



Buckhead Diner is the first in the Buckhead Life Restaurant Group to abide by Zero Waste Zone regulations.

It's Easy Being Green

Restaurants around town are doing their part to recycle, reduce and reuse.

There's certainly no shortage of restaurants in Atlanta practicing the farm-to-table philosophy. And most, if not all, believe in this idea of promoting sustainable farming, seasonal produce and organic farming, not just because the food tastes better and is better for you, but also because it's better for the environment.

But who's practicing the "green" mindset when it comes to thinking outside of the menu? We wanted to know what restaurants actually practice what they preach, and are as environmentally friendly as they really should be. And we were thrilled when we realized that there were so many restaurants doing at least something to be eco-conscious that we didn't even have enough

room to include them all. So the following list is by no means a complete one; these are just the restaurants we consider to be as green as they are good.

Souper Jenny owner Jenny Levison and manager Marcie Millard have been champions when it comes to running an eco-friendly restaurant. It was one of the first restaurants in Buckhead to recycle, both in the kitchen and in the dining area. And now Souper Jenny's taken the initiative one big step further and pledged to be part of the Zero Waste Zone (ZWZ) in Buckhead. That means just about everything it uses now is recyclable (even the bags used for the recycling are biodegradable), right down to the drink-

ing cups and straws. And this past October, the kitchen began composting to meet the food residual requirement of the ZWZ pledge. It uses a composting service that picks up four times a week, and from October to December the restaurant saved more than 11,000 pounds of food waste from the landfills. 56 E. Andrews Drive, 404.239.9023 or souperjennyatl.com.

Like Souper Jenny, **Buckhead Diner** also has pledged to be part of Buckhead's Zero Waste Zone. It's the first of the Buckhead Life Restaurant Group restaurants to abide by the ZWZ regulations of recycling, composting and converting used grease into biofuel. Buckhead Diner Executive Chef Joey Riley and General Manager Maureen Baker both have embraced the cause and have switched from plastic to paper straws, and they use only biodegradable to-go cups, lids and gloves made from corn. All food waste is now composted, and all other trash is recycled. The other Buckhead Life Restaurant Group members also are contributing. All have single-stream recycling receptacles, which makes it much simpler for staff to recycle consistently, and every BLRG restaurant has water faucet aerators so they use less water. 3073 Piedmont Road, 404.262.3336 or buckheadrestaurants.com.

Chefs and owners Joe Truex and Mihoko Obunai-Truex's restaurant **Repast** is special for many reasons (including winning the No. 1 spot in our annual "100 Best Restaurants" feature last year). But ever since it opened, this couple made it part of their mission to do their part to reduce the restaurant's carbon footprint. They've always sorted and recycled glass, plastic and paper, and all of the bathrooms use Mitsubishi hand dryers, which eliminates the need for paper products. But one thing that stood out in our minds was that they use the Natura water system, which is the only water purification system of its kind that provides chilled sparkling and still water. And Natura's glass bottles are designed to be washed and reused, so they create much less waste. 620 Glen Iris Drive, 404.870.8707 or repastrestaurant.com.

It may not sound like much, but by simply recycling the natural corks from our wine bottles, we can re-direct billions that end up in the landfill. And that's what the ReCORK program wants to do: take as many of those used natural corks as possible and recycle them into a new, useful product—SOLE footwear. **Pacci Ristorante** is participating in the ReCORK program, and we can benefit as much as the landfills. Just take your natural corks (no plastic or metal) to Pacci, and they'll give you 2 percent off your entire bill for each cork (up to 20 percent off!) as part of the Cork to Fork promotion. 866 W. Peachtree St., 678.412.2402 or pacciatlanta.com.

Reducing, reusing and recycling is what the entire **Serenbe** community is about, and that certainly goes for the restaurants as well. All food waste from **The Hil**, **The Farmhouse at Serenbe** and the **Blue Eyed Daisy Bakeshop** is composted and used as fertilizer for crops at Serenbe Farms. The restaurants rarely use disposable dishware, and all to-go cups are made of corn so they are compostable. Small incentives are offered, as well, to get diners to participate. For instance, at the Blue Eyed Daisy, if you bring in



Jenny Levison was one of the first Buckhead restaurateurs to recycle.



Mihoko Obunai-Truex and Joe Truex, owners of Repast, use the eco-friendly Natura water system, which purifies tap water.



Pacci Ristorante's Cork to Fork promotion is helping divert thousands of natural corks from the landfill.



Coffee is only 50 cents at the Blue Eyed Daisy at Serenbe when you bring in your own mug.



Ecco is Georgia's first dumpster-free restaurant.

EVEN THE DOGWOOD FESTIVAL'S GOING GREEN

This year's Dogwood Festival, which will be held April 16–18 at Piedmont Park, has partnered with the U.S. Green Building Council to ensure the festival is, well, greener than ever. 404.817.6642 or dogwood.org.

Food vendors must use only **recyclable or compostable** containers and supplies.

Waste recovery and recycling centers will be located throughout the park to collect compostables, recyclables and landfill waste. These centers will be staffed by the Girl Scouts as part of their **Forever Green Initiative** in order to assist and educate festival-goers on which materials go in which containers and why.

There will be a **solar-powered** acoustic stage.

All generators will use **biodiesel** and/or biofuel.

There will be dedicated booths in the **Green Village** featuring companies with sustainable initiatives and products.

There will be Discovery Education Centers throughout the festival to **encourage people to participate** in sustainable practices such as green building, composting, recycling, renewable energy and water conservation.

your own mug, coffee is only 50 cents compared to \$1.50 if you use a to-go cup, which are 100-percent compostable, of course. The Hil, 9110 Selbourne Lane, Suite 110, Palmetto, 770.463.6040 or the-hil.com; 9065 Selborne Lane, 770.463.8370 or blueeyeddaisy.com; The Farmhouse at Serenbe, 770.463.2622 or serenbe.com.

If we simply had to give a “supremely green” award to anyone in town, it would have to be **Fifth Group Restaurants**. We were so impressed by its eco-conscious efforts that we could have devoted an entire article to them alone. For starters, Fifth Group, which consists of **Ecco, La Tavola, South City Kitchen Midtown, South City Kitchen Vinings, El Taco and Bold American Catering**, has set a company goal of becoming entirely waste-free. And that’s no small feat when you run five restaurants and a huge catering and events business. But with a little investigating, the company realized that 70 percent of what the restaurants sent to the landfill was recyclable. Now all organic material is being composted, and the remaining waste, approximately 18 tons per month, is being sent to Georgia’s only EPA-certified composting facility, just south of Atlanta. The restaurants that both recycle and compost are virtually waste-free and create less trash than a typical household of two.

And that’s not all. Ecco is Georgia’s first dumpster-free restaurant and is the first restaurant to receive Green Foodservice Alliance certification in the state. La Tavola Trattoria in Virginia Highland is part of the first Carbon Neutral Zone created in the United States. The restaurant and 17 other businesses in the neighborhood worked with Verus Carbon Neutral to establish this pioneering eco-zone known as The Corner-Virginia Highland. The retail community purchases carbon offsets and, for all practical purposes, compensates for its residual greenhouse gas emissions. Fifth Group Restaurants also recycle spent fryer grease; installed on-demand water heating systems in all new restaurants and upgraded its existing ones; installed low-water-use dish machines; and use only U.S. EPA Design for the Environment-certified dish machine detergent and rinse company-wide. If that’s not green, we don’t know what is. Fifth Group Restaurants, multiple locations, 404.815.4700 or fifthgroup.com. —SARAH GLEIM