

[View this email in your browser](#)



ReFresh Nebraska

Exploring Food Waste Issues

Fall 2022

Food: Too Good To Waste

The second issue of ReFresh Nebraska (Spring 2018) discussed EPA's Food Waste Challenge – a six week audit designed to reduce food waste in the home. It's hard to believe, but that was four and a half years or 18 issues ago. We've covered a lot of ground since then, so thought it would be a good idea to circle back around for another look at what for many, is the first step in reducing wasted food.

Adaptable to consumer facing providers like restaurants, institutional cafeterias and school lunchrooms, the Challenge is part of a larger EPA initiative called Food: Too Good to Waste. Consisting of an implementation guide and toolkit, the program helps communities, schools and organizations engage households in an effort to reduce wasteful food management practices. Provided by EPA, the following is a brief look at program parameters, as well as links to the Guide and Toolkit for anyone interested in tackling this critical issue.

- **The Implementation Guide** is designed to teach local governments and community organizations how to implement a Food: Too Good to Waste campaign in their community using the Toolkit.
- The Toolkit, which is in Appendix D of the implementation guide provides behavior change and outreach tools designed to assist individuals and households to implement strategies to reduce wasted food in their homes. The FTGTW tools use community-based social marketing principles to reduce wasted food from households. A Food: Too Good to Waste campaign provides the tools in the toolkit to families and individuals to help them keep food out of landfills and more money in their pockets.

We hope this handbook will be used as a guide to start reducing wasted food in your community and home.

Why is Reducing Wasted Food Important?

Reducing wasted food has social, environmental and economic benefits.

- **Wasted food is a social problem:** In 2018, 11.1 percent of U.S. households were food insecure at some time during the year. That is 37.2 million Americans, of which 11.2 million are children, living in food insecure households. Wholesome, nutritious food should feed people, not landfills.
- **Wasted food is an environmental problem:** Food is the largest stream of materials in American trash. Once wasted food reaches landfills, it produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.
- **Wasted food is an economic issue:** It is estimated that at the retail and consumer levels in the United States, food loss and waste totals \$161 billion dollars.

Who Should Use this Guide and Toolkit?

The toolkit is designed for use by households. The implementation guide is intended for community organizations and local governments or any organization interested in reducing wasted food from households. For example, a local government or other community organization can take the lead in implementing a small-scale campaign, may participate as partners, and/or provide additional resources. Implementing a FTGTW campaign may align with organizational long-term objectives (e.g., reducing solid waste management costs, reducing carbon footprint or building a sustainable food system).

Where do Potential Partners Come From?

In many cases local government will take the lead in implementing the FTGTW campaign. Other community organizations may also take the lead, may participate as partners, and may provide additional resources. Potential partners include:

- Interested government programs that include waste management and food programs.
- Civic or community groups and non-profits with constituencies who are part of a target audience or have an interest in related issues.
- Food purveyors (e.g., restaurants, groceries) and other businesses.
- Farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) businesses and municipal waste management companies.
- K-12 schools that would like to integrate information on wasted food prevention and reduction into their curriculum or colleges and universities that support sustainability programs.
-
- How to Select a Target Population and Sample Size for a Small-Scale Campaign

The target population refers to the demographic that the implementing organization hopes to engage in the small-scale campaign. The sample size refers to the number of households that participate and from which the implementing organization will collect information. Generally, the target population size is larger than the sample size. A number of considerations go into selecting a target population and sample size, among these are:

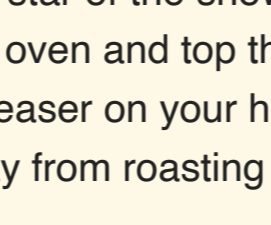
- demographics of the population the campaign is designed to reach,
- type and amount of resources the implementing organization has available,
- time frame planned for the campaign, and
- implementing organization's objectives for the campaign.

Examples of a target population may be neighbors in a residential association or members of a church congregation or similar group.

ReFresh Recipes

Shopping your fridge first is an important strategy for reducing food waste. Here's a recipe idea that will help you use what you have before buying more!

CRISPY SHEET PAN HASH YOUR LEFTOVER VEGGIES HAVE NEVER TASTED THIS GOOD



Let your holiday vegetables be the star of the show with this sheet pan hash. Simply cook your veggies and eggs in the oven and top them off with your favorite herbs and - voila! - you've got a crowd pleaser on your hands. You can even get extra scrappy by using a "dirty" sheet tray from roasting vegetables!

USES UP

Leftover Roasted Vegetables

MAKES

4 - 8 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 6 cups leftover roasted vegetables (such as brussels sprouts and/or root vegetables)
- 2 tablespoons leftover turkey fat (or extra-virgin olive oil)
- 8 large eggs
- Small handful chopped fresh herbs (such as oregano, parsley and/or chives)
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven: heat to 400 degrees F.

Chop your vegetables: Pro-tip: to chop veggies quickly, add them to the bowl of a large food processor fitted with multi-purpose blade. Pulse until roughly chopped.

Prepare tray: Drizzle turkey fat (or oil) in a heavy 9x13" sheet tray. Put sheet tray directly over two burners on low heat. Add vegetables, season with salt and pepper. When vegetables start to brown, spread evenly in 1 layer. Make 8 holes in vegetables; crack an egg in each. Sprinkle with half the cheese.

Cook hash: Transfer sheet tray to oven and bake for about 10 minutes until eggs are set.

Garnish: Top with herbs and remaining cheese.

