

Greening Your Holiday Cookout

In preparation of celebrating the Independence of our nation this weekend, I've compiled a list of ideas for you to green your festivities—and it doesn't include grilling tofu (although that isn't too bad.)

1. Shop for your fruits and veggies, and even your meats and produce, locally. There are many wonderful Farmer's Markets around Central Ohio. Don't forget you can purchase organic meat and produce at Stratford Eco Center in Delaware.
2. Skip the disposables. If your crowd isn't so big (well, heck, and even if it is), go ahead and use your "real" plates and glasses. You or the kids can even make Fourth of July stars and firework place mats and other festive decorations for that red, white and blue touch.
3. The Sierra Club urges you to opt for a cleaner-burning propane or electric grill over one powered by charcoal. Or, hey, check out a solar oven!
4. Try locally brewed beers, even organic, if you can find them. Or check out non-alcoholic alternatives like Santa Cruz organic juices, Blue Sky natural sodas and the like. Look online or at your local supermarket in the "Natural Foods" section.
5. Fireworks couldn't be any more "un-green" with the gunpowder fall out and the smoke and dusk containing various noxious chemicals! But how can we cut that out? It's tradition! Guess how Disney tackled that one—they use Sekon biodegradable fireworks (gun-powder free, "air launch" technology). Maybe local municipalities could check it out for future fireworks shows.
6. Carpool to the fireworks! Thanks to Tina B. for her Red, White and Boom! tip of parking farther out and taking the COTA bus into downtown Columbus to see the show. To find the COTA park and ride spots servicing BOOM!, go to www.cota.com or call 614-228-1776. Red, White and Boom! is going green this year, partnering with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Rumpke to provide recycling containers all over the event. It is a special event pilot program for recycling—just look for the green bins with the bright yellow tops. You can carpool to your local fireworks, too, and encourage recycling and future events.
7. Above all, and this one is easy, RECYCLE all of your cookout and party cans and bottles. If you don't have curbside recycling, please make an effort to get them to a recycling facility—you can find the nearest at www.delawarehealth.org/litter.htm or by calling the Delaware General Health District at 740-368-1700.

Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a writer and mother of three with a special interest in green living.