

# Sustainable Practices for Restaurants



[www.tnsustainabletourism.com](http://www.tnsustainabletourism.com)

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Restaurants are an integral part of Tennessee's tourism industry, and as such, restaurants have the opportunity to have a significant impact on the daily lives of our visitors and our citizens. There are literally dozens of opportunities for restaurants to minimize their impacts on the environment. Many are simple, common-sense operational changes – and almost all of the ideas listed here can save your facility money!! Take a few minutes to go through the items on this list to learn more about how your restaurant can become more sustainable. Make sure to let your customers know about the good things you are doing for the environment.

## Sustainable Practices

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- 🌱 **Eliminate the use of Styrofoam and minimize disposables.** Minimize use of all disposables and eliminate the use of Styrofoam-based products for take-out and leftovers.
  - 🌱 **Recycle Grease.** Some communities require restaurants to collect and recycle their grease. Grease filtering companies can also greatly reduce grease wastes (and costs).
  - 🌱 **Recycle and Reduce Waste.** The following items can be recycled: steel cans, aluminum cans, cardboard, plastic, paper, and composting of waste foods.
  - 🌱 **Use Water Efficiently.** Have a plan for conserving water that should consider water-saving dishwashers, faucets, and toilets; leak detection, and an effective landscape watering plan.
  - 🌱 **Conserve Energy.** Have a plan in place to reduce overall energy consumption to include replacement of lighting and equipment with energy-efficient alternatives such as compact-fluorescent lighting, LED Exit signs, lighting sensors, efficient heating and cooling, and *EnergyStar* kitchen appliances and computers.
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## Styrofoam elimination/ reduction of disposables:

Use disposable containers that are:

- 🌱 Made from bio-based materials
- 🌱 Made from recycled content paper
- 🌱 Compostable
- 🌱 Recyclable

## Grease Recycling:

- 🌱 Store the grease and have it picked up by rendering company
- 🌱 Periodically pump the grease traps
- 🌱 Filter the grease to prolong its life
- 🌱 Have a contract with grease filtering company
- 🌱 Use our grease to make bio-diesel

## Recycling:

- 🌱 Glass
- 🌱 Aluminum Cans
- 🌱 Plastic
- 🌱 Office Paper
- 🌱 Toner cartridges

- ♻ Newspaper
- ♻ Cardboard
- ♻ Packing Supplies
- ♻ Fluorescent Lamps
- ♻ Batteries
- ♻ Electronics equipment – computers, etc

## Waste Reduction:

- ♻ Track overall waste bills
- ♻ Have numeric goal to reduce overall materials that go to the landfill
  - kitchen
- ♻ Donate excess food from events
- ♻ Compost food waste and other compostables
- ♻ Have an effective food inventory control to minimize waste
- ♻ Purchase locally grown produce and other foods
- ♻ Purchase organic and/or “sustainably-grown” foods (<http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues>)
  - dining room
- ♻ Use reusable dishware and glassware & minimize use of disposables
- ♻ Use non-bleached napkins and coffee filters
- ♻ Provide condiments, cream and sugar, etc. in bulk
- ♻ Use water pitches and filtered water to minimize the use of single-use bottles
- ♻ Use menus and table placards as opportunity to communicate green activities:
- ♻ Print menus on recycled content paper with soy-based inks and include recycling symbols, recycled-content, and message about soy-based inks on printed material
  - restrooms
- ♻ Use bulk soap dispensers in public restrooms
- ♻ Use high-efficiency hand-dryers
- ♻ Purchase recycled-content paper-towels and toilet paper
  - office
- ♻ Use a last-in/first-out inventory & effective labeling systems
- ♻ Encourage suppliers to minimize packaging and other waste materials
- ♻ Purchase from vendors and service providers with a commitment to the environment
- ♻ Make 2-sided copies / printed materials
- ♻ Use electronic correspondence and forms
  - building and grounds
- ♻ Using “green” Cleaners ([www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)) that are dispensed in bulk
- ♻ Purchase durable equipment and furniture
- ♻ Purchase low-VOC carpets and fabrics
- ♻ Use reused building materials or those from sustainable sources
- ♻ Use latex paints that and low-VOC
- ♻ Re-use paint thinners
- ♻ Properly recycle and/or disposal of thinners and solvents
- ♻ Perform preventative maintenance on all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- ♻ Use less toxic materials
- ♻ Use “integrated pest management” (IPM) - [www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm)
- ♻ Minimize use of pesticides and herbicides in landscaping
- ♻ Use a nutrient management plan that minimizes the use of fertilizers in landscaping

