



"Go Further with Food" is the theme for 2018, and its importance is timely for many reasons. Preparing foods to go further at home and within the community can have a positive impact on your wallet and the environment. You can adopt healthier eating styles and help reduce food waste.

Food waste has a massive environmental impact. Each year up to 40% of food in the U.S. never gets eaten, translating to \$218 billion lost, which includes the cost of food wasted on the consumer level, retail, wasted water, energy, fertilizers, cropland, and production costs. It cost a family of four about \$1500 a year for wasted food in New York State. Food waste is also the largest component of solid waste in U.S. landfills. In New York that is 300,000 pounds of food a year and only 3% of it goes somewhere else to be used. Once in the landfill, food decomposes and releases methane, a form of climate pollution, that is more potent than carbon dioxide. If global food waste was a country, it would have the largest carbon footprint after the U.S. and China as a result of carbon pollution created from uneaten food.

The basics to cut down on food waste and your food budget

- Plan meals in advance.
- Use restraint (and a shopping list) at the store.
- Store food properly for safe and handy use.
- Develop use-it-all-up menus.
- Make the most of your freezer.



Extend the life of your food.



Wilted: Soak wilted veggies in ice water for 5 to 10 minutes is often enough to reinvigorate them or add wilted veggies to a cooked dish.

Stale: Toast stale chips, bread, and crackers for a minute or two in a regular or toaster oven to crisp them right back up.

Salty: If something taste too salty, add vinegar, lemon juice, or brown sugar to fix it or dilute with water, crushed tomatoes or unsalted broth. You can also pop a raw, peeled potato into the pot of soup to absorb some of the salt. Remove the potato before serving (and combine it with another boiled potato to make a not-too-salty mash).

Burned: You can remove burned beans or stew from the heat, scoop the unblackened portion into a new pot and cover with a damp cloth for 10 minutes. This removes much of the burned flavor. And, if the dish still tastes unappetizing, try adding barbecue, sweet chili, or hot sauce.

Overcooked: Puree in the blender with some soup stock, milk, or cream. Broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, potatoes and even leftover stir fry are excellent for this.

Use up fresh fruit before it goes bad: Combine fruits into a fruit salad or top cereal with sliced fruit. Cook berries, apples or pears into a tasty crisp or crumble. Use overripe fruit in muffins, breads, or pancakes.

Use up fresh vegetables before they go bad: Add vegetables to soups, stews, casseroles, pastas, sauces, or omelets. Combine vegetables and a little salad dressing for a side dish or snack.

Transform leftovers into a new meal: For example, take leftover mashed potatoes and combine them with stock, a splash of vinegar, onions, carrots and any other veggies on hand to make soup. See the soup recipe on the back.

Stretch ingredients over multiple meals: Use ingredients more than once to save money and avoid food waste. Add veggies to pasta or combine to make a mixed salad.

The freezer is the best way to preserve food until you're ready to eat it.

- **Freeze portions:** sliced bread, not a whole loaf. Then you can toast it right from the freezer a slice or two at a time. Use a muffin tin to freeze stews and chili in portions.
- **Freeze berries on a cookie sheet** separately for about half an hour and then transfer to a bag, so they won't all stick together. Scramble two raw eggs so that you can cook breakfast for one.
- **Keep it airtight:** Less air = less freezer burn. Freezer burn is harmless but affects taste. Water crystals that can form on frozen foods is normal. Wrap meats with plastic wrap or freezer paper before storing in zip-top bags. Squeeze excess air from plastic bags and containers, and avoid opening the freezer door unnecessarily.
- **Leave room for liquids:** Most liquids expand in the freezer, so leave about half an inch at the top of containers to account for this.



HOW TO KEEP FOOD WASTE FROM SPOILING YOUR BUDGET

Essential Frugal Living Tips



- **Blanch:** Most fruits and vegetables benefit from blanching, which preserves their quality, color, and vitamin content. First clean the produce, place it in a pot of boiling water, and then cool in ice water. There are specific blanching times for fruits and veggies.
- **Label and organize:** Label containers with contents and date, and use clear containers when possible so you can easily see what's inside. If you pack your freezer, you may want to keep a log of what's inside. It helps with meal planning and minimizes time spent searching.
- **Defrost safely:** The safest ways to defrost frozen foods are by placing them in the fridge (overnight will usually do it), in the microwave (settings vary according to model), or in a bowl of cold water. Do not thaw on the kitchen counter or in warm water.

