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Food Security in Focus

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Waste Not, Want Not: Reducing Food Waste in Your Communities

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Waste Not, Want Not: Reducing Food Waste in Your Communities

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Food Security in Focus

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Food Security in Focus

Among our nation's active-duty members and their families, an estimated 24% are food insecure.

Food Security in Focus!

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Assessing Food Insecurity

Engaging in Conversation and Assessing Food Insecurity

Food Security in Focus

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Today's Presenter

Jenna Anding, PhD, RDN, LD

Professor & Extension Specialist
Department of Nutrition
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

- Registered/Licensed Dietitian
- 24 years of experience as an Extension Specialist
- Published >20 peer-reviewed papers
- Secured >$50 million in grants/contracts to support Extension programming efforts
- Currently serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Extension*

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Learning Objectives

- Describe the types of food most often wasted at home
- Understand the differences between avoidable, possibly avoidable, and unavoidable food waste.
- Identify at least 2 habits you and can adopt to minimize food waste in the home.

Goal: Help caregivers of service members reduce food waste in the home.

- Save $$$
- Improve or maintain food/nutrition security

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What do you think? In the United States, what % of edible food goes to waste?
A. 20%
B. 30%
C. 40%
9

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What do you think? In the United States, what % of edible food goes to waste?
• Answer: ~30%
• Depending on the methodology used
• Sector of the food chain studied
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, 2014
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How much food is wasted in the US?
Enough food to fill the Rose Bowl stadium every day.
Source: Bloom, J. American Wasteland: How America Throws Away Nearly Half of Its Food (and What we Can Do About It), 2011
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An estimated 40 million tons of food goes to waste every year in the United States.
Source: Food Waste In America in 2023; Statistics + Facts. RTS, 2023
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How much food is wasted in the US?

- 422 grams/day (15 oz)
- 28.3 pounds of food **per person** per month

Source: Conrad et al., *PLoS ONE*, 2018

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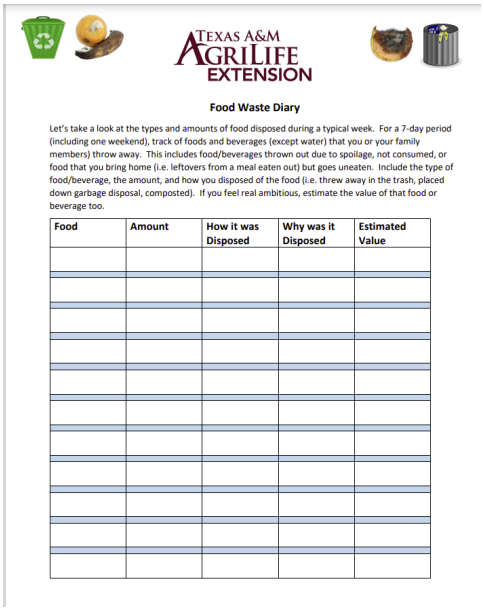
Let's talk (chat) about it.

Think about the amount of edible food you throw out. Do you think that amount is more than, the same as, or less than the amount of food thrown out by the average person?

A. More than
B. The same
C. Less than



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Food Waste Diary

Let's take a look at the types and amounts of food disposed during a typical week. For a 7-day period (including one weekend), track of foods and beverages (except water) that you or your family members) throw away. This includes food/beverages thrown out due to spoilage, not consumed, or food that you bring home (i.e. leftovers from a meal eaten out) but goes uneaten. Include the type of food/beverage, the amount, and how you disposed of the food (i.e. threw away in the trash, placed down garbage disposal, composted). If you feel real ambitious, estimate the value of that food or beverage too.

