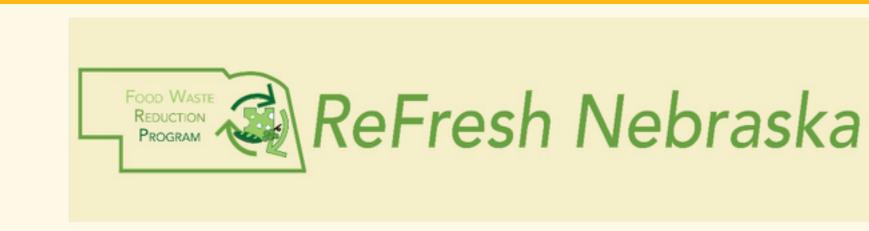
View this email in your browser



Exploring Food Waste Issues

Keep Good Food From Going To Waste -Take The Food Waste Challenge

Fall 2025

This summer, Keep Nebraska Beautiful received several inquiries regarding the Food Waste Program, and what folks can do to waste less food in their daily lives. We think EPA's Food Waste Challenge is a great place to start - so much so, that we made it the leading article of our 2nd issue back in 2018. Hard to believe it's been seven years, so thought it a perfect opportunity to renew the challenge!

From farm to table, preventable waste occurs all along the food chain. In fact, research shows that people tend to waste far more food than they think they do, so it's important to understand how and where that occurs if habits are to change. As part of their call for a 50% reduction of food waste in America by 2030, EPA introduced the Food Waste Challenge - a six week food waste assessment designed for families, but which can easily be scaled for use in restaurants, and cafeterias of all sizes. Only a few basic tools are needed - a pen or pencil, paper or printed work sheets (see link below),

preventable waste ONLY, including food that spoils in the fridge over that time. NON-EDIBLE food such as banana peels, eggshells, apple cores and chicken bones, should be discarded in the usual manner. Preferably that would mean composting, but if not yet part of your routine, we'll get there in time, so it's ok to wait until you're ready. Also, while you don't need to collect liquid waste such as soup or food-soiled paper products, any meat or veggies that can be filtered out will provide a more accurate food waste assessment. Begin by explaining the challenge to members of your household, or kitchen and ask for their participation. Prep a new garbage bag at the start of each week - preferably by lining a paper bag with a green compostable bag, but any plastic bag will do. Over the course of the week, place all your PREVENTABLE food waste inside – including food that spoils in the fridge over that time. Add

garbage bags (small if measuring by volume) and a scale, if measuring by weight. Measure

new bags as necessary. It's important that usual routines are kept as much as possible, so unless the freezer is cleaned out on a regular basis, don't do it until the challenge is over. For the first two weeks, simply measure how much food your family wastes in a week and record the volume and/or weight, establishing a baseline (see pg2). Then in weeks 3 through 5, try out one or more of the smart strategies listed below while continuing to measure how much goes to waste each week. Keep notes on what works to reduce food waste and what doesn't. Finally in week 6, hone your strategies, measure and record your final weekly food waste amount, and

compare to previous weeks to see how much food (and money) you saved. **Food Waste Reduction Strategies:** SMART SHOPPING: Shop with Meals in Mind • Shop your kitchen first and note items you already have. • Buy What You Need – Make a shopping list based on remaining needs for meals you'll eat at

home before your next shopping trip.

• Next to fresh items on the list, note the quantity you need or number of meals you're buying for.

SMART STORAGE: Keep Fruits and Vegetables Fresh • Store produce for maximum freshness - know which belong inside and outside the fridge. They

will taste better and last longer. Inside the fridge:

• Apples, berries, and cherries • Grapes, kiwi, lemons, and oranges

• Melons, nectarines, apricots, peaches, and plums (after ripening) Avocados, pears, tomatoes (after ripening)

Outside the fridge:

• Bananas, mangos, papayas, and pineapples: (in a cool place)

Almost all vegetables and herbs

Potatoes, onions: (in a cool, dark place)

• Basil and winter squashes: (once cut, store squashes in fridge) Other storage tips:

• If you like your fruit at room temperature, take only a day's worth out at a time.

fresh food items in clear storage containers for snacks and easy cooking.

• Cut your time in the kitchen by preparing and freezing meals ahead of time.

• Consider storage bags and containers designed to help extend the life of your produce.

