

What's Next?

<http://www.wastedfilm.com/>

Food Waste Facts

In the United States, [40% of all food produced never gets eaten](#). When food is wasted, so are all of the resources that went into growing, processing, and transporting it. Food waste consumes:

- [21% of all freshwater](#)
- [18% of cropland](#)
- [19% of fertilizer](#)
- [21% of landfill volume](#)

Over [90% of food wasted in the United States ends up in landfills](#) where it emits methane, a powerful driver of climate change.

To address food waste, the EPA has created the [Food Recovery Hierarchy](#). This tool recommends ways to reduce food waste and divert wasted food from going to landfill, prioritizing strategies based on their benefits for the environment, society, and the economy.



Food waste happens at many points throughout the food supply chain: on farms, in transport, at grocery stores and in restaurants, and at homes. In the United States, [almost 85% of all food waste happens downstream at consumer-facing businesses and in homes](#) (with 43% occurring in homes). Making changes to reduce your food waste at home can have a big impact!

To address food waste at home,

- **Plan your meals for the week.** Making a grocery list based on your plan will help you to buy only food you know you will use.
- **Store your food properly.** The way you store food can have a significant impact on how long it lasts. For example, did you know fresh basil doesn't like the cold? Keep it on your counter in a glass of water and it will last longer.
- **Utilize your freezer.** If you know you won't use something before it goes bad, freeze it! You can prepare soups or other meals with food that you won't use before it goes bad and then have a quick meal ready when you don't have time to prepare something. You can also freeze fruits, vegetables, bread, meat, and more.
- **Save scraps for broth.** You can save vegetable scraps and bones to make stock for soups. When preparing veggies, save the scraps (carrot tops, mushroom stems, onion trimmings, etc.) in a container in your freezer. Once the container is full, [turn the scraps into broth](#) by simmering in water until infused.
- **Learn more about dates on food labels.** Most date labels give information about food quality rather than safety, but these labels are widely misunderstood and lead to good food being thrown away.
- **Shop at home first.** Take a look at what you have in your refrigerator and cabinets before going to the grocery store. Base what you'll cook on what you need to use up at home before buying more.
- **Start with smaller portions.** If eating at a buffet, always start with less food than you think you'll eat. Your eyes can be bigger than your stomach, and this will help you to not take more than you will eat! You can always go back for seconds. If you're in a dining setting with trays, going trayless can help to reduce over-portioning.
- **Do a food waste audit.** Keep track of what foods you throw away for one week. This will increase your awareness about how you're wasting food, and help you to be able to address it!
- **Buy "ugly" produce,** and talk to grocers or farmers at farmers markets about what they do with their products that are less-than-perfect visually (but not nutritionally or in flavor!). There is a section at local City Markets where you can buy ugly and/or more ripe produce at a reduced cost.

- **Buy locally & seasonally.** Buying locally grown food, especially directly from farmers, can help you to buy less, as there is usually a more limited selection at a farm stand or market than in grocery stores. You'll have more opportunities to buy ugly produce directly from local farmers, and locally grown produce is fresher and will often last longer.
- **Learn how to preserve food.** Preserving food with methods such as canning and pickling allows you to keep it for longer amounts of time. Use [Colorado State University Extension's "Preserve Smart" tool](#) to learn how best to preserve different kinds of foods at altitude.
- **Compost.** Some food scraps, such as banana peels, egg shells, and coffee grinds, are inevitable. Composting these items keeps them from going to a landfill, adds nutrients back to the soil, and makes soil better able to sequester carbon! You can compost at home or you can sign up to participate in Vail Honeywagon's new commercial composting program. Contact requests@vailhoneywagon.com to sign up for a composting drop-site membership.

Learn More

ReFED, a multi-stakeholder nonprofit organization committed to solving our nation's food waste problem using a data-driven approach, is a great resource to learn more about food waste. ReFED provides tools on their website to help many types of stakeholders move towards a less wasteful food system. Visit <https://www.refed.com/> to learn more and to access these tools!

Other online resources that you can use to learn more about food waste are www.feedbackglobal.org, <https://www.nrdc.org/issues/food-waste>, and <https://savethefood.com/>.

Talk About It

Have conversations with your family, friends, and coworkers about this film and about food waste! Spreading knowledge about food waste is an important first step to changing our food system. Share the above tips about reducing food waste at home. Is food wasted at your place of employment? Discuss it with your coworkers and share your ideas about how to reduce food waste with management.

Take Action

The *Eagle River Valley Food Bank*, a project of *Our Community Foundation*, is working to address food waste by rescuing close-to-date and surplus food that would otherwise go to waste from grocery stores throughout Eagle County. This food, much of which is fresh food and produce, is distributed to people in our community experiencing food insecurity. Volunteer to help with food rescue in Eagle County! Your efforts will help to make our local food system less wasteful and more just. Learn more and sign up at <https://ourcommunityfoundation.org/get-involved/>.