



## New Year's Resolutions

*"Look at my works! See how beautiful they are—how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it."*

(Midrash Kohelet Rabbah 1 on Ecclesiastes 7:13)

At the 2015 Hazon Food Conference, we've delved into the topic of "Food in a Changing Climate," and thought deeply about how to fight climate change. The best long-term solutions will require profound changes in how we generate energy as a society. But there are also everyday actions and lifestyle changes we can make to have real impact.

We can set goals for both. We can make changes to reduce our own carbon footprint. And at the same time, we can get together and take collective action. Alone, we are one drop in a bucket, but as communities we can fill the bucket!

Here are seven ideas for steps you can take to ensure a healthy climate of tomorrow:

### **1. Be aware of what food you're eating/wasting**

Use Hazon's [Food Guide](#) to identify areas in which you and your community can improve your food sourcing, animal welfare standards, food service, and food waste management. Learn how to organize sustainable holiday-themed meals, purchase healthier, local, and fair trade products, and start composting. When food shopping, plan out meals ahead of time, and reduce portion sizes if you find yourself routinely throwing prepared food away. [Sustainable America](#) has great resources on reducing food waste and [BuyingPoultry](#) can help you understand animal welfare standards. Hazon can help you access food from a local farmer via a [CSA](#) near you (or teach you how to start one!).

### **2. Assess your purchasing habits**

In order of importance - reduce, reuse, recycle. It's best not to consume raw materials in the first place, so think carefully about whether you're really going to use something before you buy it. This applies to food, clothes, office supplies, kitchen supplies, and cleaning products. Each item you recycle is one fewer thing that has to be produced, and reduces the amount of material that ends up in landfills. See what you can buy secondhand. Make sure to place recycling bins next to each trash can. Wherever possible, purchase natural cleaning products free of hazardous chemicals, recycled paper, and biodegradable cutlery. These products are often just as cheap, if not cheaper, than "standard" supplies. Visit [Environmental Working Group](#) to learn more.

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### **3. Travel with others**

Fly less, drive less, carpool. If you do drive, do anything you can to improve your mileage/gallon - like keeping your tires inflated, your engine tuned up, and keeping to the speed limit. However, walking, biking, or taking a train or bus are vastly superior ways to travel. Want to get more comfortable on a bike? Check out [Hazon's New York Ride!](#)

### **4. Benchmark: estimate your carbon footprint, and your synagogue's!**

If you or your building hasn't benchmarked your energy use, now is the time! Energy audits help institutions peel back the mystery surrounding their energy use, offering recommendations for better efficiency and lower utility bills. In New York, [NYSERDA](#) offers free energy audits and incentives for small non-profits, and subsidized [Flex Tech](#) audits for larger institutions. Check the [Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency](#) (DSIRE) to find out what kinds of energy incentives your state offers. Hazon's new [Seal of Sustainability](#) also will soon have three audits geared for Jewish institutions (on food, energy/waste, and health/ecosystems).

### **5. Host a Green Kiddush**

Green a weekly event at your institution. For synagogues, a [green kiddush](#) offers a way to publicly showcase your institution's commitment to greening through a Jewish lens. Make a few small changes, such as serving a meal free of factory farm meat, cutting out plasticware, or offering local produce and organic grape juice. Time the Green Kiddush with holidays like Earth Day, Tu B'shvat, or the reading of Parshat Noah (the Torah portion describing the biblical Flood).

### **6. Start educating and advocating!**

Give a sermon, host a lecture series, show a movie, or form a book club about food, water, sustainability, or climate change. Check out [Grist](#), [The Guardian](#), and the [Jewish Climate Change Campaign](#) for the latest in climate change news and advocacy. Advocate for public transit, fight to shut down a coal-fired power plant, or plant trees in your neighborhood park. Advocating for public policies that support the development of clean energy and efficient transportation is probably the most climate-friendly step you can take today. There are environmental campaigns underway in every corner of the country, at the local, state, national, and international levels. And - share your greening successes! Use social media to let friends and organizations nearby know what you're up to.

### **7. Buy carbon offsets**

It's inevitable that we will emit greenhouse gases, as hard as we try not to (by coming to events like the Food Conference!). But we can help absorb the emissions we produce by taking simple steps -- like planting trees or buying offsets. Though there is some controversy around the effectiveness of offsets, most agree they are better than nothing. Examples include [TerraPass](#) and [Carbon Covenant](#). Many airlines offer offset programs as well.

**What's your New Year's resolution? Have feedback or more ideas on this? Let us know at [foodeducation@hazon.org](mailto:foodeducation@hazon.org)!**