Go Green: Tips for Your Family Kitchen (and Home)

Spring is a terrific time to start thinking about how you can be a good neighbor to the planet. There are many small ways you and your family at home can help the environment.

**Cut Back on Food Waste**
Did you know 30-40% of the U.S. food supply is wasted?¹ Here’s how to help lower these numbers:

- Plan a weekly menu and stick to it.
- Have a weekly “kitchen sink meal.” Use up food in the freezer, refrigerator and pantry instead of grocery shopping.
- Encourage family members to take smaller portions to avoid leaving extra food on their plates.
- Eat those leftovers.

**Eat Local**
When you buy food from local growers, you’re supporting your community’s economy and getting to know the people who grow your food. Check out nearby farmers markets. Purchase a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share. Look for “locally grown” signs in the produce aisle at your grocery store.

**Plant Some Vegetables**
Try growing your own food! If you don’t have the space or time to tend a garden, consider growing a couple pots of vegetables or herbs. Start with seeds or buy plants at a garden center. You’ll reduce your grocery costs while helping the Earth at the same time.

**Compost Food Scraps**
Instead of tossing eggshells, fruit cores and vegetable peels in the trash (which go to a landfill) or down the garbage disposal (which uses water and energy), compost them instead. Simply bury waste in the dirt (great for gardens!) or purchase a compost bin at the hardware store.

**Go Vegetarian One Meal a Week**
Did you know eating a meatless meal just once a week saves money and energy? Plant-based protein foods such as beans, whole grains and vegetables cost less in the store, require less water to grow and produce less greenhouse gases compared to raising beef and chicken.

¹ [http://www.worldfooddayusa.org/food_waste_the_facts](http://www.worldfooddayusa.org/food_waste_the_facts)
Make an Eco-Friendly Family Dinner Tonight:

**Crunch Lentil Tacos**
*Makes 4-6 servings*

**Ingredients:**
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small sweet onion, finely chopped
- 2½ cups pre-cooked lentils
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 medium or large avocados, skin and pits removed
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 8-12 crunchy taco shells

**Instructions:**
1) Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add oil and half of the onion. Stir until onion is softened (about 2 minutes).
2) *(KID STEP)* Add cooked lentils to pan and stir, then add spices and ¼ cup water. Stir well.
3) Turn heat to low to simmer and keep warm while preparing toppings.
4) *(KID STEP)* Put avocados in medium serving bowl and mash with fork.
5) *(KID STEP)* Stir in remaining onion and feta. Mix together.
6) *(KID STEP)* Spoon lentils into serving bowl. Serve next to taco shells and avocado feta guacamole.

Recipe Tip: Serve with extra veggie toppings such as chopped tomatoes, lettuce, mushrooms and avocado.

Recipe courtesy of MeatlessMonday.com and EAStrewart.com

**Smart Phone Apps for Eco-Friendly Eating**

**FoodKeeper (free)** – This USDA app helps you keep your food fresher longer, which can help reduce overall food waste at home. Click on food categories for recommendations on how to store specific foods and how long they will last.

**Farmstand (free)** – Locate farmers markets in your area. Learn market hours, addresses and additional details, such as whether they accept SNAP, WIC or other discounts. Check out comments, reviews and photos posted by customers.