



— A SIMPLE GUIDE TO —

PREVENTING WASTED FOOD

learn to save money, while saving the world





A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PREVENTING WASTED FOOD

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PURPOSE

This booklet is intended to help you waste less food by making small shifts in how you shop for, prepare, store, and serve food. Learn to toss less, save money, and keep the valuable resources used to produce and distribute food from going to waste.

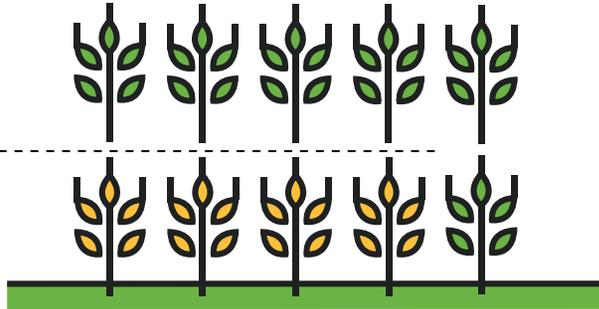
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed a Food Recovery Hierarchy prioritizing actions to be taken to prevent wasting edible food, recover edible food, and recycle what remains into a valuable product.



HOW MUCH FOOD IS WASTED

40%

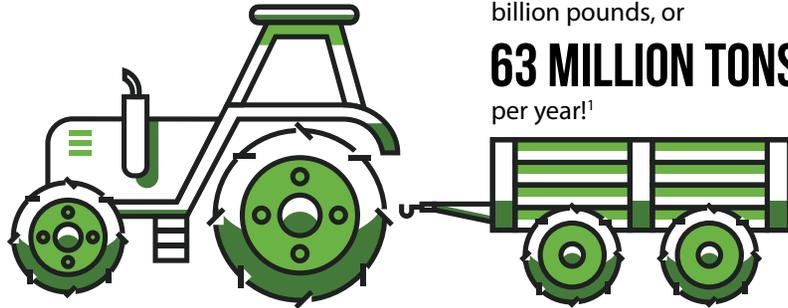
of the food grown in the United States goes to waste.



That's between 125 - 160 billion pounds, or

63 MILLION TONS

per year!¹



If we grew all the food that is wasted on a mega-farm, it would be

3X THE SIZE OF OHIO!¹



WHY WASTED FOOD MATTERS



2%

of our energy use goes to food we don't eat.²



25%

of our fresh water supply is used for food we don't eat.³

1 IN 6 PEOPLE



in Hamilton County are food insecure, without reliable access to food.⁴



18%

of all methane emissions in the U.S. are generated by landfilled food. Methane is a greenhouse gas up to **86x more potent** over a ten year period than carbon dioxide.⁵



\$218 BILLION

or 1.3% of GDP in the U.S. is spent to grow, process, transport, and dispose of food that we never eat.¹



WHY WASTED FOOD HAPPENS

- We buy too much.
- We don't understand date labels.
- We cook or serve too much.
- We're busy.
- We don't meal plan well.
- We serve food our kids don't always eat.
- We don't use the food in time.
- We don't realize how much we waste.
- We don't store food properly.



43%

of wasted food is consumer-generated.



20¢

on average out of every \$1 spent on groceries is wasted.⁶



STRATEGIES TO REDUCE WASTED FOOD

Plan Meals and Shop Smart

- **Plan the appropriate amount of food for your group size.** Refer to the National Institute of Health's website on page 16 to learn the difference between a serving and a portion so you don't buy or make too much.
- **Check the fridge to see what needs to be eaten soon.** Find creative ways to incorporate "on-the-verge" foods and leftovers into new meals like stir-fries, frittatas, soups, and stews.
- **Lean on frozen vegetables and fruits.** This will make meal planning and cooking easy and convenient.
- **Look at your schedule for the week.** If you dine out, will there be leftovers to eat? Figure out how many meals to plan to make at home.
- **Use the Meal Planning Template** on pages 15 - 16, to make your meal and grocery list.
- **Buy local, seasonal produce when possible.** Local produce will typically last longer (and taste better) than if it has been shipped a long way.



TIP 1:

Shop your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry first! Cook or eat what you already have before buying more.



TIP 2:

Stick to a grocery list to prevent waste and save money.

Prepare Ahead of Time

Did you know people are more likely to eat food that is ready to go? Washing and chopping fruit and vegetables makes it easy for your family to eat more fresh produce, if it's convenient to grab and go.

Spend a little time preparing multiple meals for the week. You'll save time and energy during the week. Pre-prepping may entice even the "not so willing cook" in your family to help out.

For more information on prepping tips visit the EPA Food Too Good To Waste website.



