

When Food is Wasted...

Food is the single largest part of trash collected. More than 20+% of ALL trash collected*. Just a fraction of our food waste ends up composted or collected most is hauled to a landfill.



When food is wasted, you're wasting money. Consider buying only the food you will use to prevent throwing away good food. Consider donating healthy, safe and edible food to organizations.

When food is wasted, it wastes resources (water, energy and labor). Wasted food in the landfill rots and produces methane — a super-pollutant more powerful than CO₂. It would be better to return those nutrients to the soil to nourish the soil for the next generation of crops. **



Know Before You Throw

How Does Date Labeling Impact Food Waste?

Confusion over the meaning of dates applied to food products can result in consumers discarding wholesome food. Examples of commonly used phrases:

- A **"Best if Used By/Before"** date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- A **"Sell-By"** date tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. It is not a safety date.
- A **"Use-By"** date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. It is not a safety date except for when used on infant formula.
- A **"Freeze-By"** date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

With an exception of infant formula. If the date passes during home storage, a product should still be safe and wholesome if handled properly until the time spoilage is evident. Spoiled foods will develop an off odor, flavor or texture due to naturally occurring spoilage bacteria. If a food has developed such spoilage characteristics, it should not be eaten. ***

What Do Can Codes Mean?

Can codes enable manufacturers to rotate their stock and locate their products in the event of a recall. Can codes appear as a series of letters and/or numbers and refer to the date the product was canned. The codes are not meant for the consumer to interpret as a "Best if Used By" date.



Cans may also display "open" or calendar dates. Usually these are "Best if Used By" dates for peak quality. Discard cans that are dented, rusted, or swollen. High-acid canned foods (e.g. tomatoes and fruits) will keep their best quality for 12 to 18 months. Whereas, low-acid canned foods (e.g. meats and vegetables) will keep for two to five years. ***

What Do the Dates on Egg Cartons Mean?

Many eggs reach stores only a few days after the hen lays them. Egg cartons with the USDA grade shield on them must display the "pack date" (the day that the eggs were washed, graded, and placed in the carton). This number is a three-digit code that represents the consecutive day of the year starting with January 1 as 001 and ending with December 31 as 365. When a "sell-by" date appears on a carton bearing the USDA grade shield, the code date may not exceed 30 days from the date of pack.



After purchasing eggs, it is recommended to refrigerate them in their original carton and place them in the coldest part of the refrigerator, not in the door due to loss of coolness from repeated opening of the door.

While supermarkets and food outlets are required by law to stick stringently to these dates and cannot sell food past them, what you do about them at home is entirely up to you. So use your own judgement. Of course, if you have any doubts, throw it out, but don't rely solely on dates.

*<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/guide-facts-and-figures-report-about>

** <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/sustainable-management-food-basics>

***<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/food-product-dating>

How you store food in your refrigerator makes a difference.

#ReduceFoodWaste

REFRIGERATOR STORAGE TIPS:

<https://www.marthastewart.com/8316531/how-to-organize-foods-in-refrigerator>

- Set your temperature to between 35 and 40 degrees.

- Top shelf store: Leftovers, drinks, ready-to-eat foods

- Deli draw: Cheese, deli meats

- Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt): store in the back of the fridge, where temperatures are more consistently cold.

- Raw meat, poultry, and fish - store on the bottom shelf, to prevent cross-contamination with other items in the fridge.



- Low humidity drawer: Fruits and vegetables that have a tendency to break down and rot. Apples, pears, grapes, mushrooms, melons, peaches, papayas, mangoes, oranges, lemons

- High humidity drawer: Vegetables that are the most likely to wilt. Carrots, leafy greens, broccoli, asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green beans, lettuce, spinach and peppers

- Condiments and spreads - store on the door shelves, as they have a more consistent temperature and are less likely to spoil quickly.

- Control the ripening process: Some produce gives off gases called ethylene that speed up the ripening of other foods. To keep foods longer, separate foods that create these gases from other foods. Keep ethylene producing fruits and veggies in a loosely tied bag. Ethylene producing fruits and veggies are: apples, bananas, kiwis, tomatoes and avocados.

- Set humidity level: The adjustable levers on the crisper drawers change the humidity levels. If your fridge has these, set one to high humidity (closed, less air coming in) and one to low (open, more air coming in).

- Avoid storing produce in plastic bags, as this can trap moisture and promote rotting.