

Food For Thought Toolkit

Monitoring Your Food Waste Challenge

In 2013 Americans threw 35 million tons of food into landfills and incinerators. This challenge will help you to monitor how much food is going to waste in your home and how you can limit your food waste footprint.

What You Will Need:

- A pen/pencil
- Print out of the weight chart below
- Brown paper bags
- Green compostable bags
- A small scale

Key Terms

Non-Edible Food Waste: Everything you wouldn't normally eat, such as banana peels, egg shells, apple cores, and chicken bones.

Preventable Food Waste: Both food you brought to eat but has since spoiled and food that was prepared but not eaten and was then thrown away.

Step 1: At the start of each week, line two paper bags with a green compostable bags. Label one bag *Preventable Food Waste* and the other *Non-Edible Food Waste*. For the purposes of this challenge, you will only track the weights of your *Preventable Food Waste*.

Step 2: At the end of the first week, measure the weight of food waste in the bag.¹ Record your result on the attached worksheet. After Week 1, apply any notes or strategies to the following weeks and see what effect it has on your overall food waste weight. Once you get started, it should take no more than 15 minutes per week to measure and record your food waste weight.

Step 3: Once recorded, your food waste (preventable and non-edible) should be composted at home in your backyard or taken to Alpha Ridge Landfill Residents' Convenience Center to be composted on site.

¹ If the bag fills before the seven days, record the weight of the full bag and record how many days you collected food in that bag. Then begin collection in a new bag. At the end of the week, total your weight for the entire week.

WEEK 1

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

WEEK 2

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

Total Weight for Week 1 and 2 _____ Averages for Week 1 and 2 Total Weight \div 2 = _____

WEEK 3

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

WEEK 4

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

Total Weight for Week 3 and 4 _____ Averages for Week 3 and 4 Total Weight \div 2 = _____

Tips:

- If you're concerned about possible odors, you can clip the top of the bag shut or use a new bag mid-week. Make sure that you continue to track your total food waste weight throughout the week.
- Do NOT collect liquid waste such as soup or food-soiled paper products.

Modeled after Food: Too Good to Waste (EPA)

Food For Thought Meal Planner

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	INGREDIENTS
SUN				
MON				
TUES				
WED				
THURS				
FRI				
SAT				

Shopping List:



Smart Saving:

**EAT
FIRST!**

Smart Saving:

**EAT
FIRST!**

PRODUCE SHELF LIFE & STORAGE GUIDE

Storing ingredients correctly and planning to cook more perishable ingredients first will help you **#ReduceFoodWaste** and save money!

Store in fridge unless otherwise noted. Store more perishable ingredients in more visible places, so you'll remember to use them sooner.

USE
ASAP

3-5 DAYS



- Asparagus
- Basil
- Bok Choy
- Chard
- Chives
- Cilantro
- Escarole
- Kale
- Okra
- Onions, Cut
- Radicchio
- Snow Peas
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
(Countertop)



USE
SOON

5-7 DAYS

- Artichokes
- Arugula
- Bell Peppers
- Broccoli
- Broccoli Rabe
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage,
Savoy & Napa
- Cauliflower
- Cucumbers
(Countertop)
- Eggplant
- Endive
- Fennel

- Green Beans
- Jicama
- Leeks
- Lettuce/Mixed Greens
- Mint
- Mushrooms
(Paper bag in fridge)
- Potatoes, Baby
(Cool dark place away
from onions)
- Radishes
- Scallions/Green Onions
- Winter Squash, Cut
- Zucchini & Summer Squash

NO
RUSH

2+ WEEKS



- Beets
- Cabbage,
Green & Red
- Carrots
- Celery
- Ginger
- Lemons
- Limes

- Onions, Whole
(Cool dark place away
from potatoes)
- Parsnips
- Potatoes, Large
(Cool dark place
away from onions)
- Rosemary

- Sweet Potatoes
(Countertop)
- Thyme
- Turnips
- Winter Squashes
(Countertop)

To get more tips on how to reduce food waste, visit
cooksmarts.com/reducefoodwaste

COOKSMARTS

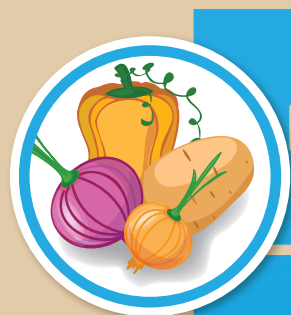
© 2016 Cook Smarts. All Rights Reserved.

