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The ULS Report™

Helping people Use Less Stuff™ *by conserving resources and reducing waste.*

A Zero Waste Thanksgiving

By Robert Lilienfeld, Editor

Between Turkey Day and New's Year Day, we Americans throw away an extra 6 to 10 million tons of waste. Much of this is food waste, so now's the perfect time for all of us to get our environmental and economic acts together!

To eliminate waste, we're going to break Thanksgiving dinner into separate but related categories: meal planning, preparation, serving, and storage.

PLANNING

Let's start by creating menus and shopping lists. First, we all know what the typical Thanksgiving ingredients are: Turkey, stuffing, bread & rolls, potatoes & root vegetables, lettuce, spinach, kale, beans, fruits and nuts.

But what we need to do is to think NOW about what we're going to do with all of the leftovers LATER. *The best way to keep leftovers out of the trash is by thinking of them as ingredients for follow-up meals, and to shop for all of them ahead of time*. This way, everything you need is in the fridge before Thanksgiving, making it easier to use leftovers and increasing the odds that you'll actually do so.

We're going to make it easy for you. We've gone to the Food Network, allrecipes.com, epicurious, delish, CHOW, Southern Food and other web sites and found 50 recipes that use up all of those leftovers: from turkey to trimmings, beans to berries, and pecans to potatoes. Just click on any of the following recipes to plan out all of your post-Thanksgiving meals!

SOUPS

- Next Day Turkey Soup
- Turkey Wild Rice Soup
- Turkey Bean Soup
- Turkey Garbanzo Bean and Kale Soup with Pasta
- Italian Turkey, Bean and Tomato Soup
- Kale and Cannellini Soup
- Hearty Turkey Soup with Parsley Dumplings
- Corn, Tomato and Turkey Chowder
- Turkey and Vegetable Soup

SALADS

- Cranberry Spinach Salad
- Spinach Salad with Bosc Pears, Cranberries, Red Onion, and Toasted Hazelnuts
- Black Friday Turkey Salad
- Sweet Leftover Turkey Salad
- Turkey Salad
- Turkey Waldorf Salad
- Curried Turkey Salad

ENTREES

- Turkey Pot Pie
- Thanksgiving Leftover Casserole
- Thanksgiving Leftovers Stuffed Shells
- Easy Leftover Thanksgiving Turkey Pot Pie
- Turkey Macaroni Bake

In this issue...

- Green Bean Turkey Bake
- Turkey Broccoli Bake
- Sweet Potato and Turkey Shepherd's Pie
- Butternut Squash and Turkey Chili
- Turkey Lasagna with Squash, Zucchini & Spinach
- Turkey and Sweet Potato Sandwich
- Turkey Pineapple Curry
- Turkey Broccoli Quiche
- Turkey and Mashed Potato Cobbler
- Turkey Divan
- Savory Turkey Cobbler
- Moo Shu Turkey
- Turkey Hash

SANDWICHES

- Awesome Turkey Sandwich
- Sweet and Spicy Turkey Sandwich
- Grilled Turkey Reubens
- Turkey, Dressing and Cranberry Panini
- Hot Turkey Sandwich
- Turkey Turnovers

VEGETABLES & SIDES

- Marinated Vegetables with Garlic and Thyme
- Thank Goodness It's Over Bruschetta
- Stuffing Stuffed Mushrooms
- Mashed Potatoes Au Gratin
- Second Day Fried Stuffing Bites with Cranberry Sauce Pesto
- Day After Bean and Sweet Potato Dip
- Pecan and Sweet Potato Bread

DESSERTS

- Holiday Leftover Sweet Potato Cake
- Cranberry-Citrus Sorbet
- Yum-Yum Cranberry Parfait

PREPARATION

Just like when you shopped for all of your meals, try to prepare as many as possible when you cook Thanksgiving dinner. Let's say that you've decided you want to try the Turkey and Mashed Potato Cobbler as a leftover meal. Make sure you make enough mashed potatoes for two meals, since the odds that you're going to mash them twice is not very high, is it?

