



What can I do in my daily life to limit food waste?

Follow these tips to help you reduce food waste, save money and protect the environment:

1 Plan your shopping: Menu plan your meals for a week. Check the ingredients in your fridge and cupboards, then write a shopping list for just the extras you need. Take your list and don't shop when you're hungry — you'll come back with more than you need. Buy loose fruits and vegetables instead of pre-packed so you can buy exactly the amount you need.

2 Check the dates: If you are not planning to eat a certain item with a short "use by" date, look for one with a longer "use by" date or just plan to buy it on the day you require. Be aware on the meaning of date labels: "use by" means that the food is only safe for consumption until the indicated day (e.g. for meat and fish); "best before" indicates the date up until when the product retains its expected quality. Food products are still safe to consume even after the indicated "best before" day.

3 Consider your budget: Wasting food means wasting money.

4 Keep a healthy fridge: Check the seals and the temperature of your fridge. Food needs to be stored between 1 and 5 degrees Celsius for maximum freshness and longevity.

5 Store food in accordance with the instructions on the packaging.

6 Rotate: When you buy new food from the store, bring all the older items in your cupboards and fridge to the front. Put the new food at the back to reduce the risk of finding something mouldy in your food storage compartments.

7 Serve small amounts of food with the understanding that everybody can come back for more once they've cleared their plate.

8 Use up your leftovers: Instead of scraping leftovers into the bin, they can be used for lunches the following day, go into the next day's dinner or be frozen for another occasion. Fruit that is just going soft can be used to make smoothies or fruit pies. Vegetables that are starting to wilt can be made into soups.

9 Freeze: If you only eat a small amount of bread, then freeze it when you get home and take out a few slices a couple of hours before you need them. Likewise, batch cooked foods so that you have meals ready for those evenings when you are too tired to cook.

10 Turn it to garden food: Some food waste is unavoidable so why not set up a compost bin for fruit and vegetable peelings? In a few months you will end up with rich, valuable compost for your plants. If you have cooked food waste, then a kitchen composter will do the trick. Just feed it with your scraps, sprinkle over a layer of special microbes and leave to ferment. The resulting product can be used for houseplants and in the garden.

See also: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/sustainability/index_en.htm