

## QuickTakes



### Cleaner and Greener

More and more Americans are bringing environmentally sound products into their homes. Today's consumers can find everything from organic foods to eco-paints to green cleaning products. Green cleaning products that clean effectively are becoming more widespread and more affordable.

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports the Safer Choice Label. The Safer Choice program certifies that a cleaning product does not contain harmful chemicals.
- The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a private non-profit group that publishes information on toxicity levels of the ingredients in common cleaning products.
- Non-toxic household staples including baking soda, distilled white vinegar and salt can be used for green cleaning — without the worry of exposure to harsh chemicals.

This month's newsletter looks at eco-friendly trends in the kitchen today.

## A Greener Kitchen

The kitchen is the hub and heart of your home. The eco-friendly kitchen begins with eating green. For the most devoted, green living means eating food just harvested from your own garden. For many more, it means buying organic produce, sustainable seafood, antibiotic-free meats and fair-trade coffee. But that's not all.

There are a number of sustainable choices involved in cooking, eating and dining. These choices can be good for the health of your family, the planet and even your wallet. We'll focus on seven areas specifically.

### 1. Buy quality, durable cookware

Goodbye non-stick coatings. Hello cast iron, stainless steel and oven-safe glass. Non-stick cookware may emit toxic fumes when overheated. Even top-of-the line non-stick pans eventually lose their coating and need to be replaced. Quality cookware without a non-stick coating can last a lifetime.

Non-stick cookware can be found in most American kitchens. If you're stuck with it, at least for a while, cook safer with it. Follow these three rules: Never heat an empty non-stick pan. Never put a non-stick pan in an oven that is hotter than 500°F. Turn on the exhaust fan when cooking with non-stick pans.

### 2. Limit containers that contain BPA

BPA stands for bisphenol A. It's an industrial chemical that is used to harden some plastics and resins. Some research has shown that BPA can seep into food or beverages from containers that contain BPA. The chemical is a concern because of possible health effects on the brains and prostate glands of infants and children. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said that BPA is safe at the very low levels at which it occurs in food. Yet many parents are choosing to stay on the safe side by avoiding BPA. They research which companies don't use BPA in their products. They also avoid plastics marked with a "PC," for polycarbonate, or recycling label #7. Not all of these plastics contain BPA, but many still do.

### 3. Waste less, want less

A significant way to green up your kitchen is to reduce food waste. Nearly all food waste ends up in a landfill or combustion facility. Once in a landfill, food breaks down and produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

Start wasting less by watching how much you cook and by limiting portion sizes. Remember, you're not cooking dinner for a football team! Refrigerate any leftovers quickly and don't forget to use them!

### 4. Compost!

Uncooked organic waste like potato peels, coffee grounds and even paper or cardboard can be composted. Don't worry if you don't have a garden in which to spread your new rich soil; many farmers and vegetable gardeners will be happy to take your compost. Check out the EPA website for tips on composting at home.

<http://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>

## 5. The glass is always greener

Nothing beats glass for eco-friendly food storage. It's nontoxic and recyclable, and it lasts for years. The downside? Glass-lidded containers can be expensive. More reasonable ones with plastic lids can be found in nearly every store that sells goods for the kitchen. Shop at flea markets and yard sales for vintage Pyrex refrigerator dishes.

## 6. Look for the Energy Star

Consider upgrading old appliances to EPA-approved Energy Star appliances for your green kitchen. An Energy Star dishwasher uses 10% less energy and 33% less water than a standard model. If you bought your refrigerator before 1993, it uses more than twice the energy of an Energy Star fridge today.

Energy Star has simulation calculators for many products on its website. It's fun to go in and see just how much you will save by buying appliances that don't hog so much power. Try it out at [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

## 7. Plan for a power strip

Plug several countertop appliances into a single power strip. This lets you turn them off easily before leaving the house. While those little lights that are always on don't sap a lot of electricity on a daily basis, over time their watts do add up.

# Turkey Meatloaf Serves 6

While this may not be your mother's meatloaf, we think it's just as good. Ground turkey keeps it lean while the vegetable stuffing makes it interesting. Leftovers are great in sandwiches!

### INGREDIENTS

- 10 sun-dried tomatoes (dried or packed in oil)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, thinly sliced
- 1 red or green bell pepper, sliced
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar or dry vermouth
- 1¼ pounds lean ground turkey
- ¾ cup fresh breadcrumbs, preferably whole-wheat
- 1 whole egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning herbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- a generous grinding of black pepper
- ¼ cup lower-sodium BBQ sauce

### NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING

230 Calories	17g Carbohydrate
5g Fat	1g Fiber
1g Saturated fat	452mg Sodium
0g Trans Fat	32mg Calcium
26g Protein	

Source: Healthy Living Kitchens



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook until they are soft and brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Push the onions to one side of the pan and add the bell peppers. Cook until they soften. Add balsamic vinegar. Stir to blend and remove pan from the heat.
3. In a bowl, combine turkey, breadcrumbs, egg, mustard, herbs, salt and pepper, mixing with a fork.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread the meatloaf mixture on the pan to the size of an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper. Lay the sun-dried tomatoes down the center of the meat. Spoon the onion-pepper mixture on top of the veggies. Fold the meatloaf mixture over the filling. Shape into a long loaf with your hands. Brush BBQ sauce on top. Bake for 40 minutes.
5. Let the meatloaf stand for 5 or 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

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