

APRIL



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"An optimist is the human personification of spring."

- Susan J. Bissonette

3 Easy Things You Can Do for Earth Day

EarthDay.org

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics." There are several benefits to reducing plastics in our world – from production concerns to waste and recycling problems, from air pollution to ocean pollution, and economic disparity issues to workplace safety, there's room for improvement. The organization EarthDay.org is aiming for a 60% reduction in the production of plastics by 2040.

Although this international environmental initiative aims at global production, technological advancements, and buy-in from governments across the world, we can each help reduce plastic waste in our own circles. Here are a couple of easy ideas to join the movement:

Reduce plastic bag use: Those plastic bags from the store pile up quickly, so take reusable bags with you to avoid using plastic store bags. At home you can reuse the plastic bags you have or recycle them. And when shopping for trash bags, look for biodegradable options.

Use and wash a water bottle: We're using plastic beverage bottles at a rate of more than 300 per person per year, and most of them won't be recycled in the end. A single reusable water bottle can last for years or even decades, depending on your choice. Plus, if you live somewhere with running water, it's cheap, convenient, and easy to fill your bottle from the tap. If you purchase drinking water from the store, purchase in larger jugs, and look for opportunities to reuse those jugs.

Mind your outfit: Fast fashion is a big topic, but there are some little things we can do to help move the needle. In addition to buying fewer, higher-quality items and natural fibers like cotton, linen, or hemp, many brands are now offering 100% recycled fabrics (polyester, viscose (rayon), etc.) You can also choose secondhand clothing, it's a great way to find unique, interesting items for your closet and give old clothes new life.

Look around your home, what opportunities do you see to reduce single-use plastics? Can you think of ways to reuse the plastics you'd normally send to the recycling bin? Are there any options to purchase items in non-plastic packaging or from a more environmentally-minded brand? Little changes add up and we can all do our part.

Inside-Out Pork Dumplings

marthastewart.com

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon ginger, minced
- 8 ounces ground pork (if substituting ground turkey, add 2 Tbsp. more oil)
- 2 scallions, whites and greens separated, cut thinly on bias
- 1 pound baby bok choy, leaves separated and cut into 1 ½-inch pieces if large
- 1 carrot, finely grated
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 6 ounces fresh wonton wrappers
- Kosher salt

Directions

1. Heat oil and red pepper flakes in a skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, ginger, and scallion whites. Cook, stirring, until scallions are tender, about 1 minute. Add pork, breaking up with a spoon until cooked through, about 3 minutes. Add bok choy; cover and steam until tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add carrots. Season with vinegar and salt. Set aside.
2. Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil. Season with salt. Add wonton wrappers one at a time. Cook until al dente, about 1 minute. Drain. Add wonton wrappers to skillet and toss. Serve with scallion greens.

8 Post-Moving Day Tips for a Stress-Free Move

homebuying.realtor | move.org | realsimple.com

There are tons of checklists and moving company reviews to help you prepare for a move, but once the furniture and boxes make it into your new home, the moving help is done for the day, and everyone is exhausted, it can all feel a little overwhelming. We've prepared a short guide to help de-stress unpacking and get you settled into your new home.

1. Build breaks into your plan. Make your dinner ahead or plan to order takeout. Expect to need a trip to the store on moving day, the day after moving day, and a week after moving day. Despite the best planning, things come up.
2. First things first - if you'll be living there from day one, the first order of business is to set up the beds and get one bathroom set up that everyone can use.
3. Plan before you start unpacking. You'll want to plan how you'll unpack, which rooms to tackle first, how to organize the drawers, and the end date when the last box will be unpacked. Include shopping for window treatments, rugs, and organizers when looking over your timeline. And don't over-schedule yourself, enjoy the process of settling into your new home.
4. Within the first week, make your emergency plan, map out your fire escapes, locate or purchase fire extinguishers and blankets, and check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Get your first aid kits and flashlights in place and stock the basement or shelter with bottled water, snacks, batteries, and a weather radio.
5. Within the first two weeks take a good look around inside and outside your new home. Note anything broken or worn, potential dangers, leaks or drainage issues, electrical concerns, and any sharp, pointing things. Note the HVAC service schedule, the age of the water heater, and any other home mechanicals. Start making your maintenance plan.
6. Now that you're moved into your new home, explore your new neighborhood. Locate nearby grocery, hardware, pharmacy, fuel, parks and trails, banks, hospitals, and walk-in clinics.
7. Wrap up the details. Change the locks, get spare keys made, check that you're set up with all the utilities and service providers you need, send thank you notes to friends and family who helped you out, and help your kids memorize your new address.
8. Host a housewarming party! Moving into a new home is a big life event and you'll want to celebrate!



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