DID YOU KNOW:

In 2015, the EPA and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) joined together to set the nation's first food waste reduction goal to cut food waste in half by 2030.

STORE IT RIGHT

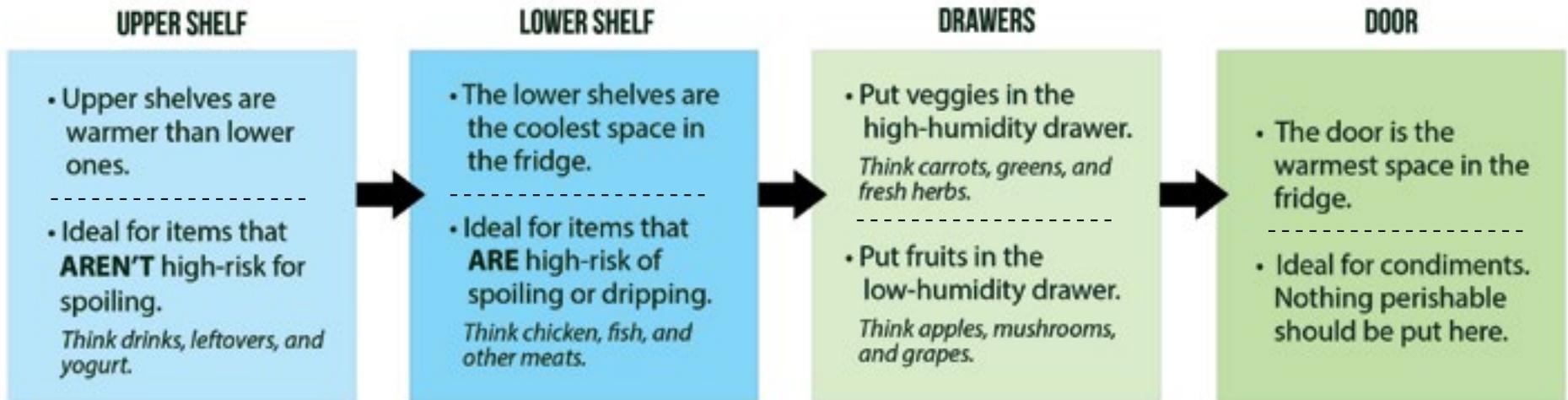
In your refrigerator

- Designate a shelf or bin for items to be eaten first (see page 13 for printable label "EAT THIS FIRST", or download on HamiltonCountyRecycles.org).
- Use the crisper drawers appropriately by separating fruits and vegetables. The higher humidity environment benefits many vegetables helping them last longer. Set to low humidity for fruits.
- Invest in clear containers for storage so nothing can "hide."
- Untie all bunches (herbs, greens, etc.) to allow the produce to breathe.
- Download the Fruit and Vegetable Storage Guide at HamiltonCountyRecycles.org for more tips.

In your freezer

- Bought too much? Double a recipe and place leftovers in single-serving containers for a quick meal later or to take to work or school.
- If you know you're not going to eat leftovers, freeze them. When you want a quick meal, they will be waiting.
- All frozen food should be in airtight containers with as much air removed as possible. Air contains moisture that creates ice crystals that can "burn" the food.
- Didn't eat all of the produce you planned? Chop and freeze it before it goes bad.
- Label and date items for easy identification.

YOUR REFRIGERATOR



TIP 3:

For best results, keep your fridge between 37 and 40 °F, and your freezer between 0 and 2 °F.

Understanding Date Labels

With one exception, it's not about food safety

Date labels are confusing and can lead to needlessly throwing away good food. With the exception of infant formula, product dating is set by manufacturers to indicate the latest date for peak quality, not safety.

Even if the date expires, a product should be safe, wholesome and of good quality if stored and handled properly.

See the USDA's Food Product Dating fact sheet at fsis.usda.gov for more information.



Use by: Last date recommended by manufacturer for peak quality.



Sell by: Manufacturer's date to tell store how long to display item for sale.



Best before/best by: Manufacturer's recommended date for optimal flavor/quality.



Closed or coded dates: Packing numbers used by manufacturers.

Try Something New

Creative use of foods to prevent waste goes way back to the beginning of humankind.

You can roast, sauté, stew, or blend to create flavorful one-pot meals, casseroles, soups, stews, frittatas, fried rice, and smoothies.

Fruits can be made into sauces, crisps or cobblers. Stale bread can be kept for breadcrumbs, croutons, French toast, and bread pudding.

A variety of foods can be dehydrated, fermented, or canned.

Many families make a night of it! Whether it's CORN (Clean Out The Refrigerator Night) or FIFI (Find It and Fix It), you can start a new tradition.

