

GREENING YOUR KITCHEN

We currently consume 25–30 per cent more energy than our planet can sustain. Yet most people don't realise that by simply modifying their food choices, they can make a bigger difference to the environment than by "greening" their car. Is it time to "green" your kitchen?

There are ways of eating and cooking that are both good for you and good for the planet. Following are several suggestions:

- ▶ Choose plant-based meals (reduce meat and dairy) or adopt a meat-free day each week.
- ▶ Learn which fruits and veggies are in season, and focus meals on these. They usually taste better and are cheaper as well.
- ▶ Reduce processed and packaged foods and avoid buying things in small packages. Buy staples in bulk.
- ▶ Plan your weekly menu and purchase only what you need. Store cooked leftovers properly to avoid waste. As much as one-third of the food we buy ends up being thrown away, even though most is still edible.
- ▶ Invest in cloth or reusable shopping bags, and reuse plastic bags to dispose of your garbage.
- ▶ Budget for more organic produce. Organic food is not a luxury—it's how food is supposed to be. Being chemical free is also better for the environment.
- ▶ Be mindful of more energy-efficient cooking methods and appliances, which can save you money and leave a smaller carbon footprint.
- ▶ Limit your use of the oven as this is the most energy-intensive way of cooking. When using it, maximise the available shelf space by pre-planning to bake or roast several dishes at the same time.
- ▶ Use slow cookers and pressure cookers, which are energy-efficient. For example, by using a pressure cooker, you can cook a meal in one-third the standard cooking time.
- ▶ Ensure that your refrigerator door has a good seal. Refrigerators consume more energy than any other appliance in your home. Also, by keeping it well stocked, you'll use less energy to keep things cool.
- ▶ Choose energy-efficient models when replacing appliances such as a refrigerator or dishwasher. Induction cooktops also help to save energy.
- ▶ Use smaller appliances like electric kettles, toasters and rice cookers for shortcuts. These are more energy-efficient than your stove or oven.



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.