

# Resources for preventing food waste

Although we love food, a lot of it goes to waste. In the U.S., about 40% of food is wasted somewhere along the supply chain. In Hennepin County, enough edible food is thrown away each year to fill Target Field 1.5 times! It may be surprising to learn that most of that food waste happens at home and when we're on the go. But that's also good news because we have the power to significantly reduce food waste by making changes in our kitchens, when we go shopping, and when we're out in the community.

Taking steps to reduce food waste can save each of us a significant amount of money, preserve the resources that go into producing and transporting food, and leave a healthier environment for future generations. In fact, preventing food waste is one of the most effective actions people can take to reduce waste and address climate change.

The following resources will help you understand the food waste issue and take actions to reduce food waste at four key phases – planning, shopping, cooking, and storage.

## Go-to resources for preventing food waste

- **Hennepin County Stop Food Waste Challenge:** [hennepinfoodwaste.ecochallenge.org](http://hennepinfoodwaste.ecochallenge.org)  
Annual month-long challenge that helps you explore food waste reduction actions and has resources to help improve your skills in cooking, planning, shopping, and storage to prevent wasting food.
- **Save the Food:** [savethefood.com](http://savethefood.com)  
Save the Food is a national public service campaign to combat food waste. The website includes tips on planning, recipes for using up food scraps, guides on properly storing food, and resources to raise awareness about food waste.
- **Love Food Hate Waste:** [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com)  
Love Food Hate Waste is a UK-based campaign to raise awareness about the need to reduce food waste and help people take action. The website includes background on the food waste issue, resources for taking action, and searchable recipes for using up leftovers.
- **I Value Food:** [ivaluefood.com](http://ivaluefood.com)  
I Value Food is a campaign from Sustainable America. The website includes a food waste quiz and a variety of resources to prevent food waste.
- **Food Too Good to Waste:** [www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-too-good-waste-implementation-guide-and-toolkit](http://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-too-good-waste-implementation-guide-and-toolkit)  
Food Too Good to Waste from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency includes a toolkit and implementation guide for local governments and community organizations to use to implement a food waste behavior change and outreach campaign in their community.

## Food waste overview and data

Explore research that helps us understand the food waste issue in the U.S.

- Natural Resources Defense Council: [www.nrdc.org/food-waste](http://www.nrdc.org/food-waste)
- ReFED: [refed.org](http://refed.org)

## Planning

Learning about what you waste, planning out what you will make and what you need to buy, and keeping track of the food you have at home are important first steps to reduce food waste.

### Tracking food waste

- Track what you toss worksheet from Hennepin County: [www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/zero-waste/food-waste-tracking-worksheet.docx](http://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/zero-waste/food-waste-tracking-worksheet.docx)

### Meal planning

- Best meal planning methods for your lifestyle from Cook Smarts: [www.cooksmarts.com/articles/meal-planning-for-beginners](http://www.cooksmarts.com/articles/meal-planning-for-beginners)
- 10 easy meal planning tips from Save the Food: [savethefood.com/articles/10-easy-tips-for-meal-planning](http://savethefood.com/articles/10-easy-tips-for-meal-planning)
- Free printable weekly meal planning worksheets from Live Craft Eat: [www.livecrafteat.com/printable-weekly-meal-planner](http://www.livecrafteat.com/printable-weekly-meal-planner)

### Keeping a kitchen inventory

- Free printable kitchen inventory worksheets from Shelf Cooking: [shelfcooking.com/kitchen-inventory](http://shelfcooking.com/kitchen-inventory)
- Free printable kitchen inventory worksheets from I Value Food: [ivaluefood.com/downloads/Kitchen\\_Inv\\_Sheets.pdf](http://ivaluefood.com/downloads/Kitchen_Inv_Sheets.pdf)

### Food tracking and meal planning apps

- Cooklist: [www.cooklist.co](http://www.cooklist.co)
- Cozzo: [cozzo.app](http://cozzo.app)
- Foodkeeper: [www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app)
- Pantry Check: [pantrycheck.com](http://pantrycheck.com)

## Shopping

Creating a grocery list, being intentional about the foods you buy (or don't buy) and using options at the store to buy just the amount you need will help you stick to your meal plan and avoid bring home excess food that ultimately goes to waste.

