

Why does wasting food matter?



40% of food in the United States goes uneaten.

Much of that waste happens in our own homes.

20% of all the freshwater used in the U.S. grows food that is never eaten.



If wasted food were its own country, it would cause more greenhouse gas emissions than any other country except China and the U.S.

The U.S. throws away \$160 billion worth of food a year. By reducing food waste, a family of four could save as much as \$1500 a year!



1 in 8 U.S. households don't have enough to eat. By buying more food than we need, we're using up valuable resources, and increasing food prices, hurting low-income families most.

About 5% of all energy used in the U.S. goes to grow food that is wasted—enough to power the whole country for 2.5 weeks!

Save money
Save the environment
Waste less food



For resources to help you waste less food, visit
seattle.gov/util/stopfoodwaste



Tips to help you waste less food.



Try a few of these tips to save money and waste less food.



Buy only what you need

- Create a realistic meal plan—decide what you’re going to eat *before* you go to the grocery store.
- Make a shopping list based on your meal plan, and include how much you need of each item.
- Stick to your shopping list—use a smaller shopping cart or hand basket to resist special deals and impulse buys.
- Buy only the amounts you need—shop from bulk bins and choose loose fruits and vegetables instead of pre-packaged foods.



Store food to stay fresh longer

- Shop for locally grown food so it’s fresh when you get it.
- Use a food storage guide to learn how to store food to last longer.
- Store new items behind the old to help you remember to use the older food first.
- Store food in clear containers so you can see what needs to be eaten.



Understand date labels

- Date labels are about best *quality*, not safety. Learn how to tell for yourself if food has gone bad, instead of relying on date labels.
- Infant formula is the only exception. It should *not* be used after the “Use-By” date.



Make cooking and eating easy

- Prepare food ahead of time—snacks like celery sticks and pre-cooked batches of food—to make meal prep easier during the week.
- Plan your portions to cook just the right amount of food.
- Reduce waste on plates. Serve food on smaller plates, or give smaller portions and let people go back for seconds.



Save food before it goes bad

- Create an “Eat First” box or shelf for foods that need to be eaten soon.
- Have a weekly leftovers night.
- Learn how to bring wilted and stale foods back to life.
- Freeze what you can’t finish.
- Share food with friends, family and neighbors.

Help your community waste less food

- Ask your favorite grocery stores and restaurants to sell smaller sizes, offer bargain bins, and donate food.
- Volunteer at one of Seattle’s many food rescue groups to help feed local families.
- Encourage your friends and family to waste less food.
- Organize a community presentation or film screening with SPU’s Love Food, Stop Waste program.



Learn more at
seattle.gov/util/stopfoodwaste
And remember to
always compost your
food scraps.

