

Sustainable Shabbat: Greening your Community Shabbat Dinner

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves... a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization... a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow men and the forces of nature. **Is there any institution that hold out a greater hope for man's progress than the Sabbath?**

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Sabbath, p.28 (1975)

Below is a list of ideas and resources for creating a Sustainable Shabbat Dinner in the vision of A.J. Heschel

Programming

- **Pray Kabbalat Shabbat outdoors** – If weather permits, try praying outdoors and focus on natural symbolism in the prayers
- **Discuss Shabbat as an environmental holiday** - study texts and how to make Shabbat a personal weekly environmental holiday

Logistics

- **Use Non Disposable Dishes** – When possible use real dishes and a dishwasher (or hand washing) with biodegradable soap
- **Use Biodegradable Dishes** – When reusable dishes are not an option, use fully biodegradable dishes which can be composted, or at least not build up in our landfills. Dinnerware is available in a number of forms including corn starch, sugarcane, leaf and more. www.ecoproducts.com
- **Use Recycled Napkins** – There is no reason to wipe your hands or face with newly cut trees. Use 100% post consumer recycled paper napkins
- **Organize Carpools** – If attendants drive to your Shabbat dinner, try organizing a ride sharing systems. Carpooling can be organized through a sign up board, e-mail listserve or through a central coordinator
- **Reduce Energy** – If you are going to leave the lights on for all of Shabbat, replace incandescent light bulbs with CFLs (Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs)
- **Skip the fresh flowers.** Try a sustainable alternative like potted flowers or herbs. At the end of the meal, give your centerpieces as gifts to your guests. If you definitely want flower centerpieces, go organic! www.organicbouquet.com

Food

To reduce the environmental impact of your meal, create a menu that is:

- **Vegetarian** (or at least offers good vegetarian alternatives) – eating vegetarian vs. chicken reduces the environmental effect of a meal more than tenfold. Reduce your use of carbon, land, pesticide and more by eating lower on the food chain.
- **Local** – reduce the carbon footprint of your dinner by buying vegetables and meats produced locally. Try shopping at a local farmer’s market. Talk to the farmer, know where your food is grown.
- **Organic** – reduce the health impact on farm workers and protect the farm’s ecosystem by buying chemical free organic vegetables, breads and meats. Organic chicken is available from Wise Kosher. www.wiseorganicpastures.com
- **Cruelty free** - Serve ethically sourced meat. Try buying your meat from the person who raised it (or as close to that as possible).
- **Fair trade dessert** – Everyone loves chocolate & coffee for dessert, make sure you treat your farm workers well by buying fair trade products. A good kosher supplier is www.equalexchange.com

Kosher Organic Wines and Grape Juice

There aren’t many kosher organic wines available, so if you want some you need to plan ahead. Go to your wine store a few weeks early, if they don’t have anything, ask them to order a case on your behalf – or order directly online. A few kosher organic wines and grape juice include:

- **Four Gates Winery** – Organic, Kosher and Kosher for Passover, not Mevushal www.fourgateswine.com
- **Yarden Chardonnay Odem Organic** – Organic, Kosher, Kosher for Passover, not Mevushal www.kosherwine.com/cgi-bin/ProductInfo.asp?WineID=73604001692
- **HoneyRun Winery** – Organic, Kosher, not Kosher for Passover, not Mevushal, not grape
- **Glendale Farm Grape Juice:** kosher grape juice local to the Northeast – 607-546-8479.

Acknowledgments

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- **Hazon** - www.hazon.org
Find more healthy and sustainable resources at Hazon’s blog: www.jcarrot.org
- **Sacred Food Project** - www.sacred-food.org
- **Teva Learning Center** – www.tevacenter.org
- **Noam Dolgin** – www.noamdolgin.com