

# HOW TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE AT HOME

## TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE KITCHEN



USFOODWASTEPACT.ORG

### TRAINING TO GO

#### POWER IS OFF?

### KEEP FRIDGE AND FREEZER CLOSED

Your fridge will keep food cold for about four hours and a full freezer will keep an adequate temperature for about 48 hours if they are not opened.

Once power is restored...

**CHECK THE TEMPERATURE.** If the freezer thermometer reads 40°F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen.

**CHECK EACH PACKAGE OF FOOD.** If the food still contains ice crystals or is 40 °F or below, it is safe to refreeze or cook.

### Storage Basics

- **Refrigerate/Freeze Immediately:** Follow the “two-hour rule” for items that need refrigeration, reducing it to one hour if above 90°F.
- **Proper Appliance Temperatures:** Keep your refrigerator at or below 40°F (4°C) and your freezer at 0°F (-18°C).
- **Follow Storage Labels:** Refrigerate items as directed on their labels. If something wasn’t stored properly, compost it.
- **Use Ready-to-Eat Foods Quickly:** Consume refrigerated ready-to-eat foods like luncheon meats promptly to avoid Listeria growth.
- **Discard Spoiled Food:** Throw out anything that looks, smells, or feels suspicious. Mold indicates spoilage and should be discarded.
- **Be Aware of Invisible Risks:** Food can cause illness even if it looks fine due to pathogenic bacteria. Always keep raw or undercooked meat, poultry, seafood, milk, and eggs properly chilled.
- **Practice Safe Food Handling:** Clean hands, surfaces, and produce; separate raw foods from ready-to-eat foods; and cook to safe temperatures to reduce foodborne illness risks.

### Refrigeration Tips

#### MARINATE IN THE REFRIGERATOR

Always marinate foods in the fridge to prevent bacterial growth. Never reuse marinating liquid unless it has been boiled.

#### CLEAN THE REFRIGERATOR REGULARLY

Wipe spills immediately and clean the fridge frequently to reduce Listeria and prevent cross-contamination from thawing meat.

#### KEEP FOODS COVERED

Store refrigerated foods in covered containers or sealed bags. Check leftovers daily for spoilage. Store eggs in their carton inside the fridge, not on the door.

#### CHECK EXPIRATION DATES

“Best if used by” dates are for quality, not safety. Foods might still be safe after this date, so use your senses to determine if food is still edible. *Exception: always use infant formula by the indicated date.*

# HOW TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE AT HOME

## TIPS AND TRICKS FROM THE KITCHEN



USFOODWASTEFACT.ORG

### TRAINING TO GO

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Planning meals for other people is hard, but it doesn't always have to be the same person doing the preparation. Including the people who will eat with you in the process will not only increase your creativity, but also ensure everybody has something to look forward to.

## Meal Planning Made Easy

- **Assess Your Needs and Goals:** Talk about dietary requirements, family preferences, and schedule. Discussing this helps reduce waste and makes sure everyone is well-fueled.
- **Plan a Weekly Menu:** Select a variety of recipes to keep meals interesting, if possible by including your family in the process, and incorporate leftover meals to reduce prep time.
- **Create a Shopping List:** Check your pantry, fridge, and freezer regularly to see what you already have. Group items on your shopping list by category (e.g., produce, dairy, meats) to make shopping quicker and easier, and stick to the list to avoid impulse buys and keep your shopping efficient.
- **(Re)cycle Your Meal Plan:** If it works, keep it! Having a two- or three-week menu cycle is a great way to save time. Note what meals worked particularly well and plan them regularly.

## Prep Ahead

### CHOP AND STORE

Wash, chop, and store vegetables ahead of time to speed up cooking during the week.

### BATCH COOKING

Cook large portions of certain foods (like grains, proteins, and roasted vegetables) that can be used in multiple meals. Our favorites:

- **Farro, lentils, quinoa:** These can be used hot or cold, in a stew, a soup, or a salad. And they add delicious whole grain carbs to any meal.
- **Peas:** Edamame, green peas, and snap peas all reheat well in the pan or the microwave.

### ADAPT TO CHANGES

Be prepared to swap meals around based on changes in your schedule or if you have more leftovers than expected.

### SEASONAL VARIATIONS

Adjust your menu based on seasonal produce availability to ensure fresh and affordable ingredients.

# MEAL PLANNER

## WEEKLY MENU



USFOODWASTEFACT.ORG

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SHOPPING
Monday				
Family Rating				
Tuesday				
Family Rating				
Wednesday				
Family Rating				
Thursday				
Family Rating				
Friday				
Family Rating				
Saturday				
Family Rating				
Sunday				
Family Rating				



These materials were produced by the R&DE Stanford Food Institute for the U.S. Food Waste Pact, an initiative of ReFED and World Wildlife Fund.



Food Shopping List Perishable Items

PRODUCE

Fruits: 2 x pers x day

Vegetables: 3 x pers x day

Fresh Herbs

DAIRY

MEAT AND SEAFOOD 3 x pers x week

DELI

BAKERY

Food Shopping List Non-Perishable Items

CANNED AND JARRED GOODS

- ☐ Vegetables (e.g., corn, green beans, tomatoes)
- ☐ Fruits (e.g., peaches, pineapple, applesauce)
- ☐ Soups and Broths
- ☐ Beans (e.g., black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas)
- ☐ Sauces (e.g., tomato sauce, pasta sauce, salsa)

DRY GOODS AND PASTA

- ☐ Rice (e.g., white rice, brown rice, basmati)
- ☐ Pasta (e.g., spaghetti, macaroni, penne)
- ☐ Grits and Polenta
- ☐ Lentils and Legumes
- ☐ Quinoa

BAKING SUPPLIES

- ☐ Flour (whole wheat, almond flour)
- ☐ Sugar (brown sugar, powdered sugar)
- ☐ Baking Powder and Baking Soda / Yeast
- ☐ Cocoa Powder

GRAINS AND CEREALS

- ☐ Oats (e.g., rolled oats, quick oats)
- ☐ Breakfast Cereals (e.g., cornflakes, granola)

CONDIMENTS AND SPICES

- ☐ Ketchup, Mustard, Mayonnaise
- ☐ Vinegar (e.g., white, apple cider, balsamic)
- ☐ Spices and Herbs (salt, pepper, paprika, oregano...)
- ☐ Olive Oil, Coconut Oil, Vegetable Oil

BEVERAGES

- ☐ Coffee
- ☐ Tea
- ☐ Juice