CREDIT Joel Gamoran, Sur La Table National Chef and Host of *Scraps*

FOOD STORAGE TIPS FROM SAVETHEFOOD.COM

MEAT, POULTRY & SEAFOOD

HOT DOGS AND PRECOOKED SAUSAGE

REFRIGERATE IT: Yes **AT FRESHEST:** Unopened, 2 weeks; opened, 7 days; frozen, 1 to 2 months

OPTIMAL STORAGE: Store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, wrapped tightly in airtight packaging. (Even though they're precooked, make sure to heat the sausages thoroughly before consuming.)

FREEZING: Unopened vacuum-packed packages can be stored directly in freezer; otherwise double-wrap tightly in freezer paper or plastic wrap.

USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Extra sausages are great in soups and chili.

SAUSAGE

REFRIGERATE IT: Yes **AT FRESHEST:** Fresh—Uncooked, unopened, 1 to 2 days; open, 1 to 2 days; cooked, 3 to 4 days; frozen, 1 to 2 months

Dry/cured— Unopened, 6 months in pantry or indefinitely in refrigerator; opened, 3 weeks in refrigerator; frozen, 1 to 2 months

OPTIMAL STORAGE: Store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, wrapped tightly in airtight packaging.

FREEZING: Wrap tightly in plastic, and then wrap in white freezer paper.

USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Combine cooked sausage with rice and spices to make a version of jambalaya, or make stuffed peppers with the mixture.

SHELLFISH

REFRIGERATE IT: Yes **AT FRESHEST:** Fresh, 1 to 2 days; shucked, 2 days; cooked, 1 to 2 days; frozen, up to 4 months

OPTIMAL STORAGE: Live—Place in a bowl on the low shelf in the refrigerator and keep damp with a cloth, but do not allow to come into direct contact with ice or water (for live lobster and crab, store in moist packaging such as seaweed or damp paper towels). Do not store live shellfish in airtight containers or bags, since the animals can die from lack of oxygen. Do not store beneath raw meat, to avoid contamination.

Shrimp— Keep in their own containers or in a zip-top bag on a bed of ice in refrigerator. Do not allow ice to come in direct contact with the seafood. Eat as soon as possible.

FREEZING: Live oysters can be frozen live; just wash the shells and place in a plastic zip-top freezer bag. Alternatively, wash the oyster shells, and shuck into a strainer (save the liquor). Rinse to remove sand. Place oysters and liquor in a plastic container or zip-top freezer bag, leaving ½-in/12-mm headspace; seal; and freeze. Do not freeze dead oysters (with open shells). For shrimp, wash and drain, freeze raw with heads removed but shells still on. Package in zip-top freezer bags, leaving ¼-in/6-mm headspace; seal and freeze.

USE IT UP/REVIVAL: Do not eat shellfish such as oysters or mussels that have died before shucking (not even if you cook them).

Pulverize oyster shells with a hammer (best to boil the shells and let dry first), then sprinkle around the garden to deter slugs. Oyster shells can also be fed to chickens.

Crab pincers can double as little picks to get the leg meat out of the shell.

To download the entire Food Storage Guide, go to:

www.savethefood.com/food-storage

Quick Tricks! Brought To You By:

N Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

NEBRASKA EXTENSION

QUICK TRICKS

Is this Food Still Safe to Eat? Frequently Asked Questions

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN Extension Educator

Is it safe to use food from dented cans?

If a can containing food has a small dent, but is otherwise in good shape, the food should be safe to eat. Discard deeply dented cans. A deep dent is one that you can lay your finger into. Deep dents often have sharp points. A sharp dent on either the top or side seam can damage the seam and allow bacteria to enter the can. Discard any can with a deep dent on any seam.

Source: USDA/FSIS. "Shelf-Stable Food Safety. Accessed 2/19/2017 at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

Is it safe to use food from rusted cans?

Discard heavily rusted cans. Cans that are heavily rusted can have tiny holes in them, allowing bacteria to enter. Surface rust that you can remove by rubbing with your finger or a paper towel is not serious. You can keep these canned foods. If you open the cans and there is any rust inside, do not eat the food. Rust (oxidized iron) is not safe to eat.

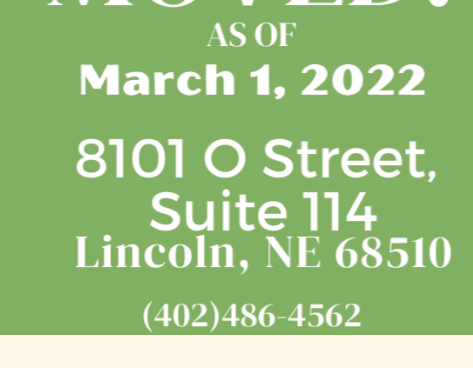
Source: USDA/FSIS. Shelf-Stable Food Safety. Accessed 2/19/2017 at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

For more waste reducing tips, go to: www.food.unl.edu/cook-it-quick-documents/makeover-your-leftovers.pdf


ZERO WASTE TIP

Cook too much pasta?
Cool quickly and freeze, then
boil again for few minutes to eat

OLIO



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE



WE'VE MOVED!
AS OF
March 1, 2022
8101 O Street,
Suite 114
Lincoln, NE 68510
(402) 486-4562

ReFresh Nebraska is published by:
Keep Nebraska Beautiful
8101 O Street, Suite 114
Lincoln, NE 68510
Telephone: (402) 486-4562
Email: info@knbf.org
Web Site: www.knbf.org

