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October 2019



Your monthly dose of *good news* about climate change.

Happy Thanksgiving week! In this issue we reflect on some of the reasons we have hope for the future, despite the doom-and-gloom stories we read about daily. We also carve out some tips to green your Thanksgiving and share some pointers on how to talk about climate change at family gatherings. Enjoy!

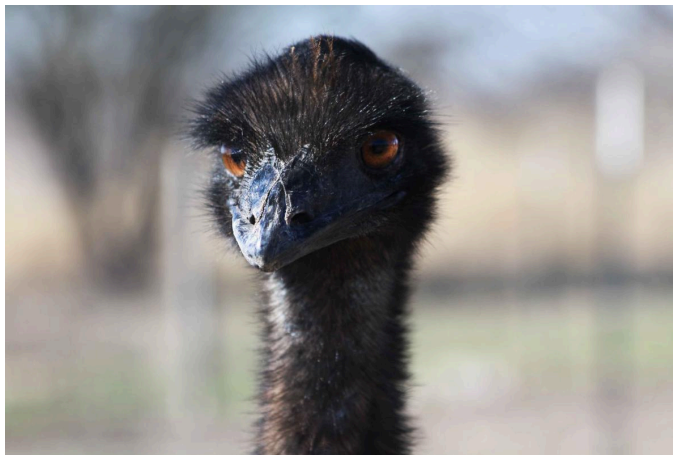
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How To Talk About Climate At Thanksgiving

Ugh, right? We've all been there. You start by asking Uncle Ed to pass the corn, but before it reaches your end of the table you're screaming that you hope he enjoys it because by the time Baby Erika is his age there won't be any corn left to enjoy.

Heated conversations can escalate quickly, but we've got your back. This Thanksgiving is an opportunity to discover what values we have in common, and to talk about how we can create a world that is healthy for children today and still livable for our grandchildren tomorrow. *Think of your grandchildren, Uncle Ed! Ahem.*

Through having difficult conversations with empathy and a goal of finding common ground, we can do a lot to heal a country that is increasingly divided. We put together this guide to help. Good luck!

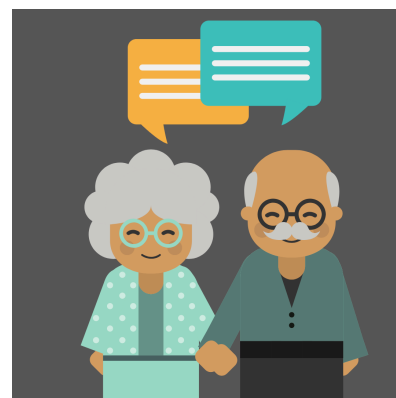


Set the stage

- **Remove the silverware and knives from the table.** Just kidding. Unless it's to replace the plastic ones with real cutlery; then we're totally serious.
- **Assume that everyone wants a healthy future and connect with each other on that level.** Most Americans understand that climate change is real and bad, but some are worried that the solutions will cause them economic hardship or to lose freedoms.
- **Listen and try to understand.** Get to the heart of why someone doesn't believe the science. Ask questions about what they think is causing extreme weather, or what it is about news stories that they don't trust.
- **Share your personal climate story.** Talk about why you are worried about your future and why solutions are important to you.
- **Recognize that this might be a longer conversation than you can have in one sitting.** Consider Thanksgiving an opportunity to lay the groundwork for future conversations. If you find common ground, you could follow up with articles that speak to particular concerns and keep the conversation going from there.

Conversation Starters

Ask the elders at the table what they remember about their earliest Thanksgiving and highlight differences about today's gathering. Did they know the farmers that provided their turkey, their apples, their pumpkins for pie? Did they use disposable plates? This can be a starting point for understanding what Thanksgiving meant in the past and how things may have been more sustainable years ago. What did they learn from their parents about waste? Was their food as processed as it is now?



Frame the conversation around shared values

Climate change impacts every part of life. Rather than debating scientific evidence, you can approach the conversation using a topic that is important to the person you are speaking with. Some common unifying issues:

- **Health:** Actions that prevent carbon pollution improve health right now while also making the world more sustainable for future generations. Check out our [list of climate and health resources](#) for a different way to think about climate action.

