

Ranae L. Aspen
Media Release for Immediate Use
August 1, 2022

Did you know that 30-40 percent of the United States food supply goes uneaten (Food and Drug Administration)? On average, a typical family of four in the US loses \$1,500 in uneaten food. Currently, groceries have increased by 10 to 11 percent. This is a perfect time to look at some ways to reduce food waste in your home.

Here are fourteen ways to reduce food waste:

1. **Shop the refrigerator before going to the store.** Use food at home before buying more. Designate one meal weekly as a "use-it-up" meal.
2. **Move older food products to the front** of the fridge/cupboard/freezer and just-purchased ones to the back. This makes it more likely foods will be consumed before they go bad.
3. **Keep your refrigerator at 40 °F or below** to prolong the life of foods. Foods frozen at 0 °F or lower will remain safe indefinitely, but the quality will go down over time.
4. **Freeze, can or dry surplus fresh produce** using safe, up-to-date food preservation methods.
5. **Take restaurant leftovers home** and refrigerate within two hours of being served. Eat within three to four days or freeze.
6. **Dish up reasonable amounts of food at a buffet** and go back for more if still hungry.
7. **Compost food scraps for use in the garden.** Visit [Nebraska Extension](#) for direction on creating compost for your garden.
8. **Check product dates on foods.** 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.
9. **Look for recipes on websites that can be searched for by ingredients to use up food at home.** USDA's [MyPlate Kitchen](#) website offers several tools for searching for recipes with specific ingredients, nutrition themes and meal course.
10. **Buy misshapen fruits and vegetables** at farmers' markets and elsewhere. They are just as nutritious and delicious as those in perfect shape.
11. **Rather than buy a food for use in only one recipe, check if there might be a suitable substitute already in the home.** Check out our [Basic Ingredient Substitution](#) webpage.
12. **Check the garbage can.** If the same foods are constantly being tossed: Eat them sooner, buy less of them, incorporate them into more recipes or freeze them.
13. **Donate safe, nutritious food** to food banks, food pantries and food rescue programs.

14. **If you have several foods that might go to waste at the same time, try adding them to such adaptable recipes** as salads, soups, pasta and casseroles. [Making a Casserole from What's on Hand](#) has a great information on ways to use up those foods.

Sources:

1. [Food Waste FAQs](#), United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
2. [Why should we care about food waste?](#), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

For more information, visit <https://food.unl.edu/article/preventing-food-waste>