Share the Bounty

So you over-purchased, made too much and don't have freezer space, couldn't resist the buy one get one free offer (BOGO), or harvested all your zucchini at once?

Your neighbor, friend, co-worker or dear old dad will appreciate your generosity and kindness when you share your extras.

Who doesn't like the gift of food?



TAKE THE FOOD WASTE CHALLENGE

Are you curious to see how much you actually waste or determined to create change in your own home?

The EPA has created a **Food: Too Good To Waste implementation guide and toolkit** you can download. Sustainable America also provides the **I Value Food: Too Good to Waste Challenge**. Hint: If you sign up online, you will be sent helpful tips and tricks.

Make it fun and ask friends or family members to join you in the campaign. Support from them and a bit of competition will more likely keep you on track.

Share photos and food waste weigh-ins with us. Email them to **savethefood@hamilton-co.org** to share your successes on social media and encourage others to do the same.





CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN

WEEKLY CALENDAR

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
BREAKFAST							
LUNCH							
DINNER							
SNACKS							

NOTES:

RESOURCES

Websites

SaveTheFood.com is a streamlined website with tips, recipes, statistics, and more.

EPA's Food Too Good To Waste is a toolkit for preventing wasted food.

HamiltonCountyRecycles.org offers food waste reduction tips.

Sustainable America's I Value Food: Too Good to Waste Challenge.

ChooseMyPlate.gov "Plan Your Weekly Meals" template as seen on pages 15 - 16.

EatByDate.com offers a robust food storage guide.

NIH.gov National institute of Health's Serving Sizes and Portions, Eat Right.

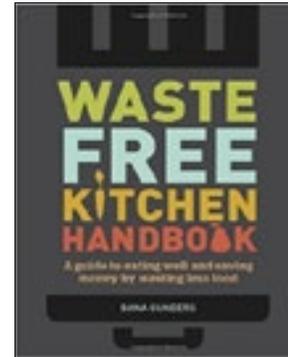
Apps

FoodKeeper can be found online as well as used as an app on your mobile device.

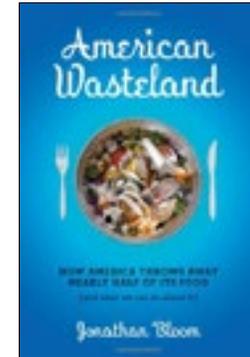
Foodful.ly is a mobile app that tracks your purchases, reminds you of what's in the fridge, and gives you recipes to use food while it's still fresh.

Handpick is an app that helps you create recipes from the food you have in your fridge.

Books

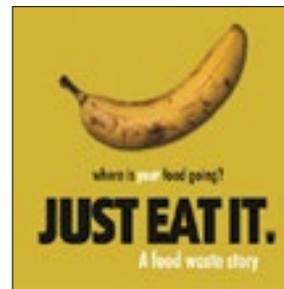


**Waste Free
Kitchen Handbook**
Dana Gunders



American Wasteland
Jonathan Bloom

Movies



**Just Eat It:
A food waste story**
Grant Baldwin



**Wasted! The Story
of Food Waste**
Nari Kye, Anna Chai

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District would like to acknowledge and thank the many organizations willing to share their resources to create this booklet.

Thank you to the following: USDA, EPA, ReFED, Sustainable America's I Value Food, SavetheFood.com, Thurston County, Washington, and King County Solid Waste Division, Washington.



ENDNOTES

¹ReFED,

"A roadmap to reduce U.S. food waste by 20 percent,"
https://www.refed.com/downloads/ReFED_Report_2016.pdf

²Cuéllar, A. D., & Webber, M. E. 2010.

Wasted food, wasted energy: the embedded energy in food waste in the United States. *Environmental Science & Technology* 44(16): 6464-6469.
https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/170087/FPRC_Issue%20Brief_UDC_Food%20Loss%20and%20Waste%2004%202014.pdf;sequence=1

³Bloom, J. & Gunders, D. August, 2017.

Wasted: How America is losing up to 40 percent of its food from farm to fork to landfill second edition of NRDC's original 2012 report
<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf>

⁴Feeding America,

<http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2015/overall/ohio/county/hamilton>

⁵EPA

<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials#Learnwhy>

⁶Bloom, *American Wasteland*, 187.

The author reports a 15 percent loss in homes, with potentially an additional 10 percent loss in liquid products. <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-food-IP.pdf>

Disclaimer: It is up to you to use your best judgement of what is still safe to eat. Neither the Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District nor its principals or employees shall be held liable for damages or injuries that may in any way arise out of any food or drink you consume.



HamiltonCountyRecycles.org

10/2017