- **Children:** Climate solutions and transitioning to clean energy protects kids from dangerous pollutants and helps them live healthier lives. For more talking points, check out our fact sheets about [how climate change impacts kids' health](#).
- **Energy Independence:** Rather than debating whether climate change is caused by humans, try mentioning that switching to solar or wind could help the U.S. become energy independent.
- **Economic Opportunity:** [Many professional fields](#) address climate change. Jobs in renewable energy, and agricultural and environmental engineering are providing pathways to young adults who want to make a difference and a good living.
- **Government Spending:** Climate change will lead to increased spending in the form of disaster assistance, infrastructure damage, healthcare, and flood and crop insurance. Investing now to prevent these damages is essential.

Gratitude Journal: 7 Reasons We Have Climate Hope

We're not all Pollyanna and sunshine over here—we know that climate change is the biggest challenge of our lifetimes. So this Thanksgiving we're remembering the climate actions that help us stay positive and motivated:

- **One-third of Americans live in a place that has 100% clean energy goals.** Local efforts are [driving big changes](#) that will cut out fossil fuels, decrease pollution, and improve our health.
- **Climate journalism is taking center stage.** Newsrooms are increasingly focused on [climate solutions, engagement, and personal storytelling](#), which is key to helping us all stay informed and engaged. Over 1200 news outlets reaching 850 million people covered the release of the [2019 Lancet Countdown](#) report with a top-line warning of impacts to kids' health.
- **There's still time to create a healthier future.** The scary news stories about what will happen if we don't take swift climate action will only come to life if we fail to act. Isn't that soothing? Our Research Fellow Dr. Renee Salas co-authored the 2019 Lancet Countdown report's U.S. Policy Brief, which recommends [mitigation and adaptation strategies to avert catastrophe](#). "There's a path to a different future. One of the hardest things for me as a doctor is when we don't have treatments available," said Dr. Salas. "But [with climate change] we have them, we just need the political and collective will to implement them."
- **Doctors are trusted sources of information, and they're joining the climate conversation,** which is why we launched [Climate MD](#) to help medical professionals turn awareness of the health threats posed by climate change into actions that improve health today.
- **Innovators are making big change possible.** Start-ups—[like this one](#) that concentrates solar energy hot enough to create steel, cement, and glass—are working to replace energy-intensive processes with renewable power.



- **The shift in public opinion.** During the September climate strikes, climate was the second most talked-about issue on social media! A Pew report released yesterday found that [77% of Americans agree](#) that the U.S. should develop renewable energy over fossil fuels. The momentum is building and there's no turning back.
- **There is a role for everyone who wants to create change.** We can all do better—fly less, eat less meat, find better ways to get to work. At the same time, we're not going to meet our climate goals through individual actions alone. Check out the [U.S. Call to Action](#) for a policy agenda we can encourage our policy makers to strive for.

Tips For A Sustainable Thanksgiving

To let some steam out of this pressure-cooker of a holiday, we've compiled a menu of options for your consideration. True fact: it's better for all of us to try a few of these things than for a few of us to try all the things.

Shopping

It's all about planning! When it comes to creating a healthy, nutritious, sustainable dinner, preventing waste is at the top of the list.

- **Shop your fridge first:** So you don't buy more of what you already have.
- **Buy wisely:** Use Save The Food's Guestimator to calculate how much you'll need to feed the small, average, and big eaters on your guest list. You'll reduce food waste and save money too!
- **Go smaller on turkey, bigger on veggies:** Vegetables are less resource-intensive to grow, if you bulk up on the side dishes you'll need a smaller bird to go around.
- **Buy local and organic if you can, and don't stress if you can't.** Check out EWG's 2019 [Dirty Dozen and Clean 15](#) lists to learn which produce has the most and least pesticides.
- **Reduce paper and plastic** by using your everyday dishes, glasses, and silverware.
- **Decorate with nature:** Why spend money on store-bought decorations when you could create a free centerpiece with pinecones, acorns, and autumn leaves?



Avoiding waste

- **Send leftovers home with your guests:** Bonus points if they bring their own reusable containers, but have some on hand if they don't.
- **Assemble your own freezer meals** for easy lunches in a few weeks, when you are feeling nostalgic for stuffing. You can also make broth from turkey bones and veggie scraps to freeze for later.
- **We love these [Thanksgiving leftover recipes](#)** for meals that don't taste like Thanksgiving. Think: Turkey Pho, tamales, and Waldorf Salad.

- **Compost your scraps** to enrich the soil for future Thanksgiving feasts.

Happy Thanksgiving!

We're taking a break for the holidays and will see you after the New Year, to take a look at what 2020 will have in store for climate change. We're optimistic we'll find good things!

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