Food	Amount	How it was Disposed	Why was it Disposed	Estimated Value

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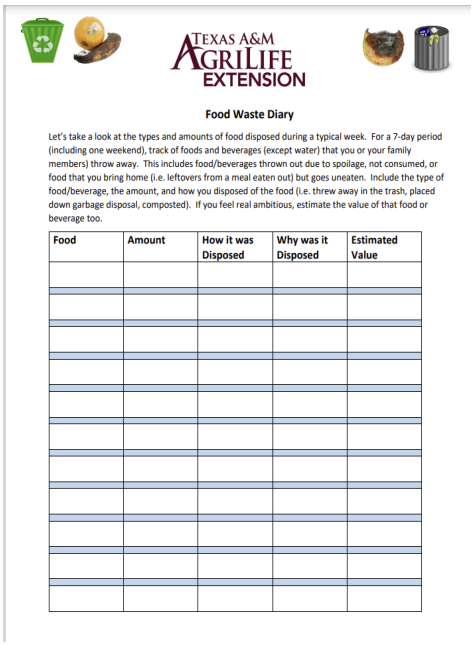

Let's talk (chat) about it…

How <u>much</u> food do you throw away?

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Types of Food Waste

Avoidable: Edible foods and beverages that were thrown away.

Crust cut off a sandwich

Possibly Avoidable: Edible foods and beverages consumed by some but not others.

Peel of a carrot; skin of a baked potato

Unavoidable: Waste that comes from foods and beverages but is not edible under normal circumstances.

Chicken bones; rind of a cantaloupe; egg-shells; tea bags

Source: Kelleher and Robbins, *BioCycle*, August 2013

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Let's talk (chat) about it…

- What type(s) of food did/do you throw out most often?
- **Avoidable, Possibly Avoidable, or Unavoidable?**

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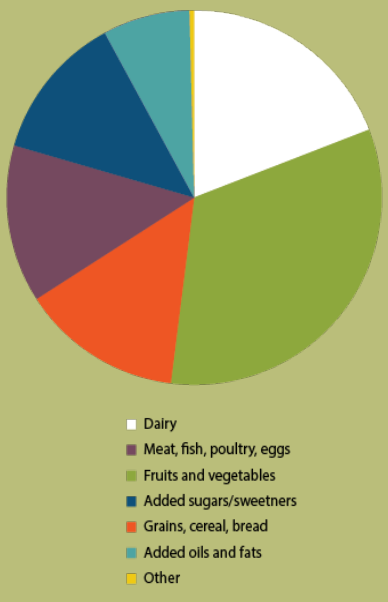
Foods Wasted Most Often

- Fruits and vegetables (32.9%)
- Dairy (19.1%)
- Breads, cereals and grains (13.9%)



Source: Adapted from Buzby, Wells, and Hyman, USDA ERS; *The Estimated Amount, Value and Calories of Postharvest Food Losses at the Retail and Consumer Levels in the US*, 2014 (2010 data).

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Why is food waste happening?

Lack of awareness about how much food is wasted.	Our desire to eat only the freshest (and "perfect") foods.	Spoilage (food spoils for several reasons).	Impulse and bulk purchase that are not used/stored.
Poor (or no) planning (not thinking about family activities).	Not utilizing leftovers or food scraps that can be consumed or composted.	Preparing more food than what can be eaten (i.e., not using/preserving leftovers, etc.).	Concern about foodborne illness.

Sources: Neff RA, Spiker ML, and Truant PL. Wasted Food: U.S. Consumers' Reported Awareness, Attitudes, and Behaviors. *PLOS One*, June 2015. *Food Waste in America in 2021: Statistics & Facts*. RTS, Food Waste Guide, 2021; Davenport ML et al., *Resources, Conservation & Recycling*, 2019

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Other Factors

Container/package size of foods – may be too big for what we can use

Food portions (when we eat out)

Dates stamped on food packages – lots of confusion!!!

Sources: Davenport ML et al., *Resources, Conservation & Recycling*, 2019; Food Waste In America in 2023; Statistics + Facts. RTS, 2023; Neff RA et al., *Waste Management*, 2019

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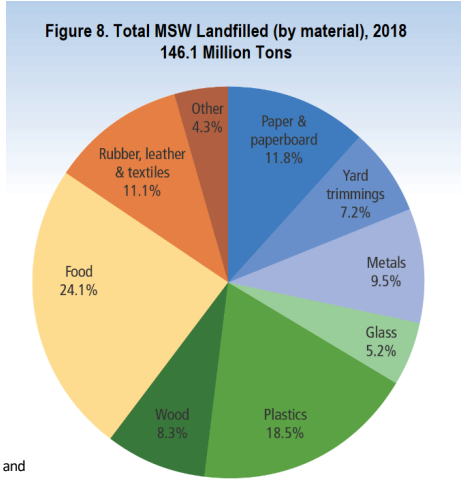
Why the Concern About Food Waste?