Food expiration dates have nothing to do with safety, and are only loosely related to quality. They're the manufacturer's best estimate of when the product is at its freshest or "peak quality." Many foods will still be good to eat days, weeks, or months after those dates, depending on the food.



Best before dates: These dates refer to quality rather than food safety. It's the date before which the brand stands by its product. Foods with a "best before" or "use by" date should be safe to eat after the date has passed, but they may no longer be at their very best. This is true for "best by," "best if used by," "enjoy by," and other similar expressions.

Sell by dates: These dates are for store staff. They actually build in quality so that if the food is sold by that date, you can still get it home and have top-quality shelf life for some time.

Use your eyes and ears: For the most part, you can trust your senses to know when a food has gone bad. Milk, yogurt, juice, sauces. Even meat that looks a little faded or gray is okay to eat. The products to be careful with are deli meats, unpasteurized dairy products, and anything with mold.



Additional Tips to Reduce Food Waste

Shop Wisely. Plan meals, use shopping lists, buy from bulk bins, and avoid impulse buys.

Request Smaller Portions. Restaurants will often provide half-portions upon request at reduced prices.

Eat Leftovers. Ask your restaurant for a "doggy bag" so you can eat them later. Freeze them if you don't want to eat them in a day or so. Only about half of Americans take leftovers home from restaurants.

Donate. Non-perishable and unspoiled perishable food can be donated to local food banks, soup kitchens, pantries, and shelters

Scrutinize deals: Five bananas for a dollar is a good deal only if you eat all five. Also, many stores offer the sale price even if you buy less than the stated quantity. If you're unsure, ask.

Use the salad bar: For mixed vegetable dishes or salads that call for small amounts of different types of vegetables, shop the salad bar. They will cost more per ounce, but less overall.

Keep it cold: Buy perishable and frozen foods last so they spend less time at room temperature. Be sure to shake the water from produce as water encourages rotting and adds weight. If you won't be home for a while, keep a cooler in your car.

Imperfections are OK: Scarred and oddly shaped fruits and vegetables, or "Funny Fruit," are perfectly normal. If we don't buy them, the store will toss them in the trash.

Buy the last one: Buying these loners discourages stores from overstocking just to create the appearance of abundance.

Resource:

<https://www.savethefood.com/>

Recycling resources: Cooperative Extension Website: <http://ccschenectady.org/recycling>



Kitchen Scraps Vegetable Bean Soup

Prep time: 10 Minutes Cook time: 1 Hour Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients

- 4 carrots, coarsely chopped
- 4 stalks of celery, coarsely chopped
- 1 red onion, (or 1 white onion or 3 shallots), coarsely chopped
- 1 sweet potato, coarsely chopped
- 1 white potato, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups cooked adzuki beans
- 2 cups cooked butterbeans
- ½ cup split peas, soaked
- 6 cups of water or homemade stock or broth
- 4 leaves of kale, stems removed and chopped
- sea salt and cayenne to taste



Directions

1. Place carrots, celery, onion, potatoes, beans, peas, and water in a large pot. Bring to a boil and then simmer on low for one hour.
2. Add kale once cooking is complete and mix in.
3. Add salt and cayenne to desired taste.
4. Serve hot.



The Major Benefits Of This Soup

- One pot meal magic
- Mix and match based on the vegetables you have on hand
- Mix and match based on the beans/lentils you have on hand
- Freezer friendly
- Portable in a mason jar or heated at home and put in a thermos
- Perfect use of kitchen scraps
- Reduce the food you toss
- Economical

Source:

Meghan Telpner Blogs - <https://www.meghantelpner.com/blog/kitchen-scraps-vegetable-bean-soup/>



Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.

For information, call 518-382-8481, #9, ext.304

Have a nutritional question or concern? If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County's Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible to have a free consultation with a Registered Dietitian. Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269.

Leave a message, if necessary, for dietitian to call you back.

Nutrition resources: Cooperative Extension Website at <http://ccschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors>

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

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