## Water Conservation:

- ♻ Track overall water usage and wastewater
- ♻ Have a numeric goal to reduce water consumption over time
- ♻ Perform preventative maintenance to stop drips and leaks
- ♻ Use water-flow metering to discover leaks and areas of high use
- ♻ Have: high efficiency dishwashers, low flow restrictors on faucets and showerheads, Low flow toilets, waterless urinals, composting toilets, automatic faucets or toilets in public restrooms.
- ♻ Discourage water-based cleanup (sweep first) and use microfiber technology mops
- ♻ Have an effective landscape management plan which utilizes drought tolerant species, metering and rain gauges, and/or minimizes lawn areas.
- ♻ Have an effective storm water management plan including: rain gardens, pervious pavement, and/or minimization of impervious areas (paving, concrete, etc)
- ♻ Have a green roof ([www.greenroofs.com](http://www.greenroofs.com))

- 🌱 Use cisterns, rain barrels ([www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/stormwater.htm](http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/stormwater.htm)), and/or drip line irrigation
- 🌱 Maintain vegetative buffers around streams and ponds

## Energy Efficiency:

- 🌱 Track overall energy bills
- 🌱 Have had an energy audit to identify efficiency opportunities
- 🌱 Have a numeric goal to reduce energy usage over time
- 🌱 Have an “energy management system” in place to track and meter energy usage
- 🌱 Calculate the pollution factor of our energy usage by using a pollution calculator, such as [www.cleanerandgreener.org/resources/pollutioncalculator.htm](http://www.cleanerandgreener.org/resources/pollutioncalculator.htm)
- 🌱 Have evaluated existing ovens and other kitchen equipment for energy efficiency
- 🌱 Have considered upgrading to an Energy Star Commercial Kitchen Package: [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=commercial\\_food\\_service.commercial\\_food\\_service](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=commercial_food_service.commercial_food_service)

Use:

- 🌱 High efficiency compact fluorescent light bulbs in all rooms and in canned lighting
- 🌱 LED Exit Signs -- [www.energystar.gov/ia/business/small\\_business/led\\_exitsigns\\_techsheets.pdf](http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/small_business/led_exitsigns_techsheets.pdf)
- 🌱 High efficiency fluorescent ballasts and lamps (T-5’s & T-8’s)
- 🌱 Ceiling fans
- 🌱 Have a high efficiency heating & air conditioning (HVAC) system
- 🌱 Perform preventative maintenance on HVAC system
- 🌱 Have geothermal heating and cooling
- 🌱 Have individual thermostats for each room
- 🌱 Have installed additional insulation
- 🌱 Use natural lighting
- 🌱 Use lighting sensors to turn on/off lights
- 🌱 Use occupancy sensors to turn on/off lights
- 🌱 Generate electricity from photovoltaic solar panels
- 🌱 Have a solar water heating system
- 🌱 Generate electricity from a wind turbine
- 🌱 Purchase **Energy Star** computers, appliances, etc. ([www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov))
- 🌱 Have thermal-rated windows and insulation
- 🌱 Use of directional (downward-facing) lighting in parking areas and other outdoor areas
- 🌱 Purchase “Green Tags” or “Renewable Energy Certificates” to support new renewable energy resources ([www.green-e.org](http://www.green-e.org))
- 🌱 Use LEED criteria when developing new buildings ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org))
- 🌱 Work to achieve LEED-EB (existing building) certification through operational changes and renovations
- 🌱 Use fuel efficient vehicles or hybrid vehicles
- 🌱 Use **Energy Star’s** Benchmarking Tools for the Hospitality Industry ([www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=hospitality.bus\\_hospitality](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=hospitality.bus_hospitality))

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**Thank you for support and commitment toward sustainable tourism in Tennessee.**

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