- Wasted food = wasted resources
  - Food produced in the US uses 10% of energy and 80% of fresh water.
- Food waste is the largest component of municipal solid waste; more than plastics, metals, wood or yard waste.



Sources: EPA, 2011; USDA, Natural Resources Defense Council, 2012; Levis et al., *Waste Management*, 2010; Buzby and Hyman, *Food Policy*, 2012; EPA, *Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: 2018 Fact Sheet* December 2020

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Wasted Food = Wasted Money

What do you think? What the value of the food that wasted in the US?

A. $200 per person/year
B. $300 per person/year
C. $400 per person/year

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Value of food waste is estimated to be nearly $400 per person per year.

Source: Buzby JC et al., USDA, 2014

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Food Prices

Category	% of food expenditures	% Change Dec 2021 - Dec 2022
All food		10.4
Food away from home	38.1	8.4
Food at home	61.9	11.8
Meat, poultry, and fish	12.7	4.5
Eggs	1.1	59.9
Dairy products	5.9	15.3
Fruits and vegetables	10.4	8.4
Sugars and sweets	2.1	12.2
Cereals and bakery products	8.1	16.1
Non-alcoholic beverages	7.1	12.6
Other foods	12.6	12.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Indexes and forecasts by USDA, Economic Research Service, 1.25.2023

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Wasted Food is also a Wasted Opportunity to Feed People

- Food insecurity is a serious problem among some military households
  - 1 in 4 US military veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan have reported being food insecure.
  - 1 in 3 servicemen/women at one US army installation (n=5,600) was determined to have marginal food security.
  - 1 in 10 U.S. households faced food insecurity in 2021.

Sources: Widome R, et al. *Public Health Nutrition*, 2014; Beymer MR et al., *Journal of Nutrition*, 2021; Coleman-Jensen A., et al., USDA/ERS, 2022

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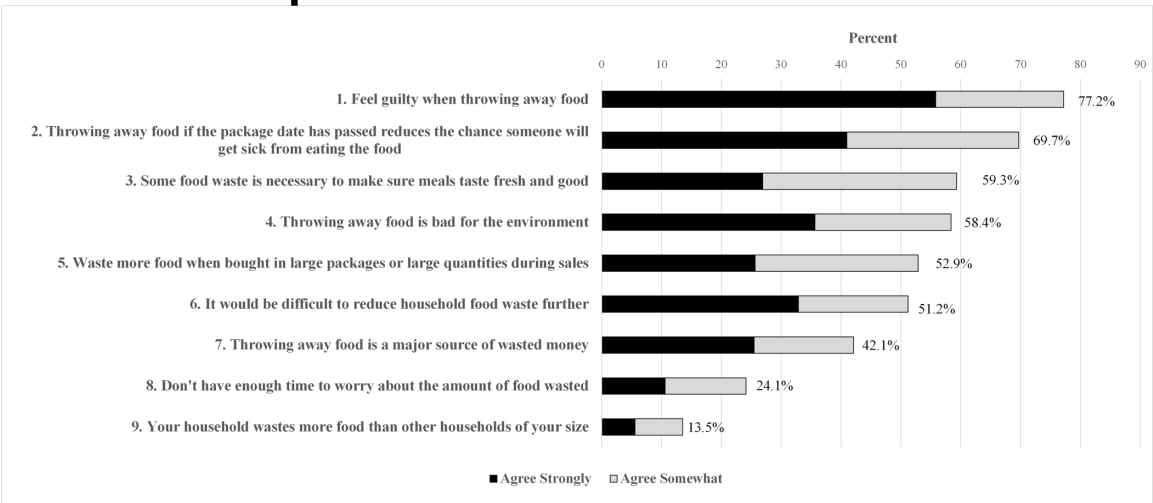
Are People Concerned about Food Waste?



