

The www.GivingGrinch.com Newsletter

Budget Advice for a Balanced Life

May 2008

A Giving Grinch Commentary: Give back to Mother Nature (and your wallet)

I never understood the stigma against tap water. I grew up drinking from a faucet, most of us did. Today people pass up drinking fountains for a \$2 bottle of... *Dennis Miller once noted "Evian spelt backwards is Naïve," and I think he was onto something.*

Last year, in America alone, we spent over \$11 billion on bottled water. What is the cost of this once free resource? According to www.thegreenguide.com, it costs 1.5 million barrels of oil annually to produce the over one million bottles of water we consume daily takes and every year over 22 billion empty plastic bottles wind up in the trash.

Don't misunderstand; I grew up in a corner of God's country free of industry and pollution and water tasted like water should. These days I live a large metropolitan area and the tap water tastes of the urban environment. Still, there are win-win solutions. Consider home filtration products, like PUR, Brita or your refrigerator water filter (replace it annually and the water tastes great). Not only is it a cheaper solution for you, it is better for environment.

This just in, research has proven that we really don't need to drink 8 glasses of water a day. <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/health/article3574829.ece>

I'm not trying to be preachy; I drink bottled water from time to time, it has its time and place, but hopefully this column makes financial and environmental *cents* of the matter.

And now, some of your suggestions...

Physiological Tips

- ✓ Use a power strip to turn your devices on/off when not in use. Suggested by Shefali in NYC!
- ✓ Close walk-in closet and bathroom doors when heating/cooling rooms. Suggested by Sonali in Bangkok!
- ✓ Let dishes in the dishwasher air dry instead of heat dry. Suggested by Sonali in Bangkok!
- ✓ Keep your freezer full (an empty freezer uses more energy to remain cold than a full one. Suggested by Kaen in Bangkok!
- ✓ Shop at discount, outlet or big box (Costco, Sam's) stores for your basic clothing needs (T-shirts, socks, etc). Submitted by Shefali in NYC!
- ✓ Purchase non-perishable items in bulk (or when on special). Suggested by Clarence in NYC!
- ✓ Use mail-order drug providers (ExpressScripts, MedCo) for routine prescription refills. Submitted by Sonali in Bangkok!

Safety Tips

- ✓ Study your employers benefits, many offer insurance (life, disability, etc) up to one year's salary (or longer) for a deeply reduced fee. Submitted by Sonali in Bangkok!

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- ✓ Request periodic job reviews to know how you stand with your employer. Submitted by Shefali in NYC!
- ✓ If your company is experiencing trouble, stay ahead of the game by networking, looking for alternative employment opportunities. Submitted by Sonali in Bangkok!

Social Tips

- ✓ Make your own gifts (jams, jewelry, knit-wear, etc)! Submitted by Sonali in Bangkok!
- ✓ If you have friends in common, go in on a gift together; usually you can give a nicer gift for less by splitting the cost. Suggested by Saheli in San Francisco!
- ✓ Visit your library to quench your reading, movie and music fix. Submitted by Clarence in NYC!
- ✓ Don't shop to curb your stress – exercise instead. Submitted by Nick, NYC.
- ✓ Shop for trendy clothes during the off-season for a deep discount (winter clothes after Christmas, summer clothes in the Fall). Submitted by Sonali in Bangkok!

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