### Creating a shopping list

- Shopping with meals in mind worksheet from the U.S. EPA: [www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/smart\\_shopping\\_ftgtw\\_2\\_1\\_2016\\_pubnumberadded\\_508\\_v2.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/smart_shopping_ftgtw_2_1_2016_pubnumberadded_508_v2.pdf)
- Using a reverse grocery list that starts with what you have at home from Apartment Therapy: [www.apartmenttherapy.com/reverse-grocery-list-shopping-method-36868285](http://www.apartmenttherapy.com/reverse-grocery-list-shopping-method-36868285)
- 10 best grocery shopping list apps from Good Housekeeping: [www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/g26255008/best-grocery-shopping-list-apps](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes/g26255008/best-grocery-shopping-list-apps)
- Shopping tips and free printable shopping list from Stop Food Waste: [stopfoodwaste.org/tips/plan/shopping-tips](http://stopfoodwaste.org/tips/plan/shopping-tips)

## Buying just what you need

- Guide to buying from the bulk section from the Hennepin County Zero Waste Guide: [www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/zero-waste-challenge/zero-waste-guide-reducing-waste-kitchen.pdf](http://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/zero-waste-challenge/zero-waste-guide-reducing-waste-kitchen.pdf)

## Finding local food

- Local food directory from Minnesota Grown: [minnesotagrown.com](http://minnesotagrown.com)
- Low-waste shopping at farmers markets from Hennepin County Choose to Reuse: [www.hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse/tips/farmers-market-low-waste](http://www.hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse/tips/farmers-market-low-waste)

## Cooking

Improving cooking skills and learning to cook creatively will help you prepare the right amount, use up food before it spoils, make the most of food scraps that normally go uneaten, and turn leftovers into new, fun meals.

### Planning proper portions

- The Guest-imator portion planner from Save the Food: [savethefood.com/guestimator/guests#guest-container](http://savethefood.com/guestimator/guests#guest-container)
- Portion calculator from Love Food Hate Waste: [www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/portion-planner](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/portion-planner)
- Portion size guide from I Value Food: [ivaluefood.com/resources/cooking-eating/portion-size-guide/](http://ivaluefood.com/resources/cooking-eating/portion-size-guide/)

### Scaling recipes

- How to scale any recipe to make it a small batch recipe from I am a Food Blog: [iamafoodblog.com/how-to-scale-any-recipe-to-make-it-a-small-batch-recipe/](http://iamafoodblog.com/how-to-scale-any-recipe-to-make-it-a-small-batch-recipe/)
- Reducing the size of recipes from University of Nebraska-Lincoln: [food.unl.edu/article/reducing-size-recipes](http://food.unl.edu/article/reducing-size-recipes)

### Using up leftovers

- 10 creative ways to use leftovers from I Value Food: [ivaluefood.com/resources/cooking-eating/creative-ways-to-use-leftovers](http://ivaluefood.com/resources/cooking-eating/creative-ways-to-use-leftovers)
- 15 foods that are always best as leftovers from Cheapism: [blog.cheapism.com/best-leftovers](http://blog.cheapism.com/best-leftovers)
- Zero Waste Chef: [zerowastechef.com/blog-index](http://zerowastechef.com/blog-index)
- Best ways to reheat leftovers from The Kitchn: [www.thekitchn.com/the-best-ways-to-reheat-leftovers-tips-from-the-kitchn-219381](http://www.thekitchn.com/the-best-ways-to-reheat-leftovers-tips-from-the-kitchn-219381)
- Cooking Matters YouTube channel from the University of Minnesota Extension: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCdHDqFqILGpviERj3nQD2Sw/videos](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdHDqFqILGpviERj3nQD2Sw/videos)

### Reviving food

- 5 ways to revive food from Save the Food: [savethefood.com/articles/5-ways-to-revive-food](http://savethefood.com/articles/5-ways-to-revive-food)
- How to revive limp vegetables from All Recipes: [www.allrecipes.com/article/how-to-revive-limp-vegetables](http://www.allrecipes.com/article/how-to-revive-limp-vegetables)

### Swapping ingredients

- Swap this for that from No Taste for Waste: [notasteforwaste.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/012-Swap-this-for-ThatLO.pdf](http://notasteforwaste.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/012-Swap-this-for-ThatLO.pdf)
- List of herb substitutes from Authority Health: [www.authorityhealthmag.com/herb-substitutes](http://www.authorityhealthmag.com/herb-substitutes)

## Using up food

- Delicious ways to use vegetable tops and stalks from Cooking Light: [www.cookinglight.com/cooking-101/ways-to-use-vegetable-tops-and-stalks](http://www.cookinglight.com/cooking-101/ways-to-use-vegetable-tops-and-stalks)
- 25 ways to use almost-spoiled food from Eat This, Not That: [www.eatthis.com/food-spoilage](http://www.eatthis.com/food-spoilage)
- How to not waste your extra vegetable parts from Potluck Video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoDfMZFKI0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoDfMZFKI0)
- Nose to tail cooking for beginners from Men's Journal: [www.mensjournal.com/food-drink/nose-to-tail-cooking-for-beginners-20140107](http://www.mensjournal.com/food-drink/nose-to-tail-cooking-for-beginners-20140107)

