



## Ten Tips for a Healthier, Greener Kitchen

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If home is where the heart is, then the kitchen is where our stomachs hide out. Kitchens are typically the favorite room in the house to entertain guests and family because it revolves around food and eating – an enjoyable activity for most. It makes sense, then, to focus on your kitchen as a high priority room to “green” in your home. Here are 10 tips to go greener in your kitchen:

1. **Calling the pots “green”** – Cooking with non-stick pans used to be all the rage, at least until we found out that the chemical used to make it slippery (perfluorooctanoic acid - known to us as Teflon) is suspected to be potentially cancer-causing. To avoid this, or any variation of this chemical, the best options are stainless steel, cast iron and ceramic-coated cookware. Glassware is also a good option.



2. **Greener dishes, containers and bakeware** – Take a pass on disposable dishes – they just pile up in the landfill. For

bakeware, beware of the stuff that claims to be “non-stick” because it’s coated with possible cancer-causing chemicals and choose ceramic or stoneware instead. Replace plastics that are cloudy and/or scratched with glass, stainless steel and ceramic bowls and jars. They last longer and don’t leach harmful chemicals.

3. **Greener cleaners for the kitchen** – Look for all-purpose, third-party certified cleaners for tackling kitchen cleaning. Eco-labels like EcoLogo and Green Seal help to identify greener cleaners that have met strict environmental standards. Steer clear of products that use antibacterial agents (these typically have triclosan in them and have been linked to super germs). For the floors, washable microfiber mops work wonders. When buying paper towels, also look for those that are certified by a credible third-party eco-label. They work as well as regular brands and are environmentally preferable.

4. **Running your appliances efficiently** – When it comes time to replacing appliances like the fridge, stove, dishwasher and microwave, look for the Energy Star and WaterSense labels to help select energy-efficient and water-saving models.

5. **Save the water!** – Turn the tap off when washing dishes and fill the sink to wash a full plate-load. Choose water-saving dishwashers and select the energy-efficient setting in use. When making tea and coffee, use only the amount you need and give plants any excess, clean water rather than pouring it down the drain.

6. **Eat “green”** – Stock the fridge and cupboards with as much local, organic and fair trade products and produce as possible. If your grocery store doesn't offer a wide selection of locally-sourced, organic food, put in a request with your grocer.

7. **Avoid extra food packaging** – Bring your own bags to the grocery store, pass on produce bags, buy concentrated liquids and bulk-size containers and use the deli counter to avoid Styrofoam and plastic altogether.

8. **Compost leftover foods** – Try reducing the amount of garbage that goes to the landfill by redirecting organic waste such as raw vegetable and fruit scraps to a backyard composter, an indoor worm bin or a city composting bin if it is available where you live.

9. **Recycle those aluminum cans and milk containers!** – It goes without saying that recyclable food packaging should go into the recycling bin, not the trash can, but make sure to check what items your city or town accepts. Keep this kitchen waste out of the garbage.

10. **Renovating for a healthier, higher purpose** – If the kitchen is in need of a renovation, source out environmentally preferable options. For countertops, try recycled glass, or PaperStone (which is made of post-consumer waste, recycled

paper and petroleum-free resins); look for cabinets with low-VOC finishes, engineered wood floors which use less hardwood and paints that are the most environmentally-preferable options available.