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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Holiday Meal Planning to Reduce Food Waste and Clogged Pipes

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY** – After filling up on Thanksgiving favorites, it’s hard to imagine nearly half of all food prepared for the holiday will end up in the trash. Yet, it’s true. Thousands of pounds of uneaten turkey, gravy, green beans, and mashed potatoes wind up in San Diego’s landfills. That may seem outrageous, but 40% of all food produced in the U.S. is never eaten. In fact, food is the single largest contributor to U.S. landfills today, with each individual tossing out 20 pounds of food a month on average and costing the average family more than \$1,500 each year.

Wasting food also wastes money, time, labor, transportation, water, and land resources. In addition, food breaking down in a landfill releases methane gas, a climate pollutant that is up to 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Fortunately, small changes can make a big difference. This holiday season, by following these tips from the County of San Diego, residents can save money and help the environment while enjoying their holiday meals.

**REDUCE WASTE AT HOME** – The easiest way to reduce food waste during the holidays is to buy and prepare the right amount of food. Save the Food, a campaign of the Ad Council in collaboration with the Natural Resources Defense Council, created a tool to help save money and time while reducing food waste. The Guest-imator helps create a menu based on how many people are attending your holiday feast. Try it out here: <https://www.savethefood.com/guestimator>

Reduce plate waste by using smaller dishes and serving spoons. Of course, guests can always come back for seconds. Having a plan for leftovers is another way to ensure that the food you prepare is eaten. Provide containers for guests to take home remaining food or use the leftovers in creative ways (e.g., top oatmeal with cranberry sauce or make mashed potatoes into potato pancakes). Visit [WasteFreeSD.org](http://WasteFreeSD.org) for more tips, including how to keep fruits and vegetables fresh longer.

**KEEP FATS, OILS, AND GREASES OUT OF THE DRAIN** – Another important way to protect our environment (and your plumbing) this holiday season, and year-round, is to properly manage used cooking oil.

Deep fried turkeys have become an increasingly popular holiday tradition, but can use up to three **gallons** of cooking oil. If discarded down a drain like a kitchen sink, oils, fats, and greases may block pipes and cause sewage overflow in homes, streets, lawns, and our ocean, not to mention severely damage home plumbing systems. Contrary to popular belief, mixing oil with soap or pouring hot water down the drain afterwards are not effective methods for preventing “fat-bergs” that cause sewage backups.

Fortunately, free drop off locations exist for cooking oils. Collect cooled cooking oils in a secure lidded container labeled “used cooking oil.” Do not mix chemicals or other liquids with the cooking oil. To find the closest drop off location, visit the County’s Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste database, [WasteFreeSD.org](http://WasteFreeSD.org), or call 1-877-R-1-EARTH (1-877-713-2784).

**LEARN MORE ABOUT REDUCING FOOD WASTE** – Residents interested in learning more about food waste reduction, can visit the County’s website, <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/recycling.html> or attend one of I Love A Clean San Diego’s free, family-friendly Zero Waste Workshops. The next scheduled [Save Your Scraps Workshop](#) is on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Monteville Community Center. Attendees can enjoy hands-on activities and informational lessons. For more information, please visit [CleanSD.org](http://CleanSD.org).

**About I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD)** *As San Diego’s most influential advocate for sustainability, I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD) is an environmental catalyst, awakening passion and inspiring action, empowering everyone to improve the health and beauty of our local environment. For over sixty years, we’ve brought the best in all of us together for a lasting, positive impact on our region. We are passion in action. For more information, to volunteer or donate, visit [CleanSD.org](http://CleanSD.org) or call (619) 291-0103. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

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