

## UNO Green Guide

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### Reduce & Reuse

One of the best ways to reduce your environmental impact and help you save money is to buy less stuff! It takes significantly, up to 4 times, more energy in grams of CO2 emissions to purchase something online than in a nearby store. If you need to buy stuff, ditch Amazon and go hit up your local Target!

When you do buy, buy fewer items that contain plastic! Plastic is often used for single-use items that have permanent alternatives. Some examples include using:

- Cloth, re-usable grocery bags and produce bags instead of plastic bags
- Reusable water bottles that can be refilled at one of UNO's filtered water stations instead of using single-use, plastic water bottles
- Metal straws instead of single-use, plastic straws (Carry it with you!)
- Reusable, wood utensils instead of single-use, plastic utensils (Carry them with you, too!)
- Shampoo bars and soap bars instead of plastic-bottled shampoos and body washes
- Mason jars, Pyrex, or Tupperware instead of single-use, plastic bags for bringing your lunch or snacks
- Reusable beeswax food wrap instead of plastic wrap
- Stainless steel razor blades instead of plastic, single-use razors
- Plastic-free, natural deodorant instead of single-use, plastic containers
- Refillable floss instead of buying single-use, plastic flossers or containers of floss

- Bamboo toothbrushes instead of single-use, plastic toothbrushes

Other alternatives that cut down on waste include using:

- Kitchen towels, rags, and old t-shirts instead of single-use paper towels
- Reusable ear swab instead of single-use cotton swabs (Q-tips)
- Reusable menstrual hygiene products (cups, underwear, etc.) instead of single-use menstrual hygiene products (pads, tampons, etc.)
- Reusable, washable cotton rounds instead of single-use cotton balls
- Make your own cleaning solvents instead of purchasing them in single-use, plastic containers
- Growlers to [refill beer](#) and kombucha instead of purchasing single-use containers
- Cloth diapering instead of single-use, plastic-lined diapers

It's also important to note that you can reuse stuff you already have! Here are some reuse tips!

- Buy used clothes from second-hand stores and do clothes swaps with friends instead of buying new
- Donate used items (clothes, blankets, towels, pens, etc.) to local schools, shelters, or other organizations
- Reuse candle containers as trinket holders or planters.
- Sell old electronics, furniture, etc. to friends or through online marketplaces
- Bring old books to your local library, and get a library card so you can have unlimited access to books instead of buying them to read once
- Bring your old sneakers to a Nike store to participate in their [Shoe Recycling Program](#).
- Reuse gift bags for upcoming birthdays and holidays.

## Recycle

There are times when we cannot avoid purchasing an item but also cannot continue using it. In these cases, turn to recycling where relevant instead of contributing to unnecessary waste!

The following items can be recycled right here at UNO.

### Plastics #1 & #2

- Read the number printed within the recycling logo.
- All items must be **completely cleaned and dried** of all food, liquid, or product debris before being put into a recycling container or dumpster.

### White Paper

- Please remove staples, paperclips, etc.

### Cans

- Small aluminum cans
- Small steel cans

## Mixed Paper

- Newspapers
- Phone books
- Catalogs
- Office paper
- Other mixed paper

## Cardboard

- Corrugated cardboard
- Boxboard
- All cardboard boxes must be flattened!

If you're interested in recycling more than what is accepted at UNO, check out what is accepted at the nearby [Elysian Fields Recycling Drop Off Center](#).

## Important Note

If you collect your own recycling, do not use a plastic bag or liner—and DO NOT put any plastic bags in UNO's recycling dumpsters. Anything recycled alongside even a single plastic bag will be treated as landfill trash.

**The entire recycling dumpster would go to the landfill.**

Please help us maintain the purity of our recycling stream! Keep plastic bags out of our recycling dumpsters!

## Glass

Unfortunately, glass can never be added to comingled recycling.

You can recycle glass through [Glass Half Full NOLA](#) and their weekly drop-off program.

## Food

Food waste has gotten a lot of attention recently as a high contributor to the US's methane emissions. The most effective way to manage your food waste is being smart about your consumption! This is similar to reduction, don't buy it if you won't eat it! The average US household throws away 1/4<sup>th</sup> of food purchased. Many people ask, "if something is biodegradable, why does it matter if it goes to the landfill?" Here are some reasons why you should take extreme efforts to minimize your food waste and compost before landfilling:

- According to the USDA, ~30-40% of the food supply in the USA is wasted every year. This equates to approximately **133 billion pounds and \$161 billion dollars in 2010**.
- The EPA estimates that in 2010, 218.9 pounds of food was wasted per person.
- Food waste that enters a landfill decomposes via a process called anaerobic decomposition, meaning that no oxygen is added, since the trash is just piled on

top of each other over time. This decomposition method releases methane, a greenhouse gas.

- Composting is done via a process called aerobic decomposition (adding oxygen to the food waste). This chemical reaction releases carbon dioxide instead of methane.
- Methane contributes 72% more harmful greenhouse gas emissions than carbon dioxide.

