't have a large carbon footprint because it didn't travel far to get to you. Eating foods from your area [benefits your local economy](#) including farmers and other suppliers.

Canada has some of the most [stringent food-safety regulations](#), so you know that local food is healthy and you won't be exposed to pesticides that have been banned here, but are still used pervasively in other countries.

Eat Less Meat

Sure, you may not want to go for the tofurkey, but you can cut down on meat in your appetizers and other dishes. Cutting down on your meat intake is the single most effective way to reduce your carbon footprint and the amount of money you spend on your Thanksgiving feast.

A whopping [51% of greenhouse gas emissions](#) are caused by animal agriculture. 9,085 litres of water are needed to produce just 1 pound of meat, while a pound of tofu only requires 923 litres. "If all the grain currently fed to livestock in the United States were consumed directly by people, the number of people who could be fed would be nearly 800 million," [says David Pimentel](#) of Cornell University.

If you're brave enough, a vegan Thanksgiving can be cheaper, healthier and kinder to the planet. [Here's a full list of recipes](#) to make your meatless Thanksgiving feast a success.

Thanksgiving Décor as Nature Intended

Now that you've got the food under control, let's move on to the décor. Buying Thanksgiving decorations from the dollar store only adds to the landfill. Those disposable items are made as cheaply as possible and are likely to off-gas some pretty nasty chemicals at a time when your doors and windows are closed.

Bouquets of exotic flowers have traveled a long way to get to your table and are often grown using

pesticides that [are banned in Canada](#) and are to be avoided.

Instead, find some great no-carve pumpkin decorating [ideas here](#), or use the leaves, berries and pine cones that nature has generously provided. They won't cost a cent, don't off-gas and are biodegradable too!

Use fabric napkins, and avoid foil roasting pans, [straws](#), disposable cutlery and crockery so you reduce waste and cost. After all, you have a whole house full of willing dish washers. Encourage your guests to share rides and take public transport which is cheaper and reduces their travel carbon footprint.

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