

# Food Waste? No way!

April 27, 2023



## Concepts Taught:

- Learn meal planning and meal prepping tips.
- Discuss proper storage of produce to decrease spoilage.
- Identify ways to use commonly wasted foods.

## EPA:

- The Environmental Protection Agency estimates in the U.S., in 2019, 96% of household food waste ended up in landfills or sewer systems.
  - ...the rest (about 4%) was composted.
- What is composting?
  - A natural breakdown process of food scraps, leaves, and grass clippings to form a nutrient-rich matter good for gardens and flower pots.

## Prevent food waste at home by:

- Planning meals
- Shopping for needed food
- Storing food properly
- Problem solving and a little creativity!

## Meal planning:

- Decide how often to make a meal plan. Weekly? Monthly?
- Decide how many meals will be needed for that meal plan and shopping trip.
- Create a "theme" for each day of the week. Example: Monday - stir fry, Tuesday - tacos, and so on.
- Use the "theme" to make meal planning easier. Example: Monday - shrimp stir fry, Tuesday - black bean tacos, and so on. Review sale items at grocery store to help decide which foods to include.
- Rotate favorite, go-to meals and opt to make a new recipe only one to two times weekly.

## Grocery shopping:

- Buy foods that need restocked in your home kitchen.
- Buy foods that are needed for the meal plan.
  - Be flexible with the meal plan. Develop or change meals around sale items at store. Example: Planned shrimp stir fry, but chicken is on sale - change to chicken stir fry.
- Shop your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer first. Example: thaw the chicken in the freezer instead of buying more chicken for the chicken stir fry.

## Storage:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables prefer certain storage areas.
  - High humidity drawer of refrigerator: airflow is cut off and increases humidity. Good for: lettuce, spinach, spring mix, cucumbers, fresh herbs.
  - Low humidity drawer of refrigerator: air and moisture escapes through a vent. Good for: mushrooms, peppers, peaches, avocados, plums.
  - Cool, dry, dark, and well-ventilated area: potatoes, garlic, onion, winter squash
  - Away from other fruits and vegetables: bananas, apples, pears, avocados

## Problem solve and get creative:

- Bread - put half in the freezer, make croutons or breadcrumbs or bread pudding, store in a cool and dry place
- Milk - buy smaller containers, consider a milk alternative that has a longer shelf life
- Onions - can be diced and frozen for up to 10-12 months
  - Check out Food Keeper resource below for more information on how long to keep frozen food
- Potatoes - include in a soup or freezer casserole
- Berries - make a quick smoothie or freeze for later use on yogurt
- Lettuce - make a goal to eat a side salad with dinner every night. Can place in cold water to bring crispness back to wilting lettuce (works with celery too!).

## References and Resources:

- <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>
- <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app>
- [https://www.canr.msu.edu/food\\_preservation/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/food_preservation/)