



Ours to Protect on Sunshine 106.8 – December 4th 2023

As the festive season begins in earnest award-winning sustainable food writer and author Caroline Kennedy offers advice on how to make the Christmas dinner table and home entertaining more sustainable this year without compromising any of the festive cheer

Some tips for cooking sustainably at Christmas time.

1. Plan. Make lists, check them twice. Make sure that you're being nice and not naughtily going overboard. Don't overstock on perishables. There's only so much room in the fridge and the shops will be open again after Christmas.

2. Measure: Do you really need a turkey that big? Count how many people you will have to feed on Christmas Day and buy accordingly. James Whelan's Butchers has a great ready reckoner online (<https://www.jameswhelanbutchers.com/info/3745/what-size-turkey-do-i-need/>) and any butcher will help you figure out what size you need.

3. Love your leftovers: It's Christmas time so it's always worth throwing yourself into the turkey and ham situation with full gusto.

a. Sandwiches are a great way to use up scrappy bits - just make sure you have a selection of good condiments on hand to jazz them up. Favourite Stephen's Day sandwich: building from the bottom up, a slice of good sourdough (toasted if it's seen better days), Builín Blasta spicy smoked onion mayo, turkey (go for the brown bits for the best flavour), stuffing, ham, an Irish camembert-style cheese like Cooleeney, cranberry sauce and finish with another slice of sourdough. Bonus points if you toast this beauty.

b. Get some good butter puff pastry - Roll It butter puff pastry is now widely available in supermarkets - and make an open-faced tart out of an assortment of leftovers with a little crème fraîche on the base, followed by turkey, ham, cooked veg, some blue cheese (I'm a fan of Cashel Blue with this combination) and the last few scrapings of cranberry sauce.

c. Turkey curry may have gotten a bad name in *Bridget Jones' Diary* but if she'd tasted one made using Green Saffron's Turkey Delight she might have changed her mind. Creamy with coconut, zippy with lime and packed with the freshest of spices, this is a dish that will appeal even to the elderly relative who has to be told that it's turkey stew (we didn't dare tell him that it was curry until afterwards!).

4. Soup it up: If your ham came with a bone, don't hand it over to the dog without getting the most out of all those delicious bits still clinging on. Use it as the base for a pot of split pea or lentil soup, which is perfect for feeding crowds if you have unexpected visitors. It's also a great way to use up any limp, saggy bits of veg - carrots, celery, onions - that are lying around in the aftermath of Christmas dinner.

5. **Befriend your freezer:** when you get sick of staring at that turkey, pick all the meat off the bones and freeze to use in a turkey and mushroom pie sometime in January. Any bits of ham can go into the same bag for the same destination. Freeze the bones to make stock at a later date. Leftover herbs, bread, mashed potatoes, and Christmas pudding can all be frozen successfully as well but remember two key things: label everything carefully and use it sooner rather than later.

Tips for a more sustainable Christmas Table:

6. Candles will always add a welcome glow. To help the planet use natural soy candles or beeswax taper candles . A simple touch is to use tiny soy tealights in ceramic holders

7. Make paper stars to decorate the Christmas dinner table. There are plenty of tutorials on YouTube and the kids will love making them with you

8. Bring in natural foliage from the garden to embrace and connect with what's happening in the natural world at this time of the year.

9. For the Christmas tablecloth try to go with 100% linen where possible. Linen is a naturally strong, versatile and biodegradable material

10. Add delicious smelling dried fruits such as orange slices dried in the oven to create a natural festive scent

11. For a sustainable Christmas gift give a plant to each of your guests as they leave

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