

Avoiding Waste in Ramadan – For Distribution at Masajid

“O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for God does not love the wasters.” (Qur’an: 7:31)

“It is He Who produces gardens, with trellises and without, and dates, and tilth with produce of all kinds, and olives and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in variety): eat of their fruit in their season, but render the dues that are proper on the day that the harvest is gathered. But waste not by excess: for God does not love the wasters.” (Qur’an: 6:141)

“The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few morsels to keep him alive. If he must fill it, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink, and one-third for air.” (Hadith)

“He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbor goes hungry.” (Hadith)

As we plan for Ramadan and iftar dinners in our masajid, it is critical that in doing one good deed by feeding others we do not incur bad deeds by wasting food and creating landfill that remains on earth long after we are gone.

To that end the following are simple but important guidelines for a waste-free iftar dinner.

1. If using disposable utensils, use eco-friendly, compostable quality paper products such as Chinet, and avoid the use of Styrofoam, plastic and other non-biodegradable or non-recyclable products. (Plastic is generally not recyclable unless it is clean. If composting is available in your area and your masjid has the proper containers, all waste - food waste and paper plates -can be composted except for the plastic utensils which will need to go in a separate container and either washed before recycling or put in a regular garbage can.)
2. Serve juice or natural drinks or even better just water in large reusable containers; you can add lemon, mint, or fruit for a nice taste. Designate a separate container for recycling bottles or cans if they are being used but encourage regular attendees to bring a reusable water bottle to the masjid during Ramadan to avoid using bottle water.
3. Meat is a major contributor to climate change, is expensive and less healthy than vegetables so try to serve a balanced meal that includes one meat, one starch, one cooked vegetable and one salad and fruit serving.
4. It is best to serve the food to prevent people from taking too much and wasting. When serving, make smaller portions for children old enough to eat on their own. For adults, serve less than customary and inform people that they can come back for seconds.
5. Have paper boxes available for both individual and general left-overs and make an announcement encouraging people to avoid wasting food by taking any left-overs home.
6. Addressing the topic of hunger and waste in khutbahs and create signs with the ayat above discouraging waste.