### 14 Ways Consumers Can Reduce Food Waste

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About 40 percent of the United States food supply (1500 calories/person/day) goes uneaten. Discarded food in homes and food-service accounts for less than 1 percent of this total food loss and is mostly avoidable. The remaining portion—lost or wasted during food production—also has a large environmental impact.

This amount of food waste is among the highest globally. Preventing food waste saves money and resources. Resources used to produce uneaten food include: 30 percent of fertilizer, 31 percent of cropland, 25 percent of total fresh water consumption and 2 percent of total energy consumption.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates food wastes at almost 14 percent of the total mass of waste in the United States in 2010, with less than 3 percent recovered and recycled. Food in landfills decomposes to produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Feeding the world will become more difficult in the future as 9 billion people are expected on the planet by 2050, compared to a world population of around 7 billion people in 2015. Developing habits to save food and the resources associated with producing and buying food will put less strain on the planet’s resources and lessen the environmental impact of food waste.

Here are 14 ways consumers can help reduce the amount of food wasted.

**1. Shop the refrigerator before going to the store.**

Use food at home before buying more. Designate one meal weekly as a “use-it-up” meal.

**2. Move older food products to the front of the fridge/cupboard/freezer and just-purchased ones to the back.**

This makes it more likely foods will be consumed before they go bad.

**3. Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below to prolong the life of foods.**

Foods frozen at 0°F or lower will remain safe indefinitely but the quality will go down over time.

**4. Freeze or can surplus fresh produce.**

You may already have frozen foods at home. It is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

**5. A “Use-By” date is the last day before food becomes unsafe to eat.**

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### Clean Out the Fridge

**Potato Salad**

1) Begin with cooked, diced potatoes (1-inch cube). Let them stand until cool enough to handle. Tip: You can skin the skins on young, tender potatoes and other varieties of potatoes with a thin, delicate skin. There are over 100 varieties of potatoes. If uncertain about the best way to boil potatoes — and potatoes are a food that gets wasted at home — check an online potato resource such as the website of the United States Potato Board, the nation’s potato marketing and research organization.

2) While the potatoes are cooking, cool, clean and prepare potential still-edible foods that might soon go into the garbage. Also, look for jars and packages of other still-edible foods that have been lingering in your refrigerator. Use your own preference as to amounts of ingredients. The salad in the photo contains: red peppers, peas, or split a dish with a dining companion.

3) The last step is combining the potatoes and vegetables with mayonnaise at the beginning of the meal if portions look especially large. Remove take home food from your plate at the beginning of the meal so leftovers are as appetizing as the original meal, rather than the picked-over remains. Or, choose a smaller size and.

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