

## Let's Talk Trash: Reducing Food Waste at Home Participant handout

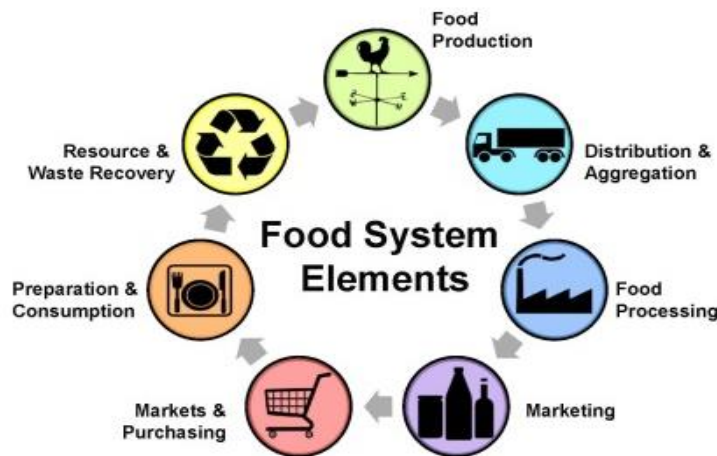
Food waste is a growing problem that affects all consumers. In this lesson we will be learning about food waste, and how it impacts hunger, food insecurity, food costs and the environment. We will explore ways you can reduce food waste in your own home. By learning to reduce food waste not only will you save money, but you will also help conserve natural resources like air, soil and water quality, and make a positive impact on food insecurity & hunger.

**Food Waste:** Edible food that is discarded and goes uneaten.

**Food Insecurity:** Food insecurity is a condition that occurs when there is a lack of access to safe and nutritious food, preventing people from living healthy and active lives. It can occur when people do not have physical or economic access to the food that meets their preferences and dietary needs. In the US, 1:5 children experience food insecurity.

**Hunger:** Hunger is an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.

**Food System:** A food system includes all processes involved in keeping us fed: growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, and disposal of food and food packaging. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each of these steps. Each step or element of the Food System interacts with the social, political, economic and natural environment.



Adapted by Christy Shi, Center for Environmental Farming Systems.  
From: Wilkins, J. and Eames-Sheavly, M. *Discovering the Food System: An experiential learning program for young and inquiring minds.*  
Cornell University, Departments of Nutritional Science and Horticulture. <http://www.discoverfoodsys.cornell.edu/>

At each step in the Food System there is potential for waste of food, natural resources and human energy. This waste can have impact on food distribution, food cost and food availability.

***Buy what you need, and eat what you buy.***

# America wastes **40%** of food!

## When we waste food, we affect the following:

- Food security
- Our food budgets
- Natural resources
- Greenhouse gas
- Wasted water

## What we all can do to waste less food:

### 1. Shop “refrigerator first”

- Eat food before it goes bad.
- Cook or eat what you already have at home before buying more.
- Refrigerate take-home food within 2 hours (1 hour when temperature is above 90°F). Use within 3–4 days. Reheat to 165°F using a food thermometer.

### 2. Keep perishable foods cold

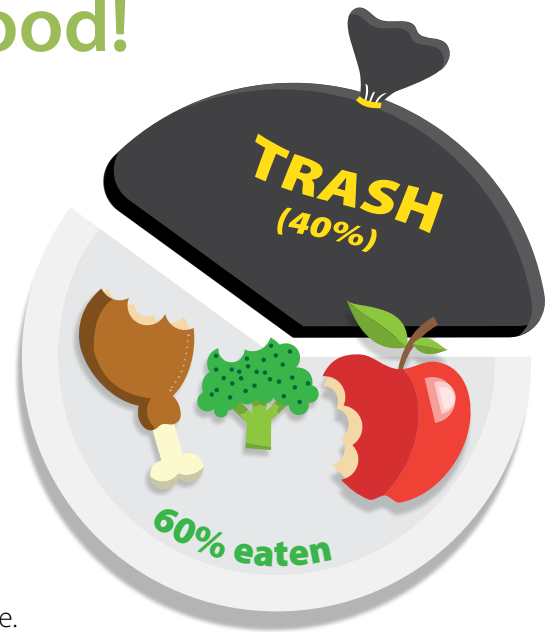
- Refrigerator: 40°F
- Freezer: 0°F

### 3. Keep fresh food longer

- Do not refrigerate potatoes, onions, winter squash or garlic.
- Do not refrigerate tomatoes, avocados, bananas, peaches, watermelon, or nectarines.

### 4. Read the label

- Food stored constantly at 0°F will always be safe.



#### “BEST IF USED BY”

- Not a purchase or safety date; food may be eaten after this date
- Product has best flavor and quality if used by this date
- A less specific date than “use by”
- Often found on canned fruits and vegetables

#### “SELL BY”

- Buy before “Sell By” date passes. Fairly set time period before food goes bad.
- Eat or freeze by the time on chart below unless the package gives a specific date
- *Refrigerator/Freezer Storage Chart* at <http://bit.ly/Refrigerator-Freezer-Storage-Chart>

#### “USE BY”

- Refers to a **PEAK DATE** for best quality; not a specific safety date
- Form of date used on foods considered to be perishable from a microbiological point of view
- Gives **last date** when a food is expected to be at **peak** quality; eat by this date for best taste and quality
- Often found on fresh and chilled foods such as fruits, vegetables, salad mixes

# Keep It Cool:

## REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER FOOD STORAGE CHART



Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics

Properly storing foods can help maintain their quality. Make sure perishable foods never sit out of refrigeration for more than two hours, and follow the expiration dates to ensure taste and safety. If no expiration date is available on the package, the following refrigeration guidelines provide a helpful gauge. Freezing is also a smart storage option for shoppers who wish to extend the shelf life of perishable foods beyond their expiration dates. But whether you're freezing or refrigerating, one basic rule applies: When in doubt, throw it out!

