

Food: Too Good to Waste

Why we care

About 40% of food produced in the U.S. goes uneaten. Growing this food is resource intensive in terms of land, water, and fertilizer, and it creates as much climate change pollution as 37 million passenger vehicles. In Oregon, 71% of food waste thrown away by households could have been eaten by humans (at one point). Most of our household food waste is due to spoilage; the rest is caused by cooking or serving too much at once.

Simple, positive steps

Shop and eat wisely.

- Plan meals ahead, take a food inventory before shopping, make a list, and stick to it.
- Shop more often and buy less at one time.
- Avoid waste by embracing imperfect or “funny fruit.”
- Serve smaller portions. Using smaller plates can help.
- At restaurants bring your own to-go box for leftovers or split an entrée with a friend.

Know and use what you have.

- Avoid packing the refrigerator so you can’t see what you have.
- When unloading groceries, rotate older food to the front.
- Plan meals based on what might spoil soon.
- Incorporate leftover vegetables in soups, casseroles, omelets, and burritos. Use overripe fruits in smoothies or quick breads.
- “Sell by,” “best by,” and “use by” dates refer to peak quality, not food safety.
- Save leftovers for lunches at work, snacks for hungry children, or “leftover night.” [Visit Love Food Hate Waste](#) for recipes.

Store wisely

- Freeze or preserve excess meat, produce, or bread.
- Check out [How-To: Store Fruits and Vegetables](#) for fruit and veggie storage tips.