



**Seattle
Public
Utilities**

How to buy and waste less
food by planning ahead



Meal Planning & Shopping Guide

The first and most important step to reducing food waste is to buy only what you need. This starts by making a plan and sticking to it.

1. See What You Already Have

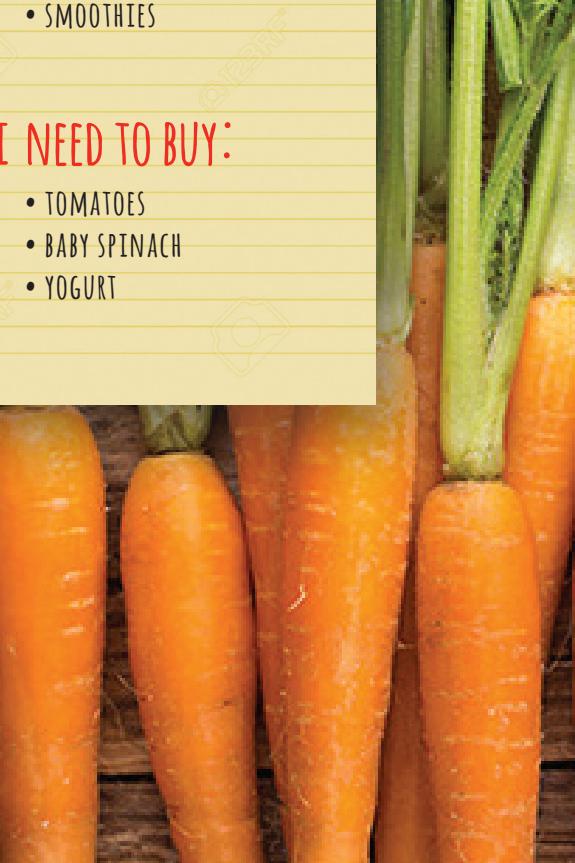
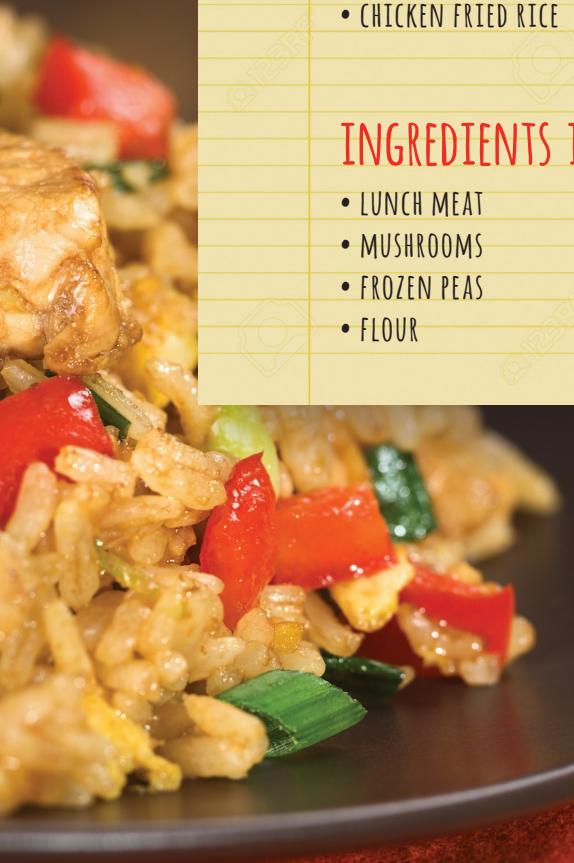
- 🍎 Check your refrigerator and cupboards to see what food needs to be used up.
- 🍎 Create a list of meals you can make with those foods.
- 🍎 List the ingredients you still need to buy to complete your meals.