### Perishable Foods

Refrigerator  
(below 40°F)

Freezer  
(at or below 0°F)

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### MEAT (BEEF, PORK, VEAL, LAMB)



Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Roasts	3 to 5 days	6 to 9 months
Liver, variety meats	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked meat	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Ground meat		
- uncooked	1 to 2 days	4 months
- cooked	3 to 4 days	

### POULTRY (CHICKEN, TURKEY)



Poultry, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Poultry, pieces (breasts, thighs, wings)	1 to 2 days	9 months
Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked poultry	3 to 4 days	4 months
Ground poultry		
- uncooked	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
- cooked	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 months

### HOT DOGS, LUNCH MEAT



Hot dogs		
- opened	1 week	1 to 2 months
- unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Lunch meat		
- opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
- unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months

### EGGS



Fresh, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze
Egg whites and yolks (raw)	2 to 4 days	1 year
Egg substitutes		
- opened	3 days	Does not freeze well
- unopened	10 days	1 year

Note: All recommendations assume refrigerators are set below 40°F and freezers are set to 0°F

### BACON, SAUSAGE



Bacon		
- opened	1 week	1 month
- unopened	2 weeks	
Sausage (meat or poultry)		
- raw	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
- pre-cooked/smoked	1 week	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage (labeled "Keep Refrigerated")		
- opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
- unopened	3 months	
Pepperoni, sliced	2 to 3 weeks	1 to 2 months

### HAM, CORNED BEEF



Corned beef (in pouch with pickling juices)	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month
Fresh ham, uncooked		
- uncured	(if dated, follow "use-by" date) 3 to 5 days	6 months
- cured (cook-before-eating)	5 to 7 days	3 to 4 months
Ham, fully cooked, store wrapped		
- whole	1 week	
- half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
- slices	3 to 4 days	
Ham, fully cooked, vacuum sealed		
- undated, unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
- dated, unopened	Use-by date	
Ham, canned (labeled "Keep Refrigerated")		
- opened	1 week	1 to 2 months
- unopened	6 to 9 months	Do not freeze

### DAIRY



Cheese, hard or processed		
- opened	3 to 4 weeks	6 months
- unopened	6 months	
Cheese, soft	1 week	6 months
Cottage/ricotta cheese	1 week	Do not freeze
Cream cheese	2 weeks	Do not freeze
Butter	1 to 3 months	6 to 9 months





# Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for Best Flavor

## Store in the refrigerator

<b>FRUIT</b>		<b>VEGETABLES</b>				
Apples (more than 7 days)	Berries	Artichokes	Belgian Endive	Cauliflower	Leafy Vegetables	Radishes
Apricots	Cherries	Asparagus	Broccoli	Celery	Leeks	Spinach
Asian pears	Cut Fruit	Green Beans	Brussel Sprouts	Cut Vegetables	Lettuce	Sprouts
	Figs	Beets	Cabbage	Green Onions	Mushrooms	Summer Squashes
	Grapes		Carrots	Herbs (not basil)	Peas	Sweet Corn

1. Place fruits and vegetables in separate, perforated plastic bags.
2. Use within 1-3 days for maximum flavor and freshness.
3. Store each group in different produce drawers in the refrigerator to minimize the detrimental effects of ethylene produced by the fruits on the vegetables.

## Ripen on the counter first, then refrigerate

Avocados      Kiwi      Nectarines      Peaches      Pears      Plums      Plumcots

1. To prevent moisture loss, store fruits and vegetables separately in a paper bag, perforated plastic bag, or ripening bowl on the counter away from sunlight. Ripening fruit in a bowl or paper bag can be enhanced by placing an apple with the fruit to be ripened.
2. After ripening, store in refrigerator and use within 1-3 days.

## Store only at room temperature

<b>FRUIT</b>			<b>VEGETABLES</b>			
Apples (fewer than 7 days)	Citrus fruits	Persimmons	Garlic*	Peppers <sup>†</sup>	Tomatoes	
Bananas	Mangoes	Pineapple	Ginger	Potatoes*	Winter Squashes	
	Melons	Plantain	Jicama	Pumpkins		
	Papayas	Pomegranates	Eggplant <sup>†</sup>	Sweet Potatoes*		

1. Many fruits and vegetables should only be stored at room temperatures. Refrigeration can cause cold damage or prevent them from ripening to good flavor and texture. For example, pink tomatoes ripen to a better taste and red color if they are left at room temperature. In the refrigerator, they do not turn red, and even red tomatoes kept in the refrigerator lose their flavor.
2. Keep away from direct sunlight.
  - \*Store garlic, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes in a well-ventilated area in the pantry.
  - <sup>†</sup>Cucumbers, eggplant, and peppers can be refrigerated for 1-3 days if they are used soon after removing from the refrigerator.

## Cleaning Your Produce

Always keep produce separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Never use detergent or bleach to wash produce. Instead, rinse produce under running tap water immediately prior to use, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Washing too far in advance removes some of nature's natural preservatives. However, head lettuce or leafy greens remain crisper when washed right away and then refrigerated. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed," or "triple washed" need not be washed. Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables within 2 hours.

For information on how to store other fruits and vegetables go to [FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org](http://FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org)

Source: UC Davis Postharvest Technology