Some tips on how to reduce your food waste:

- Plan your meals in advance, making very detailed lists and sticking to them.
- Look in your refrigerator and see what you have before you go to the grocery store. What can you make to include ingredients you already have?
- Look up how to properly store your produce so that it stays fresh longer.
- Buy frozen fruits and vegetables! There is no proven information that they are less healthy for you, and they can be stored for much longer than fresh alternatives.
- Freeze everything! Bread, meat, and leftovers are all very yummy after being frozen. You can even make large batches of food and freeze them in individually portioned containers for quick, easy lunches.
- Do not store produce in the produce drawers! This seems like a very strange suggestion, but it has been shown that many people forget about produce once it's put into drawers, increasing the probability that it will go forgotten (out of sight, out of mind). Store items that take a while to expire, such as beverages, in the produce drawers instead.
- Ask about portion sizes at restaurants and if you over-order, take it home with you for lunch tomorrow.
- If you have produce that seems "old," look up recipes for it! It can probably still be used in a soup, casserole, smoothie, etc. For example, stale bread can be used to make croutons, beet tops and other veggies can be added to stock with some seasoning for a yummy soup, etc.
- Give bits of produce that you normally wouldn't eat (broccoli stems, strawberry tops, carrot tops, etc.) to your dog. Of course, always check to see if it's safe for them to eat it before you give it to them!

If you have some food that you absolutely cannot come up with anything creative to salvage it, you can avoid its landfill-fate by composting it! Keep a reusable container in your freezer and add your food waste to it. Acceptable food waste includes:

- Fruit scraps
- Vegetable scraps (peels, pits, seeds)
- Eggshells
- Nut shells
- Seed shells
- Teabags
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Plain grains
- Plain pasta

- Plain bread

**Not compostable:** meat, dairy, oily foods, bones

**Note:** Freezing your compost reduces pests and smells. When the container is full, bring it to your closest [composting drop-off station](#).

Eating less meat, particularly red meat, helps the environment by reducing transportation costs and water reduction. When you think about it, if you eat produce from a local farm, the “energy” used is from watering the plants, then distributing them to your local farmers market. That definitely uses some water and energy, but when you compare it to meat, it is extremely small.

To produce meat, you have to first water grains that have to be shipped to a processing facility to turn it into feed. The processing facility must be cleaned regularly to maintain a standard for processing food. Then the feed is shipped to the farm. The cattle, chickens, pigs, etc. then eat the feed. Once the animals are large enough for processing, they must then be shipped to a processing facility. The processing facility must be cleaned even more thoroughly than the feed facility, as there is now room for bacterial and viral contamination. Most meat processing facilities are sprayed down at least 8 times each day. Once the meat is processed, then it is shipped all over the country. For more information on how eating less meat can make a big impact on your carbon footprint, visit [here](#).

To support local farmers, purchase your food at farmers markets because:

- “Local” means lower transportation distances, which means lower ozone-depleting substance emissions.
- Local farmers markets often do not pre-package their items, which reduces the amount of plastic used.
- Most local farmers markets encourage bring your own bag, which also reduces plastic consumption.
- You get to meet your neighbors and support your community!

A list of farmers markets in New Orleans can be found [here](#).

If you are too busy to go to the farmer’s markets or don’t have transportation, there is a community-supported agriculture (CSA) through [Covey Rise Farms](#) that delivers local produce to your front door!

## Transportation

New Orleans is not a beacon for green transportation methods. However, when possible, try to take public transportation or ride your bike to reduce emissions from vehicles. If you do choose to bike, plan your route using the [New Orleans Bike Easy Map](#). It will show you the best routes for bike friendly travel. Google maps can help you plan your trip via public transportation and the New Orleans Region Transportation Authority (RTA) has an app that gives real time updates on bus and streetcar location.

When you do have to drive, try to reduce trips by planning to do activities in the same area. Also plan to do more activities with friends and car pool instead of driving multiple vehicles.

## Water

Reducing water consumption has been around for a while as a way to reduce your carbon footprint, but that doesn't make it any less important! Here are some ways to reduce the amount of water you use:

- Set a timer to encourage yourself to take shorter showers. Aim for 5 minutes or less.
- Turn off the water when you brush your teeth
- Wash dishes in the dishwasher instead of by-hand
- Do not pre-rinse your dishes before loading them in the dishwasher
- Run full loads in your dishwasher
- Adjust your washing machine to the correct load-size each time you wash your clothes
- Fix any pipe leaks as soon as possible
- Collect rainwater or water used to rinse produce to water your plants; you can also apply for a locally-painted rain collection barrel through [Green Light New Orleans!](#)
- Switch your toilet to either WaterSense-certified or dual-flush toilets, which use significantly less water
- If it is yellow let it mellow, if it is brown flush it down.

## Energy

Don't forget to turn off the lights! That isn't just something your dad has yelled at you since you were born, it's a way to save energy, which also saves money! Here are some other energy-saving tips:

- Unplug electronics when not in use. Even if they are off, they still absorb energy
- Purchase EnergyStar appliances (dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, dryers, etc.). These products are certified to reduce your energy consumption.
- Hang dry your laundry instead of using a dryer
- Limit the amount of time your refrigerator door is open
- Use fans and windows instead of air conditioning. Turn off window units in rooms that you are not using.

## Community

- Consider joining the UNO Sustainability Circle for a chance to become more involved on the progress on campus!
- Join other on-campus sustainability focused groups such as, Beekeeper's Club, Community Garden Club, Louisiana Environmental Advocacy Force (LEAF), etc.
- Walk with your friends to the store, restaurants, bars, and entertainment spots.
- Consider planting trees and other plants to beautify your space and to help clean our air.
- Volunteer with green focused non-profits. A list can be found [here](#).

## Resources

- **Go Green NOLA** - <http://www.gogreennola.org/>
- **YLC Recycles** - <https://ylcnola.org/project/ylc-recycles/>
- **Lafitte Greenway** - <https://www.lafittegreenway.org/greenway>
- **New Orleans City Recycling Information** - <https://www.nola.gov/sanitation/recycling/>

- **Crescent City Farmers Market** - <https://www.crescentcityfarmersmarket.org/>

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