



RETHINKING FOOD WASTE



A guide to preventing waste before, during, and after meals.

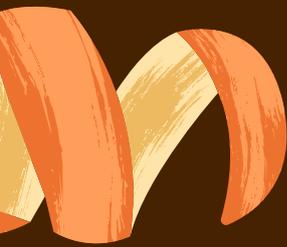


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SAVE THIS GUIDE

We encourage you to save this guide to reference day-to-day. Hang it up around your house, classroom or workplace!

“Food loss and waste undermine the sustainability of our food systems. When food is lost or wasted, all the resources that were used to produce this food - including water, land, energy, labour and capital - go to waste. In addition, the disposal of food loss and waste in landfills leads to greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change. Food loss and waste can also negatively impact food security and food availability, and contribute to increasing the cost of food,” ([United Nations](#)).

BEFORE YOUR MEAL

We frequently disregard food waste before we start preparing and consuming our meals. However, a majority of effective ways to reduce food waste begin long before you dig in!

GROCERY SHOPPING



BE A PLANNER

Make a list of meals you plan on preparing and the ingredients required *before* you go shopping.

Do a quick inventory before you leave for the grocery. You may already have what you need!

LOOK AROUND

BUY UGLY

Misshapen fruits and vegetables taste the same as regular ones. They can be used in smoothies, juices, and desserts.



Avoid buying unnecessary snacks and pre-packaged foods while you shop.

DO NOT IMPULSE BUY

A whopping 10 million pounds of imperfect foods are tossed into the trash worldwide every year!

AT-HOME PRACTICES



FREEZE IT

Store foods in the freezer to prevent spoilage; consult the FoodKeeper App for storage duration guidelines.

Food can be forgotten and wasted when it gets pushed to the back of the refrigerator.

KEEP IT VISIBLE

TIP: Consider removing a shelf or a drawer to prevent food waste!

READ THE DATES... CORRECTLY



“Learn about food product dating – Many consumers misunderstand the purpose and meaning of the date labels that often appear on packaged foods. Confusion over date labeling accounts for an estimated 20 percent of consumer food waste,” (The Food and Drug Administration).

MEAL PLANNER

Be mindful while you plan your meals!

Approximately one-third of global food produced is lost or wasted! United Nations

BREAKFAST

LUNCH

DINNER

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

SUN

GROCERY PLANNER

FRESH PRODUCE

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PLANT PROTEINS

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DAIRY ALTERNATIVES

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CANNED GOODS

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FROZEN FOOD

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OTHER

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NUTS/LEGUMES

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WHOLE GRAINS

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Be mindful while you shop!

45% of fruits and vegetables, an estimated 20% of meat, and approximately 20% of dairy products produced are wasted.

(Environmental Protection Agency)

DURING YOUR MEAL

Food waste during meals is a common problem, especially if no prior planning is involved. Yet, with careful attention, substantial food waste can be minimized, saving you money and benefiting the environment.

PORTION CONTROL

Use the plate method to help determine appropriate portions of each food group.

EAT IN ORDER OF WHAT IS MOST PERISHABLE

EAT LEFTOVERS

“Dedicate one meal a week to using all leftover ingredients or other foods you might've overlooked in the fridge or freezer,” (University of Colorado Boulder).

UTILIZE FLAVOR & STAPLES

Keep essential kitchen items like grains, spices, and sauces available to give a fresh twist to your usual meals.

In the US, agriculture alone is responsible for 80% of all water consumed, and between 21% and 33% of it is wasted every year. (Environmental Protection Agency)



**DID YOU
KNOW???**

“More Easy Steps to Reduce Food Waste”, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/CONSUMERS-More-Easy-Steps.pdf>

“Reducing Food Waste in the Kitchen.” Environmental Center, 16 Feb. 2022, www.colorado.edu/center/2022/02/16/reducing-food-waste-kitchen.

“Learn.” FW Prevention Week, www.foodwastepreventionweek.com/learn.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Composting at Home” www2.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home

AFTER YOUR MEAL

Think before you throw it away! "Food waste is the single most common material landfilled and incinerated in the United States, comprising 24 and 22% of landfilled and combusted municipal solid waste, respectively, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)."

PACK UP LEFT OVERS

DONATE UNUSED FOOD Find your local food bank with *this tool* from Feeding America.

COMPOST

Learn how to *set up your own compost bin*, find a community garden or local drop-off center with a quick internet search, and check your state or county website to see if curbside composting is an option in your region.

BACKYARD COMPOSTING : THE DO'S AND DON'TS

- ✓
- Fruits and vegetables
 - Cardboard (non-coated/small pieces)
 - Coffee ground
 - Paper filters
 - Eggshells
 - Natural ashes
 - Grass clippings
 - Hair and fur
 - Houseplants
 - Leaves
 - Newspaper (shredded)
 - Nutshells
 - Paper (non-coated/small pieces)
 - Sawdust
 - Tea bags
 - Wood chips
 - Yard trimmings

- ✗
- Coal or charcoal ash
 - Dairy products
 - Egg
 - Diseased/infested plants
 - Fats, grease, lard, or oils
 - Meat/fish bones and scraps
 - Pet feces or litter
 - Black walnut trees
 - Yard trimmings with chemical pesticides.

WHY?

Attempting to compost materials in the red box can be harmful to plants, create odors that attract rodents and flies, contain parasites, bacteria, germs, pathogens, and viruses that are harmful to humans, or could kill beneficial compost organisms!

"From Farm to Kitchen: The Environmental Impacts of U.S. Food Waste." Environmental Protection Agency, Nov. 2021, https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-11/from-farm-to-kitchen-the-environmental-impacts-of-u.s.-food-waste_508-tagged.pdf

"15 Quick Tips for Reducing Food Waste and Becoming a Food Hero." Newsroom, 29 Sept. 2020, www.fao.org/newsroom/story/15-quick-tips-for-reducing-food-waste-and-becoming-a-food-hero/en

"Composting Is Way Easier Than You Think." NRDC, June 16, 2016, <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/composting-way-easier-you-think>

"Composting at Home." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www2.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home

OUTSIDE THE HOUSEHOLD

Remember these 3 practices when eating at school, work, or a restaurant.

1. PORTION

Bring or order only what you will eat. **Focus on choosing healthy proportions when possible.**



2. SHARE

Share extra food with others if you accidentally pack or order too much.

3. SAVE

In the case of leftovers, save them for the next day. Opt for healthy non-perishable options whenever possible to avoid spoilage.



Learn the basics of packing a healthy lunch with ECP's Lunch Packing Guide.



"The disposal of food loss and waste in landfills, leads to greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change."

RELATED OFFERINGS



~19 min

Rethinking Food Waste

Travel alongside a slice of pepperoni pizza, from field to trash, to learn about the waste produced through food production and consumption...

EN CC EN, ES



~21 min

Growing Community Roots

Dig into the history of gardening and the importance of community gardens in creating healthier, more equitable food systems. These...

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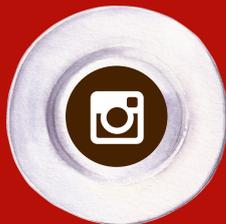


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Our Carbon Footprint

Explore the role food production plays in climate change and sustainable alternatives in partnership with the Environmental Working...

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