• Many fruits give off natural gases that hasten the spoilage of other produce. Store bananas, apples, and tomatoes by themselves and store fruits and vegetables in different bins.

SMART PREP: Prep now, eat later • When you get home from the store, take the time to wash, dry, chop, dice, slice, and place your

know you won't be able to eat in time.

• To prevent mold, wash berries just before eating.

• Prepare and cook perishable items, then freeze them for use throughout the month. For example, bake and freeze chicken breasts or fry and freeze taco meat. SMART SAVING: Eat what you buy

For more information on sustainable management of food or to take the Food Waste Challange,

• Befriend your freezer and visit it often. Freeze food such as bread, sliced fruit, or meat that you

Be mindful of leftovers and old ingredients that need using up. Designate an area in the fridge for food that should be eaten soon to prevent spoiling and post an EAT FIRST prompt as a visual reminder.

For more information, see the <u>EPA Food System Programs & Funding page</u>

Click here for a printable Food Waste Challenge Worksheet!

please visit www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food

GET SMART: TAKE THE CHALLENGE KEEP GOOD FOOD FROM GOING TO WASTE

RECORDING WORKSHEET





cilantro sauce is best when served up at cookouts, right along with whatever you're throwing on the flame.

MAKES

4 Servings

USES UP

DIRECTIONS

Cilantro Stems

INGREDIENTS

• 1/4 cup red wine

vinegar or freshly

squeezed lemon

Salt and freshly

ground black

pepper

FRUITS

APPLES

• 1/2 cup fresh

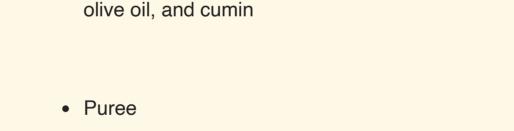
cilantro stems (from

1 bunch of cilantro)

neutral oil, such as

• 1/2 cup olive oil or

COZY COMFORT FOOD THAT WASTES LESS AND TASTES GREAT



· Adjust the seasoning to taste. Serve

FOOD STORAGE TIPS FROM

SAVETHEFOOD.COM

• In a blender, mixing cup of a small food

processor, or immersion blender, combine the

vinegar and a pinch of salt and pepper. Swirl a

few times to dissolve the salt. Add the stems,

immediately or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 organic canola or days. grapeseed • 1/2 tsp ground cumin From "Eat it Up!" by Sherri Brooks Vinton, Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2016

cardboard box covered with a damp towel in a root cellar or other cool place. Ideally, you would wrap each apple individually in newspaper to reduce their influence on each other. Many heirloom varieties are not suited for longterm storage, so try to eat them right away. **FREEZING:** Can be frozen raw or cooked, with or without sugar. Raw—Wash, peel (if desired), core, and slice. To prevent browning, either blanch for 1½ to 2 minutes or sprinkle with lemon juice. Then choose between (1) packing dry with ½ cup/100 g sugar per 1 qt/1 kg of apples; (2) packing in 40 percent syrup; or (3) placing directly on a baking sheet and freezing, then transferring to an airtight container. Cooked—Cook, cool, and pack

REFRIGERATE IT: Yes **AT FRESHEST:** Up to 6 weeks in the refrigerator, longer in a root cellar environment

OPTIMAL STORAGE: Do not wash until ready to use. Store in a breathable bag in the low-humidity drawer of

cause others to brown). Apples ripen 6 to 10 times faster at room temperature. For large quantities, store in a

the refrigerator. Handle carefully to prevent bruising, and separate any with bruises from other apples (or they will



3. Refrigerate ripe bananas to make them last a few days longer. They may be brown on outside, but still a good color on the inside. 4. Freeze lemon slices in water in cupcake pans for large, flavored ice cubes.

with plastic wrap. Transfer frozen pieces to freezer bags. Toss into smoothies.

\$EPA

2. Roll citrus fruits with your hand on a hard surface before juicing to get more juice from them.

pans as silicon is more flexible.

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

Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food

5. Freeze washed, peeled, bite-size pieces of fruit for smoothies. Place on baking sheet with sides and cover

OD DO AVOID Send Down the Drain, **Prevent Wasted Food** Landfill, or Incinerate Produce, buy, and serve with or without energy recovery **Anaerobic Digestion** Donate Upcycle Apply to the Land Feed Compost Animals Anaerobic Leave Digestion Unharvested with beneficial use of



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

