

TOP 10 TIPS FOR Reducing Household Food Waste

Here are our favorite tips, along with EatFresh.org resources that will help.

- 1 Make a Plan**—Reducing household food waste starts before you even go to the grocery store. Check your fridge, freezer, and pantry, and [create a meal plan](#) based on those ingredients. Create a list of what you need before shop.
 - [Planning your meals ahead of time saves money, saves time, and encourages healthier eating.](#)
- 2 Understand Expiration Dates**—Most foods are safe to eat past their expiration or sell-by date. The dates are more of a suggestion and an indication of freshness.
 - [“Food code dates are often misleading” with tips](#) around expired foods.
 - Unopened canned and boxed foods are often safe long after the stamped date. See the extended shelf life of many pantry staples on our [Decoding Expiration Dates Handout](#).
- 3 Shop Smart to Avoid Food Waste**—Stick to your grocery list. Don’t get swept up by displays or sales, as you’ll often spend more than planned and come home with more food than you need. Here are a few other great tips...
 - Don’t go to the store hungry. Impulse buys can result in extra food that ultimately goes unused.
 - Shop the perimeter for whole, nutrient-dense foods. These are healthier and often require less packaging (like fruits and veggies).
 - Buy bulk foods to purchase exact amounts needed, save money and reduce packaging.
 - Find even more tips in the Lifestyle category: [Shopping & Budgeting](#).
- 4 Organize Your Fridge Like a Pro**—Professional kitchens organize refrigerator space in two ways by placing items that need to be used sooner closer to the front of the fridge. They also arrange foods based on [safety and temperature zone](#)...
 - Upper shelves (consistent): ready-to-eat foods and beverages, fresh herbs
 - Lower shelves (coolest): dairy, eggs, meat, fish, and other raw ingredients
 - Crisper drawers (humid): produce—separate fruits and vegetables
 - Fridge door (warmest): condiments, water, pasteurized juices, and least perishable items
- 5 Use the Whole Ingredient**—Let no edible parts go to waste. Herb stalks impart just as much flavor as their leafy parts. Instead of throwing herb stalks away, chop them up and add them into sauces and dips using the EatFresh.org [Snacks](#) filter.

6 Proper Storage of Fruits and Vegetables—Storing your produce properly can help keep your fruits and veggies fresh for longer. Keep your produce whole until ready to eat.

- Most fruits and vegetables can be stored in the fridge. Storing them in a crisper drawer can maintain their freshness for longer.
- Certain fruits and vegetables, like bananas and avocados, should be stored away from other foods. See which others and more tips on storing fresh produce on our Lifestyle page: [Storing foods correctly means they will taste better with less waste.](#)

7 Get Creative in the Kitchen—Cooking at home allows you to customize our meals however you want with whatever you have. Don't give up on a recipe just because you don't have all the ingredients. You can substitute!

- Hover over ingredients listed on any EatFresh.org recipe and a list of alternative ingredients will appear.

8 Reinvent Your Leftovers—A great way to save time in the kitchen and reduce food waste is to use leftovers to build new meals for the week.

- Check out this Meal Plan to learn how ingredients can be reused in multiple recipes throughout the week: [Master Your Leftovers—Chicken and Rice.](#)
- Search function: Enter your leftover vegetable, protein, or grain into the search bar and see what recipes come up. With those items already cooked, you're a few steps ahead!

9 Freezer: Your Food Time Machine—Just like pressing pause, your freezer is the best way of preserving food until you're ready to eat it, preventing good food from spoiling.

- Freeze food such as sliced bread, fruit, or meat (e.g. chicken breasts and taco meat) that you know you won't be able to eat in time. Frozen fruits are great for [smoothies](#).
- Use the Recipe Double feature with [soups](#), [stews](#), or [chili](#) to make a larger batch, with plans to freeze half. To freeze, pour leftovers into a muffin tin or ice cube tray so you can defrost smaller batches.
- Make sure you [defrost safely!](#)

10 Giving Back: Composting—For the food scraps you aren't able to save using EatFresh.org, give them back to nature by composting. It's a natural way to recycle material to create rich soil.

- Check your local community regulations and programs.
- Choose the type of composting that works best for you (e.g. outdoor hot pile, underground pile, or compost bin).
- You can compost vegetable and fruit scraps, grains, dairy, coffee grounds/filters, tea bags, and non-greasy food scraps.

For more tips and recipes, visit eatfresh.org