



Save *THE* Food

Up to 40% of the food in the US is wasted and never eaten. Considering how many people don't have enough to eat, the idea of so much food ending up in landfills is startling. Here are some tips on how you can do your part to reduce food waste:



Plan Ahead

There are two rules of shopping that can help you reduce food waste, save money and improve how well you eat - don't shop when hungry and bring a list. A good shopping list is based on what you plan to eat for the next week or so. Remember though, that meal planning doesn't mean you have to cook from scratch every night. Map out days for quick meals, new recipes and no-cook nights of leftovers or eating out. If your shopping includes the local farmers' market, go there first and then make any adjustments to your meal plan and shopping list to include any great finds you weren't expecting.



Choose Wisely

Buy what you need. While bulk discounts can seem like too good a deal to pass up, if you end up buying more than you need, the deal may not actually be that good. Bulk bins, on the other hand, can be a way to purchase smaller amounts than what is typically found on the shelves to better match what you need. Embrace imperfection. When shopping for produce, look for fruits and vegetables that aren't bruised, damaged or overripe. Do, however, give ugly produce a chance. Fruits and vegetables don't always grow in the exact shape or size that we expect.



Use It:

Too often, we end up tossing food that could have been saved. Don't be fooled by dates. Dates on foods are not always expiration dates. Sometimes they aren't even dates, but codes used by the manufacturer. Unless the date specifically says "expiration" or "use by" it is most likely safe to use the food past that date if it has been stored properly. If you won't use something before it goes bad, consider freezing it. Many foods can be frozen safely for use later. For more information on reducing food waste and food safety, check out savethefood.com and homefoodsafety.org

REFERENCES:

1. Gunders, Dana. Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill. NRDC Issue Paper, August 2012. Available at: <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-food-IP.pdf>.
2. Home Food Safety. Available at homefoodsafety.org.
3. Save the Food. Available at savethefood.org.

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