FOOD I NEED TO USE UP:

- BREAD
- TACO SHELLS
- COOKED CHICKEN
- COOKED RICE
- LETTUCE
- CARROTS
- BANANAS
- BERRIES



MEALS I CAN MAKE:

- SANDWICHES
- TACOS
- CHICKEN FRIED RICE
- SALAD
- BANANA BREAD
- SMOOTHIES

INGREDIENTS I NEED TO BUY:

- LUNCH MEAT
- MUSHROOMS
- FROZEN PEAS
- FLOUR
- TOMATOES
- BABY SPINACH
- YOGURT

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS
MON	BANANA BREAD	SALAD	FRIED RICE	BERRIES
TUES	SMOOTHIES	SALAD	FISH, RICE, VEGGIES	BERRIES
WED	GRAPEFRUIT	EAT OUT	FISH TACOS	FRUIT
THURS	SMOOTHIES	EAT OUT	LEFTOVER FRIED RICE	FRUIT
FRI	OATMEAL W/FRUIT	SANDWICHES	TAKE-OUT	BROWNIES
SAT	EAT OUT	SHOPPING	---	---
SUN	---	---	---	---



2. Create your Meal Plan

- 🍎 Look at the list of meals you came up with while shopping your kitchen. Add them to your meal plan.
- 🍎 Include when you plan to eat out or have leftovers. Plan around what's normal for you, and be realistic about how much time and energy you'll have to cook during the week.
- 🍎 Fill in the rest of your meal plan with other meals you want to prepare.

3. Make a Shopping List

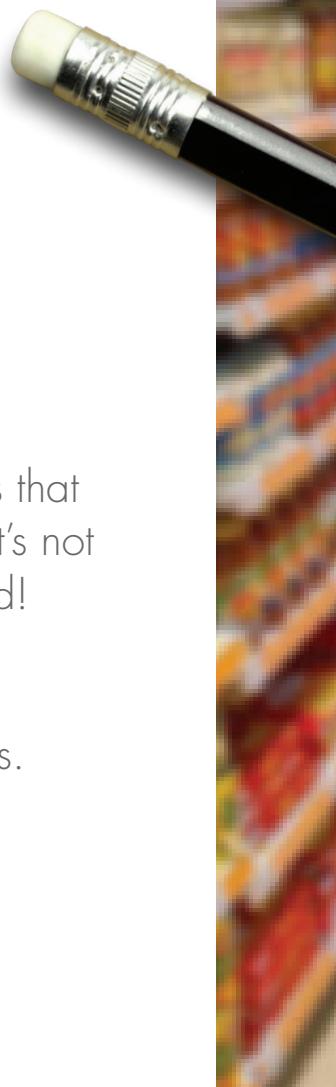
🍎 Make a shopping list based on your meal plan. Include how much of each item you need so you don't overbuy.

4. Stick to your Shopping List

🍎 Use a smaller shopping cart or a hand basket. Bigger carts make you want to fill them.

🍎 Resist impulse buys and special deals that make you buy more than you need. It's not a deal if you end up wasting the food!

🍎 Buy only the amounts you need. Shop from the bulk bins for dry goods. Choose loose fruits and vegetables if pre-packaged amounts are too big.



ITEM: AMOUNT NEEDED:

TOMATOES	2 (FOR SALADS)
MUSHROOMS	1 BOX (SALAD & FRIED RICE)
FROZEN PEAS	1 BAG
FLOUR	1 BAG
BABY SPINACH	1 BAG (SALAD & SMOOTHIES)
FISH	4 FILLETS
BROCCOLI	1 HEAD
YOGURT	2
GRAPEFRUIT	2
APPLES	4
PEARS	4
BROWNIE MIX	1 BOX
OATMEAL	2 CUPS (BULK BIN)

A collage of three bags of frozen food. The top bag contains cherries, the middle bag contains corn, and the bottom bag contains green beans. The word 'chop' is overlaid on the cherries bag, and the word 'freeze' is overlaid on the corn bag.

chop

freeze



5. Stick to your Meal Plan

- 🍎 Use up foods that go bad quickly earlier in the week. Save non-perishable and frozen foods for later.
- 🍎 Prepare food ahead of time—such as cutting up celery sticks—for easy snacking during the week.
- 🍎 Use batch cooking to save time and money and keep you on track with your meal plan. Cook entire meals ahead of time to store in the refrigerator or freezer for later. Or make lots of one thing—like rice or vegetables—that can be used in several different meals you've planned for the week.

Tips

- 🍎 Keep a running list of meals your household enjoys. That way, you can easily choose meals to prepare and will already have some ingredients on hand.
- 🍎 Plan meals that use the same ingredients. For example, you can use chicken in salad and also in fried rice. Or you can have fish and vegetables one night, and fish tacos another night.
- 🍎 Try out one of the many free mobile apps that will help you plan meals and make shopping lists.





Save money
Save time
Waste less food



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For resources to help you waste less food, visit

seattle.gov/util/stopfoodwaste

