

Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership's guide to:

## Reducing Food Waste

A guide to help you reduce food waste, save money and explore culinary creativity



# LOVE FOOD hate waste

## Facts about domestic food waste:

The average household creates about **1.28 pounds of daily waste, equal to 14% of the family's food purchases**

America's per capita food waste has increased by 50 percent since 1974

Some waste happens because people are confused by "use-by" and "best-by" dates- which are based on manufacturer suggestions for peak quality.

<http://civileats.com/2012/08/16/18-little-known-facts-that-will-motivate-you-to-cut-back-on-food-waste/>

## Cool Harvest

Making the food • faith • climate connection

Use Cool Harvest as a resource for gardening tips, making connections to climate, information on composting, DVDs about sustainable eating, how to eat seafood and meat sustainably and arrange and host a healthy potluck!

[http://action.interfaithpowerandlight.org/site/c.dmJUKgOZjil8G/b.6605225/k.97F1/Cool\\_Harvest.htm](http://action.interfaithpowerandlight.org/site/c.dmJUKgOZjil8G/b.6605225/k.97F1/Cool_Harvest.htm)

## Fast Facts about Food Waste

*Percent of food products wasted by the average American:*

**Dairy-** 17%  
**Meat-** 33%

**Vegetables-** 20%  
**Seafood-** 25%

**Fruit-** 15%  
**Grain-** 18%

- ❖ *In the U.S. we waste around 40 percent of all edible food.*
- ❖ *The average American throws away between \$28-\$43 in the form of about 20 pounds of food each month.*
- ❖ *If we wasted just 15% less food, it would be enough to feed 25 million Americans.*
- ❖ *Nearly all of our food waste ends up in landfills where it decomposes and releases methane, a heat trapping greenhouse gas that is 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide*
- ❖ *Consider these cost estimates of all the food that never gets eaten in the U.S. and imagine just how much we can save by wasting less food:*
  - 25% of all freshwater used on the U.S.
  - 4% of total U.S. oil consumptions
  - \$165 billion per year (more than \$40 billion from households)
  - \$750 million per year to dispose of the food
  - 33 million tons of landfill waste (leading to greenhouse gas emissions)

([http://www.nrdc.org/living/eatingwell/files/foodwaste\\_2pgr.pdf](http://www.nrdc.org/living/eatingwell/files/foodwaste_2pgr.pdf))

## What are the benefits of waste reduction?

You can cut your cost for waste disposal- by reducing the amount of food waste you produce you can significantly reduce the amount of waste you send to the landfill which could lead to fewer pickups of waste per month.

*The amount you spend at the store will decrease as you begin to plan meals ahead, buy in bulk and learn how to preserve leftovers and avoid allowing food to spoil.*

By eliminating the millions of tons of food thrown away annually in the US and UK more than 1 billion people could be lifted out of hunger worldwide, experts claim. Experts brought together by the Food Ethics Council argue that excessive consumption of food in rich countries inflates food prices in the developing world.

*More efficient systems that reduce waste would likely result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the amount of methane produced in landfills and may also lead to critical redesign of supply chains and retail models, which may result in less energy used along the food chain.*

(<http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/food-loss-and-waste/en/>)

# 12 Ways to Prevent Food Waste at Home

**WATCH YOUR TRASH-** for one week take note of what is in your trash. Analyze everything that goes in the bin or down the disposal. Then adjust your habits; buy a smaller box of cereal, prepare less to avoid spoiled leftovers, store food in air tight containers etc.

**REORGANIZE THE FRIDGE-** Keep an organized fridge to avoid pushing ingredients to the back to be forgotten. Keep leftovers in sight.

**TAKE SMALLER PORTIONS-** Before you dish out another restaurant size portion at home, ask yourself if you will really finish what is on your plate

**BE FLEXIBLE WITH PRODUCE-** Declare one dinner a week a use-it-up meal, designing it around things that are about to go bad. Casseroles, frittatas, soups and smoothies are all forgiving dishes that embrace produce that is close to turning.

**CHECK YOUR SETTINGS-** Setting your fridge at 39 degrees can help keep foods safe. Studies show the average person's fridge tends to be too warm, encouraging faster spoilage.

**FREEZE YOUR LEFTOVERS-** If you know you won't get to those leftovers soon, store them in individual servings, which will make thawing easier and cover them in freezer-grade wrap. Broth or tomato paste can be frozen in ice cube trays. Nuts have a long life in the freezer since the cold stabilizes their oils. Make sure your freezer is set to zero degrees.

**SHOP MORE OFTEN-** if you do one sweeping shopping trip per week your fruits and veggies will go bad. Try a couple smaller trips throughout the week to restock produce.

**BUY LOCAL-** Broccoli in the produce aisle has already endured a trip of 7-10 days which is half its lifespan. Make a commitment to shop as local as possible so you're purchasing perishables that last longer.

**PLAN AHEAD-** Look at your calendar and develop a weekly menu around your schedule, marking days you're most likely able to cook. Plan three or four days to make recipes and two to eat leftovers; keep a "free" day for events like dinner with friends.

**RETHINK QUANTITY-** Shop at the deli counter or in the bulk aisle so you can buy precisely what you need. Look at what you waste on a regular basis (lunch meat, extra recipe ingredients, a 5lb. bag of carrots etc.) According to a 2009 study from the Bulk is Green Council, you can save an average of 35 percent just by buying what you need.

**LEARN LABEL LINGO-** "Sell-by" or "use-by" dates don't always mean "toss-by". If stored properly, most foods stay fresh several days longer than the use-by date, even meal. If you do note any off odors, textures or colors, don't risk it. Also, never use baby formula past its date.

**HAVE A PLAN B-** Itching to try a new recipe? In a study conducted at Cornell University, more than 50% of thrown-away food items were purchased for a specific meal or occasion that never happened. To avoid wasting cabinet castaways, have a backup plan ready. Prepare to have another recipe on hand that can take the place of the more complicated one you did not get to. Source: <http://www.wholeliving.com/136597/12-ways-prevent-food-waste-home/@center/136755/green-home-guide#32859>



## Online Food Waste Reduction Resources:

<http://www.epa.gov/foodrecovery/>  
<http://ni.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>  
<http://www.foodrecoverynetwork.org/>  
<http://www.wastedfood.com/>  
[http://endhunger.org/food\\_waste.htm](http://endhunger.org/food_waste.htm)  
<http://www.zerofoodwaste.com/>  
<http://www.zeropercent.us/>

*Compiled by the Interfaith Food and Farms  
Partnership of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.*

**Your Scraps Add Up:** Reducing food waste can save money and resources

<http://www.squidoo.com/what-you-need-to-know-about-food-storage-and-food-storage-containers>