Source: Qi D, Roe BE (2016) Household Food Waste: Multivariate Regression and Principal Components Analyses of Awareness and Attitudes among U.S. Consumers. *PLOS ONE* 11(7): e0159250. https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0159250

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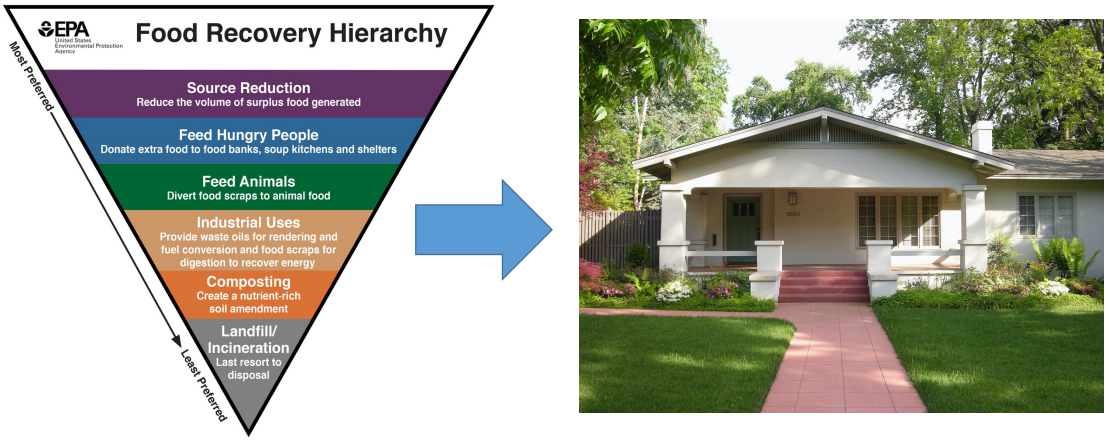
Reducing Food Waste: Opportunities from a National Level to a Household Level



Source: https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy

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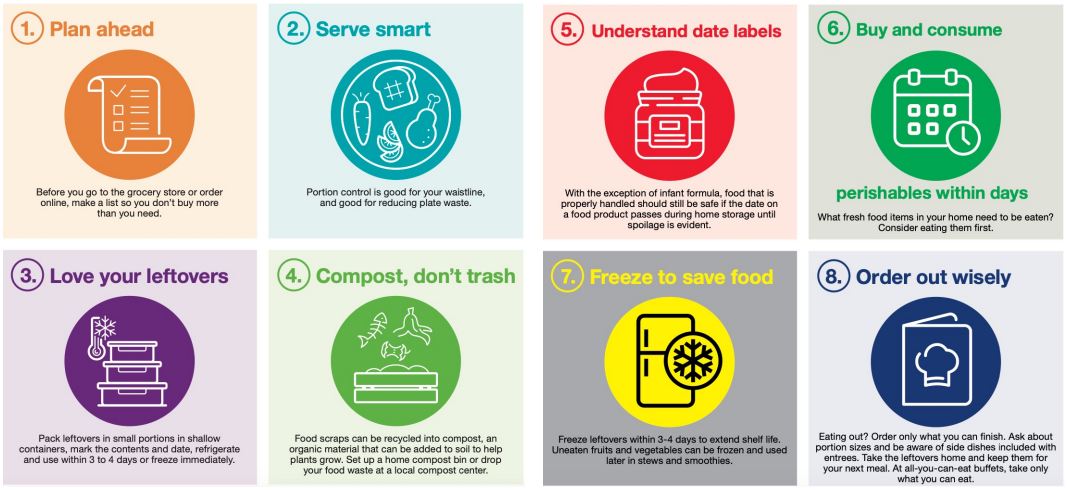
USDA Recommendations



Source: USDA https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste/consumers

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Opportunities to Reduce Food Waste at Home

- Meal planning
- Food shopping
- Meal preparation
- Food storage

Have a purpose…Have a plan.

