

Daily Use of Water in Ghana

Fortunately, here in Amisano, we have many sources of water. During the dry season, however, it's sometimes hard to come by. Even though I have piped water, I always boil and filter it before using it. The pipes in Ghana are always breaking and the water isn't always clean. I also use the piped water for washing clothes and for bathing.

In my house I have a flush toilet, and I have a sink for washing dishes. The biggest difference from the United States and the biggest challenge is doing my laundry by hand. I don't use nearly as much water as I did in the U.S. I've come to realize how precious water really is.

*By Molly Campbell
Amisano, Ghana*

Instead of taking a shower, I take a bucket bath. Instead of turning on the faucet, I turn my water filter tap for drinking water. Instead of putting my clothes in the washer, I put them in a plastic bucket and scrub by hand (oh, my knuckles!). Instead of putting my dishes in the dishwasher, I put them in another bucket to wash. Instead of having an electric pump that pumps water from our well to the sink, I pump water by hand, carry it to a large blue container, and fetch it when I need it. Instead of having options for what I can drink when I'm thirsty, I always drink water. Water doesn't go down a drain here; when wastewater fills up in a bucket, I throw it into the bushes.

*By Nell Todd
Mafi-Dove, Ghana*

My use of water here in Ghana differs tremendously from the way I used and thought about water in the United States. With no running water, every drop counts for me because every drop includes the labor of fetching or collecting, hauling, and storing. I use water for the same things as I did at home, but I use a lot less. Instead of a long hot shower, I use less than one full bucket for bathing. Instead of rinsing food under a faucet, I rinse it in water in a small basin, in which I'll also wash my hands, and add soap and wash my dishes. I store water in a large drum, but I store my drinking water in a separate container to minimize contamination. In addition to using water for bathing and cooking, I use it for washing my clothes and sometimes in cleaning.

The households around me use water in much the same way, but also in a way that relates to their crops. After they've peeled their cassava, they must scrub it well before sending it to the mill. In order to make porridge, they soak the maize overnight before milling it and then boiling it. In times of low rainfall, they haul water from the river to their fields to prevent crops from dying.

*By Amy Wiedemann
Gbefi, Volta Region, Ghana*