



***Justice - Peace - Care for Creation
Franciscan Tips for an Eco-Friendly Life***

- Use cloth or recyclable bags for grocery shopping (save 10 cents). If you do use plastic bags, remember to cut the handles. Animals frequently get their heads caught in them and they first, are terrified and two, they can choke. BTW, some local Sprouts stores takes plastic bags to recycle. Look for a store near you that also recycles them.



- Avoid buying pre-packaged produce in bags and plastic clamshells - buy the actual vegetables & fruits and wash them yourself (save \$ and reduce landfill)
- Every grocery store has a clearance aisle; check for “ugly” produce and grocery items that are reduced in cost (reduce landfill)
- Know the difference between **Sell By**, **Best By** and **Use By** dates. The only federally regulated food date label is the one required on infant formula. Other than that, food product dating is completely voluntary, and producers tend to be quite conservative, understanding that conditions in grocery stores and homes might not be ideal. Nonetheless, most shoppers and home cooks use these dates to gauge freshness and quality. If this is you, here’s a look at what the terms really mean: **Sell By date:** This date



is determined by producers to inform sellers when to remove items from the shelves. The goal is to ensure consumers receive the item at its optimal quality, which can last for several days to several weeks past the date, depending on the item. Milk for instance, according to Consumer Reports, should last five to seven days past its sell-by date if stored properly.

Best By date: This date guarantees the period of time the product will be at its best flavor or quality — when bread will still taste soft or crackers crisp. The food will still remain edible after this date, it is not about food safety, but about taste. **Use By date:** This is the last day the producer guarantees the best quality of the product. Again, except for the case of infant formula, this is not a safety date nor a mandatory label.



- Don't buy more than you need unless you have a large-capacity freezer (reduce food waste)
- Use a shopping list when you market
- Plan your meals to minimize your trips to the store (cut down on greenhouse gases) and cut down food waste.
- Buy Local and Fresh - In North America fruits and vegetables travel an average of 1,500 miles before it reaches your plate (cut down on greenhouse gases)
- Use dish towels or rags to clean up and wipe spills in the kitchen (save \$ on paper towels and reduce landfill)
- Trade plastic storage containers for glass ones (glass does not retain smell and holds up to dishwashing without melting)
- Reuse takeaway containers when you have them to send leftovers home with friends



- Save the cut ends of vegetables and poultry carcasses to make stock; buy soup bones and make your own broths - they don't taste artificial and you can control what goes in them
- Eat less meat and more plant-based meals (reduces methane gases, water and pesticide use)
- Cut Down on consuming foods that require huge amounts of water to grow. On average, California crops used 2.97 acre feet of water. An acre foot is equal to about 326,000 gallons. Almonds and pistachios, 4.49 acre feet per acre; based on the data presented in the UNESCO study, **peanuts** have the lowest fresh water footprint of comparable U.S. grown nuts.
- You can freeze cake batter; so, you can make portions that are appropriate for your household (health benefit - weight loss)



- When possible reuse food storage bags
- Use a rag or an old sock to dust (cut down on land fill from “Swiffer” type products)
- Use mop heads that you can launder and reuse (cut down on landfill)
- Buy one bottle of hand soap and dishwashing detergent in a dispenser then buy a refill to replace the soap (cut down on land fill)
- Monitor egg freshness; if your eggs stand up in water, they are old; boil them and use them for salads
- Cut back on the use of air fresheners - boil cinnamon and clove
- Rethink single use coffee pods - get a refillable version. (Single cup coffee makers are a costly way to make coffee and adds to landfill)



- Use cloth napkins in place of paper ones and washcloths instead of paper guest towels
- Shop for eco-friendly cleaning products and search for DIY cleaners You can make effective, non-toxic cleaning products using baking soda, vinegar (great for descaling coffee makers) lemon and soap as ingredients - Google for a treasure trove of ideas
- STOP buying bottled water (reduce landfill). Don't forget to cut open any 6-pack plastic holders to avoid injury to foraging animals.
- Run your dishwasher and washer & dryers when the demand is less. According to PG&E Electricity prices are higher during peak demand hours and lower during off-peak hours. Peak times may vary by rate and/or energy provider but are generally defined as the hours **between 4 to 9PM.**

- 📍 Use grey water (pasta water, leftover water in your pet's water dish) to water plants
- 📍 Go paperless when you can (reduce landfill) In the United States alone, paper bills generate almost 2 million tons of CO₂
- 📍 Use fans during the summer and comforters during the winter. If your feet are cold, you'll be cold; wear socks.
- 📍 If solar power is available to you, investigate and use it.
- 📍 Switch to Energy efficient appliances, glass doors and windows.
- 📍 Do less online shopping (reduce landfill from boxes, packing peanuts, bubble wrap)
- 📍 DON'T exchange presents, donate to a needy cause; unless you're a child you probably already have more stuff than you know what to do with; cen-

ter your efforts on someone who doesn't.



- Be creative about wrapping presents; use plain brown paper bags decorated with last year Christmas cards; a simple twine, yarn or string bow around a bottle instead of a gift bag; make your own tags & make your own gifts (baked good, crafts, etc) when you can.

- Turn off your faucet when you brush your teeth - running a faucet for more than 5 minutes uses as much energy as a 60-watt bulb in 14 hours.

- When you are replacing appliance select energy-efficient models.

- Trade tub baths for showers. A full bathtub uses about 70 gallons of water, but a 5-minute shower takes only 10 - 25 gallons (besides your just sitting in dirty water)

- Turn off electronics if they're not in use.





- Replacing one regular light bulb with an LED light can eliminate 150 lbs of carbon dioxide annually
- Screen savers do not use less energy; use “sleep mode” and turn off your computer at the end of the day.

Nurturing and cherishing creation is a command God gives not only at the beginning of history, but to each of us. It is part of his plan; it means causing the world to grow responsibly, transforming it so that it may be a garden, a habitable place for everyone.

Pope Francis

With sincere thanks to Apple Pages for providing this template and to everyone who has posted on the internet, shared their tips and helped me create this little pamphlet. Barbara Courtois, JPIC Animator, St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity. This pamphlet is for distribution within our community.