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Meal Planning

- How many meals/snacks do you need this week?
  - Think about family obligations, activities for the week
  - Can dinner tonight be used for lunch tomorrow?
- How many will be eating?
- Start with **what you have on hand** (freezer, refrigerator, & pantry)
  - How many of us know what we have right now?
- Use a list when shopping

Have a purpose…Have a plan.

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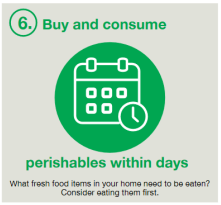
Food Shopping

We often buy food without thinking how it will be used; this can contribute to waste.

- Stick to the list…unless there is a good reason
- Have a purpose and a plan for everything you put in your buggy/cart
- Size matters! Pay attention to the package size; quantities bought
  - 53% of adults surveyed agree that more food is wasted when bought in large packages or if they buy large amounts because it is on sale.
  - Bulk bins may/may not be the most cost effective if the product isn't used
  - Watch out for "bundled items"
- Buy what you can use/freeze before the **date** stamped on the package for best quality



Have a purpose…Have a plan.

Sources: Gustavsson et al., *Global Food Losses and Food Waste*, The Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology, 2011; Qi D and Roe BE, PLoS One, 2016

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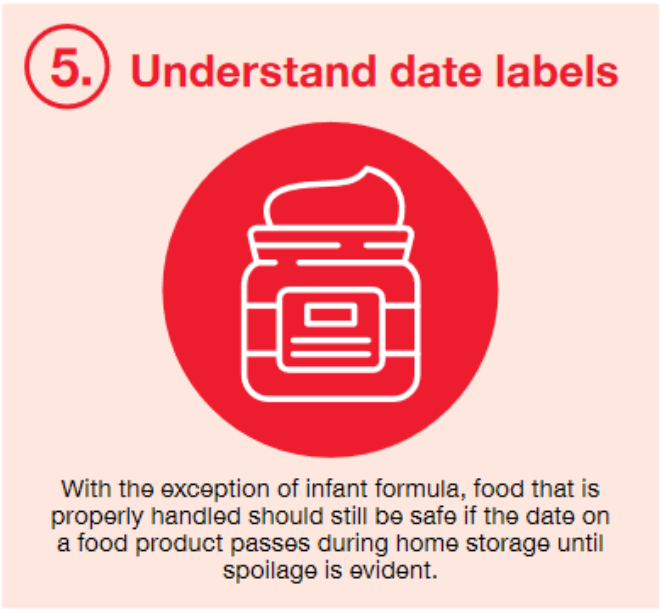
Don't Be Confused by Dates on Food Packages



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What Does the Date Mean?

- Best-by
- Best-If-Used-By
- Sell-by
- Best if used by
- Expiration
- Pull-by
- Pack date
- Use-by

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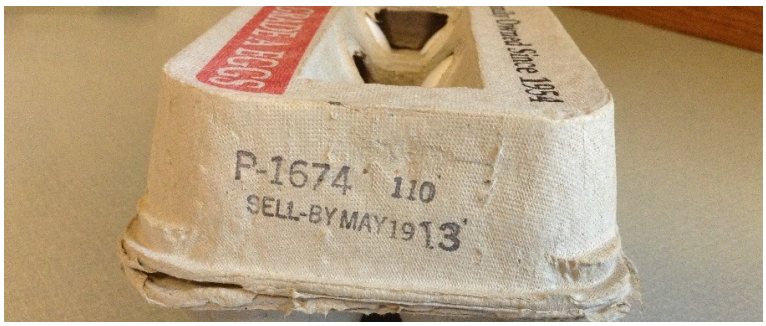

- 84% Americans report they theow away food near the package date at least occasionally.
- 37% do this “always” or “usually.”

Did you know?

