

# Tips to reduce food waste.

## USA TODAY NETWORK

Each year, nearly 40 million tons of food is discarded by Americans. Equating to more than \$161 billion, food waste accounts for approximately 30-40% of the U.S. food supply.

While cutting down on food waste reduces methane emissions from landfills and conserves energy – preventing pollution involved in the growing, manufacturing, transporting, and selling food – it can also save you money by buying less food.

Here are a few ways to reduce wasted food, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

### **Planning**

Making a list with weekly meals in mind, you can save money and time and eat healthier food.

Keep a running list of meals and their ingredients that your household already enjoys.

Make your shopping list based on how many meals you'll eat at home.

Plan your meals for the week before you go shopping and buy only the things needed for those meals.

Include quantities on your shopping list noting how many meals you'll make with each item to avoid overbuying.

Look in your refrigerator and cupboards first to avoid buying food you already have, make a list each week of what needs to be used up and plan upcoming meals around it.

### **Storage**

Store fruits and vegetables for maximum freshness; they'll taste better and last longer, helping you to eat more of them.

Find out how to store fruits and vegetables so they stay fresh longer inside or outside your refrigerator.

Freeze, preserve, or can surplus fruits and vegetables - especially abundant seasonal produce.

Many fruits give off natural gases as they ripen, making other nearby produce spoil faster. Store bananas, apples, and tomatoes by themselves, and store fruits and vegetables in different bins.

Wait to wash berries until you want to eat them to prevent mold.

### **Preparation**

Prepare perishable foods soon after shopping.

When you get home from the store, take the time to wash, dry, chop, dice, slice, and place your fresh food items in clear storage containers for snacks and easy cooking.

Befriend your freezer and visit it often.

### **Thriftiness**

Be mindful of old ingredients and leftovers you need to use up.

Shop in your refrigerator first. Cook or eat what you already have at home before buying more.

If safe and healthy, use the edible parts of food that you normally do not eat.

Plan an “eat the leftovers” night each week.

Casseroles, stir-fries, frittatas, soups, and smoothies are great ways to use leftovers, too.

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