## Timing food prep and cooking

- How to time your cooking so everything is ready at once from Life Hacker: [lifehacker.com/the-grown-up-kitchen-how-to-time-your-cooking-so-every-1794685126](http://lifehacker.com/the-grown-up-kitchen-how-to-time-your-cooking-so-every-1794685126)
- Timing is (yes, actually) everything in the kitchen from Bon Appetit: [www.bonappetit.com/test-kitchen/cooking-tips/article/its-all-about-timing](http://www.bonappetit.com/test-kitchen/cooking-tips/article/its-all-about-timing)

## Involving kids in the kitchen

- Cooking tasks kids can help with at every age from The Food Network: [www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids/best-cooking-tasks-kids-every-age](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids/best-cooking-tasks-kids-every-age)
- 70 cooking activities for kids from Kids Cooking Activities: [www.kids-cooking-activities.com/70-kids-cooking-activities.html](http://www.kids-cooking-activities.com/70-kids-cooking-activities.html)
- Toddlers at the table – avoiding power struggles from Kids Health: [kidshealth.org/en/parents/toddler-meals.html](http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/toddler-meals.html)

## Storage

Getting to know where, when, and how long to store food will keep it fresh and tasty for as long as possible.

### Food storage guides

- Storage guide from Save the Food: [savethefood.com/storage](http://savethefood.com/storage)
- A to Z Food Storage Tips from Eureka Recycling: [eurekarecycling.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/A-Z-Food-Storage-Guide-web.pdf](http://eurekarecycling.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/A-Z-Food-Storage-Guide-web.pdf)
- Foodkeeper app from FoodSafety.gov: [www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app)

### Food safety and date labels

- How to tell if food is safe to eat from Business Insider: [www.businessinsider.com/how-to-tell-if-food-is-safe-to-eat-2016-3](http://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-tell-if-food-is-safe-to-eat-2016-3)
- Be smart about date labels on packaged food from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: [www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/confused-date-labels-packaged-foods](http://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/confused-date-labels-packaged-foods)

### Using and organizing your refrigerator and freezer

- Refrigerator insider – help your refrigerator save food from Hennepin County: [www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/work-with-hennepin-county/environmental-literature/save-the-food-flyer.pdf](http://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/work-with-hennepin-county/environmental-literature/save-the-food-flyer.pdf)
- Avoid waste with an eat first shelf from Life Hacker: [lifehacker.com/avoid-food-waste-with-an-eat-this-first-shelf-1841469901](http://lifehacker.com/avoid-food-waste-with-an-eat-this-first-shelf-1841469901)
- The art of freezing from Save the Food: [savethefood.com/articles/the-art-of-freezing](http://savethefood.com/articles/the-art-of-freezing)
- Guide to frozen food storage and freezer shelf life from Cook Smarts: [www.cooksmarts.com/articles/guide-to-frozen-food-storage](http://www.cooksmarts.com/articles/guide-to-frozen-food-storage)

## Food preservation techniques

- Preserving and preparing food safely from the University of Minnesota Extension: [extension.umn.edu/food-safety/preserving-and-preparing](https://extension.umn.edu/food-safety/preserving-and-preparing)
- 6 simple ways to preserve food from your garden from Yes Magazine: [www.yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2017/09/04/6-simple-ways-to-preserve-foods-from-your-garden](http://www.yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2017/09/04/6-simple-ways-to-preserve-foods-from-your-garden)
- How to quick pickle any vegetable from The Kitchn: [www.thekitchn.com/how-to-quick-pickle-any-vegetable-233882](http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-quick-pickle-any-vegetable-233882)

## Community

Encouraging businesses and organizations to prevent food waste and contributing to food waste reduction efforts in your community can help you have a bigger impact.

### Resources for businesses and schools

- Food donation resources for businesses from Hennepin County: <https://www.hennepin.us/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/organics-recycling#food-to-people>
- Waste prevention grants for businesses from Hennepin County: <https://www.hennepin.us/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/business-recycling#assistance-signs-grants>
- Food waste prevention resources for schools from Hennepin County: <https://www.hennepin.us/schoolrecycling/#organics-food-waste-prev>

### Volunteer

- The Food Group Produce Rescue: <https://thefoodgroupmn.org/support/volunteer/gleaning/>