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Source: Neff et al., *Waste Management*, 2019

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Meal Preparation

- Prepare the amount of food that you/family will eat or use (now or in the future)
  - Practice portion control when serving
  - Serve on smaller plates
- Pack leftovers in single-serve containers for future meals (use within 3-4 days)
- Freeze leftovers for future meals

Have a purpose…Have a plan.

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Food Storage

- Store leftovers in clear containers **so you can see them**.
  - When was the last time you cleaned out the refrigerator?
  - What is the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer?
- Keep an inventory of what foods you have
- Date the foods you place in the freezer; practice. FIFO for best quality

Have a purpose…Have a plan.

(and keep your stored food safe)

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Manage those Leftovers – If You Have Them

People who eat leftovers tend to waste less food.

Barriers to Using Leftovers	
Concern about safety/foodborne illness	Use within 3-4 days; maintain 40 degrees or cooler in the refrigerator
"I didn't know _____ was in there!"	Place leftovers in the refrigerator where they can be seen and easily accessed
Leftovers are boring	Can they be repurposed into another meal/dish?
Sense of guilt/sacrifice	Prepare less to avoid leftovers

Source: Schanes K et al., *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 2018

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Minimize Takeout Waste

- Portion sizes tend to be large when we eat out.
- Do people **eat** leftovers from restaurants?

Reasons for Taking Leftovers Home	Reasons Against Taking Leftovers Home
Save $$	Don't like the meal as a leftover
Get 2 meals for the price of 1	Hard to transport the food home
One less meal to cook	No place to refrigerate it (safety)
Don't want to waste food	Too much of a hassle
	Not sure when I would eat it

Source: Talwar S. et al., *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 2023

Have a purpose (when you eat out)…Have a plan (if you have leftovers).

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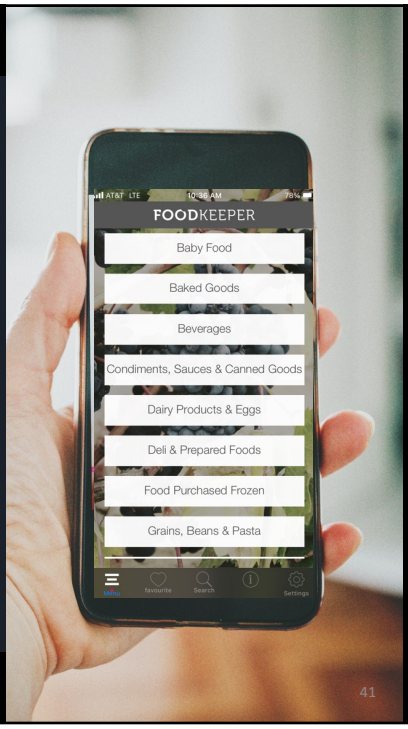
Is it still good?
Can I eat it?

There's an app for that!



Source: https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app

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Final thoughts……

- Lots of food is being wasted that could be put to better use.
- Food waste has economic, environmental, and social consequences.
- When talking about food waste, you have to know your *audience*.
- Largest source of food waste is the home.
- There are several steps that we can take to reduce food waste food at home.

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Thank you!

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Continuing Education

This webinar has been approved for the following **continuing education (CE) credits**:

- 1.0 CE from the **University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work (Social Work, LPC, LMFT).**
- 1.0 CE from the **Commission for Case Manager Certification.**
- 1.0 CE from the **Patient Advocate Certification Board** to Board Certified Patient Advocates (BCPA).
- 1.0 CE from the **American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences** for Certified in Family and Consumer Sciences (CFCS).
- 1.0 CE from the **American Association for Family and Consumer Sciences** for Certified Nutrition and Wellness Educators (CNWE).
- OneOp **certificate of attendance** available.

Evaluation Link

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OneOpMilitaryCaregiving@gmail.com

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Upcoming Food Security in Focus Event

Increasing Children's Fruit & Vegetable Exposure: Tools for Practitioners Serving Families Experiencing Limited Income

March 1, 2023, 11 AM – 12 PM ET

This webinar will focus on nutrition for children affected by poverty.

EVENT PAGE:
https://oneop.org/event/134982/

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