

Food: Too Good to Waste

Why we care

About 40% of food produced in the U.S. goes uneaten. Reducing food losses by 15 percent would be enough to feed 25 million Americans every year. Most of our household food waste is due to spoilage; the rest is caused by cooking or serving too much at once. Food sent to a landfill (instead of being composted) creates methane, which is 21 times more potent than CO₂ in its effect on climate change.

Simple, positive steps

Shop and eat wisely.

- Plan meals ahead, take a food inventory before shopping, make a list, and stick to it.
- Buy in bulk to get only what you need.
- 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.

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.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.