Get Fresh with FRUITS and VEGETABLES



My Heart. My Life.™

Stretch your produce and your dollars by knowing how to store fresh fruits and vegetables.



The American Heart Association
RECOMMENDS



4-5 SERVINGS
of fruits and vegetables
each per day.

Don't wash, cut or peel
until you're ready to eat
(except lettuce and greens).

Fridge temperature should
be at 40° F or below

Always refrigerate cut
or peeled produce.

PANTRY

1

Pack away in a cool, dark place like your pantry or cellar:

ONIONS, GARLIC & SHALLOTS

HARD SQUASH

(Winter, Acorn, Spaghetti, Butternut)

SWEET POTATOES, POTATOES, & YAMS

WATERMELON

COUNTERTOP

2

Store loose and away from sunlight, heat and moisture:

BANANAS

CITRUS FRUIT

Store lemons, limes, oranges and grapefruit loose or in a mesh bag. Refrigerate for longer storage.

STONE FRUIT

Ripen avocados, apricots, nectarines, peaches and plums in a paper bag, then move to the fridge where they'll last a few more days.

TOMATOES

KEEP THEM APART:

- Fruits like apples, bananas and pears give off ethylene gas, which can make other produce ripen and rot faster.
- Store vegetables and fruits separately.
- Keep apples, bananas, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumbers, onions, pears, potatoes and watermelon away from other produce.

REFRIGERATOR

3

Store in plastic bags with holes, in your produce drawer, unless noted:

APPLES & PEARS

BEETS & TURNIPS

Remove greens and keep loose in the crisper drawer.

BERRIES, CHERRIES & GRAPES

Keep dry in covered containers or plastic bags.

BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER

CARROTS & PARSNIPS

Remove greens.

CELERY

CORN

Store inside their husks.

CUCUMBERS, EGGPLANT & PEPPERS

Store on the upper shelf, which is the warmer part of the fridge.

FRESH HERBS

Except basil. Keep stems moist and wrap loosely in plastic.

GREEN BEANS

LETTUCE & LEAFY GREENS

Wash, spin or pat dry, wrap loosely in a dishtowel or paper towels and place in a plastic bag in vegetable drawer. Keep stems moist.

MELONS

MUSHROOMS

Keep dry and unwashed in store container or paper bag.

PEAS

ZUCCHINI & SUMMER/YELLOW SQUASH

Funded nationally by

Walmart

For more tips on healthy eating,
cooking and recipes,
heart.org/simplecooking

Simple
Cooking with
Heart

©2014 American Heart Association. 2/14DS7752

Additional Resources

Guides and Tips:

[Save the Food](#)- Food storage and cooking tips to prevent waste.

[Love Food Hate Waste](#)- Food saving and storage tips, portion and planning, and budget-friendly recipes.

[USDA Food Safety Education](#)- Basics for proper handling, storing, and preparing of food.

[USDA Recovery/Donations](#)- Explanation of federal laws that encourage food donation.

[Hands-On Hemp](#)- Instructional guide for your Hands-On Hemp Reusable Produce Bag.

[Food Rescue Locator](#)- Nationwide database connecting donors to needy communities.

In the News:

[Ugly fruit and vegetables: why you have to learn to love them](#)- The Guardian

[It's Time To Get Serious About Reducing Food Waste, Feds Say](#)- NPR

Mobile Apps:

[FoodKeeper](#)- Online database and mobile app to help you maximize freshness and quality of food.

[Food Cowboy](#)- Uses location-based technology to connect surplus food with nearby charities

[Food For All](#)- *Coming soon*. Allows people to purchase excess food from restaurants that would otherwise be wasted.

Get Involved:

[Community Action Council of Howard County](#)- Food Assistance Program for Howard County Residents

[Maryland Food Bank](#)