

## SUGGESTED WEBSITES

greenandjust.org/other-resources.html  
fairtradejudaica.com  
ecoproducts.com  
dinegreen.com  
freecycle.org

## RESOURCES:

### Caterers

Consider caterers with the Tav HaYosher. Launched by Uri L'Tzedek, the Tav HaYosher is a local grassroots initiative that brings workers, restaurant owners, and community members together to create just workplaces in kosher restaurants and catering services. In order to qualify for the Tav HaYosher, a restaurant must protect workers' rights including fair pay, fair time, and a safe work environment.

### Gemachs

After your celebration is over, please consider donating your outfit to a gemach (Jewish donation agency), so others who may not be able to afford new outfits can also have clothing that will make them feel beautiful at their simchahs. Search online for gemachs to find those in the area.

### Tzedakah

Your simchah should reflect your Jewish values of *tzedek* (justice) and *chesed* (compassion). There are many ways you can give *tzedakah* (charity) at your simchah: ask for donations to a charity instead of gifts, use beautifully decorated *tzedakah* boxes as centerpieces. There are many organizations that work to create *tzedek* and transform our communities; choose the one(s) that resonate most with your family.

### Food Banks

Donating leftover food from your simchah prevents waste and fulfills the mitzvah to help feed those in need. Food banks generally accept prepared catered food as long as:

- It was kept refrigerated.
- It never left the kitchen.
- It is properly packaged.
- It is not more than a couple of days old.

The following is a list of food banks in New York that accept food from catered celebrations. For a more detailed list of food banks please visit Food Bank NYC or Feeding America.

#### Bronx Jewish Community Council

[nminkove@bjcconline.org](mailto:nminkove@bjcconline.org)

#### City Harvest:

Call Food Sourcing team at 646.412.0758 or email [fooddonations@cityharvest.org](mailto:fooddonations@cityharvest.org)

#### Food Bank For New York City:

Food Sourcing Manager, 212.566.7855 x 2250, [foodsourcing@foodbanknyc.org](mailto:foodsourcing@foodbanknyc.org)

#### Rescuing Leftover Cuisine:

[rescuingleftovercuisine.org/donate-food](http://rescuingleftovercuisine.org/donate-food)

## CREDIT

Much of the information in this guide was borrowed from: "Greening Your Simcha" from Beth Meyer Synagogue's Environmental Committee, Just Simchas Guide to Bar and Bat Mitzvah from Uri L'Tzedek, the Bayit, and the HIR Green Team. Photos are from jag studios.

## DISCLAIMER

Throughout this brochure we have listed a number of websites, vendors, etc. Please note that we do not endorse these website, groups, or companies as we have not necessarily shopped at or worked with all of these people or organizations. Please do your own "due diligence" – research and reference checking – when choosing people to contract with or products to purchase for your event. Above all, make sure you enjoy your simchah!

# So you're planning a simchah...



As you plan a special event, please keep in mind that your celebration also has an impact on our environment. This guide is a starting point to help you align your values and increase your positive impact on the world as you celebrate the significant milestones in your life.

Please note that this brochure is not a comprehensive guide, but a beginning on your "green simchah" journey.

Contact [seal@hazon.org](mailto:seal@hazon.org) for more information.



## INVITATIONS/THANK YOU'S

- Consider eliminating paper invitations altogether and using an online invitation app such as Evite, PaperlessPost, or GreenEnvelope. You can use these for the main event, for events surrounding the main event, or as a "save the date".
- Print invitations on recycled paper & find a printer that uses low-toxic dyes or soy-based ink.
- Print double-sided whenever possible.
- Encourage guests to recycle invitations.
- Avoid foil-lined or plastic envelopes as they cannot be recycled.
- Consider postcard-style invitations.
- Ask for replies via phone or email rather than including a separate reply card.

## BOOKLETS

B'nai mitzvah booklets are often used to provide event details and to recognize important people. Consider printing on recycled paper with soy-based inks. Print only enough for each guest to reduce waste and recycle leftovers.

## DECORATIONS/CENTERPIECES

- Consider centerpieces which can be donated or re-used: toys, books, sports equipment, games, art supplies, or food to be donated to local community centers.
- Use plants instead of pre-cut flowers so they can be given to guests.
- If using flowers, before your event arrange a place to take them such as nursing homes or senior centers.
- Consider reusable table linens first, paper next. Avoid plastic or choose plastic made with recycled content.
- If using balloons, consider latex first. Make sure balloons are responsibly discarded after use.

## FOOD

Food is often the main attraction! The fear of running out of food often leads to an overabundance of leftovers. Work with the caterer to order only enough.

- Work with your caterer for the leftovers to be donated to organizations or local food banks.
- Recycle everything that can be: cans, cartons, plastic bottles, glass, organic waste as compost.
- Buy local and/or organic food.
- Consider using reusable plates/utensils.
- If you choose not to use reusable place settings, consider using biodegradables such as paper, corn, or sugar cane-based materials. Please do not use Styrofoam.
- If using paper products, consider using products with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification.
- Reduce the amount you need. Do you really need plates for the hors d'oeuvres, or will napkins suffice?
- Skip menus/course listings on each table.
- Bring containers or baggies to take the leftovers home, or send with the guests. Why cook tomorrow?

## KIPPOT

Buy kippot made from recycled materials or fair trade sources. Take a look at Fair Trade Judaica, Fair Trade Kippot, or ZaraMart.

## FAVORS

- Skip the favors or consider an environmental alternative with a message, i.e., reusable water bottles.
- Make a donation in guests' names to a personally meaningful cause, or plant a tree in their names.
- Edible favors are another way to go. Consider chocolate, candies, even homemade pickles – things that are eaten and not thrown away.

## TRAVEL

- Encourage carpooling.
- Purchase or provide the information for your guests to purchase carbon offsets for the travel to your event. The JNF Go Neutral program is one source to offset your carbon emission.

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycle as much as possible.
- Hosts and caterers are asked to adhere to NYC recycling rules and to minimize waste.

This means that:

- All paper is collected in the blue bins.
- All plastic bottles and containers are collected in the green bins.
- All organic matter, food waste, and food-soiled paper is collected in the brown bins.

## ACTIVITY

B'nai mitzvot often involve an activity. Consider the values of your child when planning. Here are some ideas:

- Go outdoors.
- Use food to create a meaningful activity like pickling, herb planting, makeup balm, candles, etc.
- Avoid activities that make waste.