

Happy Earth Day: 8 Sustainable Restaurants That Embrace Zero Waste

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Earth Day, once a tree-hugging, let's-plant-seedlings occasion, has evolved into a celebration of many things, including sustainability and zero waste in restaurants. In fact, later this month, the Institute of Culinary Education (ICE) and the New School in New York City will launch the first-ever Zero Waste Food Conference to discover better methods for producing, distributing, consuming, and disposing of food in cooking and in restaurants. And, San Francisco has a special Earth Day initiative: Zero Foodprint is a community of restaurants interested in eliminating their contributions to climate change — check out these [Zero Foodprint restaurants](#) that have pledged to be carbon neutral every day. We've also got eight super sustainable restaurants in other spots around the country where Mother Nature is practically chef de cuisine.

Local Provisions, Asheville, North Carolina

Chef/owner Justin Burdett works with local farmers to best use the entire plant, like his popular Tom's Turnips, a dish that incorporates charred turnips, tempura fried turnips greens and bulbs and pureed fermented turnips. By using the entire vegetable, the dish shows off several textures and depth of flavor — and eliminates waste entirely. Another example of Burdett's zero-waste mentality: his sweet onion dish incorporates fermented and charred onions in a subtle onion water made from the onion skins. [Make a reservation at Local Provisions.](#)



Wolf, Los Angeles, California

Chef Marcel Vigneron zeros in on a zero-waste cooking, utilizing “every possible edible part of the product from seed to stalk”, such as his favored Charred Carrots dish — he uses the entire vegetable, including the skins (which boost nutrients and flavors) and carrot tops, and pairs it with Romanesco, avocado, hazelnut, broccoli, and furikake. Eat your veggies takes on a whole new level here in the City of Angels. [Make a reservation at Wolf.](#)



[Graffiti Earth at Duane Street Hotel](#), New York, New York

The menu at chef Jehangir Mehta's restaurant is focused on healthy grains and plant-based dishes. But, most importantly, Graffiti Earth works with "ugly" produce that would otherwise go to waste because of minor (and non-flavor affecting) aesthetic flaws and underutilized seafood, like broken scallops that can be caught without damaging ecosystems. Outside the kitchen, chef Mehta is also committed to the environment with repurposed furniture and napkins made from renewable materials. [Make a reservation at Graffiti Earth](#).



[Wrench & Rodent Seabasstropub](#), Oceanside, California

Chef Davin Waite plates his own entrées — and does the dishes, too — as part of his impressive efforts to combat food waste. “Taking on the role of dish washer in his kitchen allows him to see exactly what his guests are wasting,” says a restaurant spokeswoman. “It’s the best feedback he can get as a chef.” And that’s only one way chef Waite tackles the zero-waste issue. He also supports Save Good Food, using “ugly” and surplus produce from local farms. And, Waite makes sure to use the whole of any ingredient in his dishes (for example, not only broccoli florets, but the stems and greens, too). [Make a reservation at Wrench & Rodent Seabasstropub](#).



South City Kitchen, Buckhead, Georgia

Open less than a year, this popular Southern-concept restaurant (fried green tomatoes, y'all) is already composting 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of organic matter each month. The fryer grease is also recycled and LED lighting meets strict energy codes. It's part of the Fifth Group, a collection of restaurants that recycle and compost 95 percent of the product that comes through the doors, resulting in almost one million pounds of compost and 500,000 pounds of recycled materials per year, South City Kitchen has three locations in Greater Atlanta. [Make a reservation at South City Kitchen.](#)



[The Market Place](#), Asheville, North Carolina

Named one of America's most sustainable chefs by Mother Nature Network and chosen for the past four years to address Congress on food sustainability, chef William Dissen's restaurant has put the focus on local foods for more than 35 years, long before it was a hashtag. The menu, which highlights seasonal, local comfort food, like Mac & Cheese (Benton's prosciutto, peas, elbow macaroni, cheddar mornay, herb crust), comforts the planet, too. [Make a reservation at The Market Place.](#)



Urbane, Seattle, Washington

The first LEED-certified hotel in Seattle, Urbane partners with local farms and purveyors to source seasonal ingredients when they are at their peak quality. The restaurant also partners with Cedar Grove composting to turn food and plant waste into compost that is then used throughout the region. And, the Natura water system triple-filters city water for use in the restaurant, which is sealed in reusable glass bottles for all diners, eliminating the need for plastic bottles. [Make a reservation at Urbane.](#)



There are scores of sustainable restaurants on OpenTable. Let us know your fave here or over on [Facebook](#), [G+](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), or [Twitter](#). And, remember to snap + share your [#dishpics](#) with us on Instagram for a chance to win in our [weekly giveaway](#).

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