Ready to cook? If you've got a convection oven, use it! You can cut down on cooking time by around 25%. In general, this means cooking the bird for 15 minutes a pound, rather than 20 minutes per pound for conventional ovens. For the average 12 pound bird, that's one hour less cooking time. Not bad!

If you're in the market for a new oven, take a look at an OKOTHERM convection oven from Kuppersbusch, a German manufacturer. It contains a catalytic converter that works (like the one in your car) by cleaning the air as it leaves the machine. Since your kitchen stays cleaner, you'll reduce the use of harsh cleansers. The oven also has a very smooth surface that keeps food residues from sticking. There's no need for an expensive high-heat, energy intensive cleaning cycle or chemical oven cleaners.

SERVING

The best way to reduce food waste is to remember that what stays on the platter is food, what stays on the plate is waste. If you're serving at the table, ask your guests to take a little of everything, and come back for more if they're still hungry.

Research also indicates that serving buffet-style reduces the amount of food people take, keeping waste to a minimum. The reason? Guests tend to only take what they really want, since they don't have to worry about embarrassing the host if they don't take from platters when unwanted food is offered to them.

STORAGE

Now, it's time to take care of the leftovers. First, instead of sticking large amounts of a specific food into a container, divide the food into individual portions or into the amounts you'll need for the next meal. Label all items and put the ones you're going to use together in the same drawer or on the same shelf.

You'll also note that containers are going high-tech. For example, Tupperware containers have a built-in grid that keeps moisture away from the food. There are also two vents that can be opened or closed, depending on the type of food stored: Foods that are light breathers, like carrots or celery, keep longer with both vents closed. But heavy breathers, like spinach or broccoli, need both vents open.

* * * *

Now you know how to have a happy, zero waste Thanksgiving. Plan ahead and enjoy the recipes. Both your purse and the planet will thank you!

A Few Surprises About Plastics & Packaging

By Robert Lilienfeld, Editor

We are just about to wrap up a summary of a very significant study that measured the impact of 32 different products and materials on European energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The peer reviewed research, which was conducted for PlasticsEurope, looked at both the current impact of plastics and the theoretical impact of replacing other materials with their equivalent plastic counterparts.

One of the findings was very much in line with public expectations: *Rather than landfilling paper and plastic packaging, it should be reused, recycled or used to generate energy*. The impact versus landfilling was large: at least a 10 time reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas generation.

The other two findings were not at all in line with public perceptions: First, *the use of plastic products instead of competitive products enables significant energy and greenhouse gas savings*. The differences here were also large: the annual equivalent of 18.4 billion gallons of gasoline and 135 million tons of CO_2.

Second, *when it comes to fresh foods, packaging in general, and plastic packaging in particular, significantly reduce greenhouse gas generation by reducing food spoilage and waste*. The greenhouse gas generation associated with packaging production was significantly offset (4-9 times) by the waste saved from reducing spoilage.

The implications here are very interesting: First, government, industry, and society must continue working together to get the most value out of our resources by extending their usable life and constantly finding ways to do more with less.

Secondly, the science indicates that plastics and plastic packaging can play a far more positive role in the quest for sustainability than most people recognize.

Reduction Roundup™

Windows on the Future

Scientists at Brookhaven and Los Alamos National Laboratories have created a new type of transparent thin film material that could boost solar window production. The material consists of a semiconducting polymer doped with carbon-rich fullerenes (whatever they are!).

Wireless Electric Car Recharging?

Maybe we won't even need plugs to recharge electric cars in the future. Simply drive around and the whole thing gets powered wirelessly with help from magnetic fields. The New Zealand-based company HaloIPT recently unveiled its commercially available charging technology that makes it possible. CBC News reported that the charging speed is comparable to that of a plug-in.

The ULS Report

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