



Seven Top Tips to Cutting Food Waste

Americans throw out about a quarter of all food they buy, according to a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council – which translates to an estimated \$1,350 to \$2,275 annual loss for a family of four. This presents a great opportunity for all of us: with better storage and more efficient use of our grocery purchases, we could potentially cut our food budget up to 25%. Here are some ideas for cutting food waste in your home.

- 1 Check expiration dates when you shop.** Check a few containers to get the freshest package on the shelf, instead of buying the one in front.
- 2 Practice first in, first out.** When you unpack this week's groceries, place them at the back of your cupboard or fridge, so that older foods get used first.
- 3 Prep greens after shopping.** Lettuce, kale, chard and other greens can be washed right away, dried in a salad spinner, and stored in large containers with a few paper towels to absorb moisture. Your prepped greens are ready to make salads in minutes – and your greens will keep up to two weeks.
- 4 Eat fresh produce first.** More fresh produce is thrown out than any other type of food. Plan meals so that you eat perishables like berries early in the week, while saving “durables” like carrots and potatoes for later.
- 5 Collect “Clean-the-Fridge” recipes.** Frittatas, stews, and chilis can all be made with a variety of different vegetables, and smoothies are a great way to use up fading fruits, especially overripe bananas. Once a week, before you go shopping, make something creative – like the “Clean-the-Fridge Vegetarian Chili” recipe here.
- 6 Put leftovers front and center.** Dedicate a highly-visible section of your refrigerator to leftovers that need to be eaten, so your family will get in the habit of looking for tasty tidbits there. Mark containers with a colored sticker so everyone knows the food is fair game for snacking, and keep things moving so nothing gets green and fuzzy hidden at the back of your fridge.
- 7 Pack lunch as you clean up dinner.** Dole those dinner leftovers into single-serve containers or divided lunch box containers. Refrigerate, and they'll be ready to grab in the morning as you run out the door. You'll have delicious homemade food to warm in the workplace microwave, instead of eating fast food.





Clean-the-Fridge Vegetarian Chili

This is a great way to use up all those bits and pieces of veggies in your refrigerator. Serve over bulgur, whole grain pasta, or all on its own, and try topping with a little good quality, grated Cheddar.

Yield: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 5-6 cups chopped vegetables, whatever is in your fridge
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup vermouth, cooking sherry or white wine
- 1 (15-ounce) can juice pack tomatoes, roughly chopped, including juice
- 1 (6-ounce) can low-sodium vegetable juice (optional)
- 3/4 cup chicken or vegetable broth (more as needed)
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried (or Italian spices)
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons chili powder, or to taste
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste



DIRECTIONS

1. Empty both cans of beans into a colander, rinse thoroughly, and drain. (Rinsing canned beans removes 30-40% of the sodium).
2. Roughly chop 5-6 cups of your favorite vegetables and sauté in the olive oil. A typical mix might be: 1 small red onion, 1 large carrot, 2 stalks celery, 1 large zucchini, 1 large yellow crookneck squash, 1 large red, yellow or green pepper, 6 mushrooms.
3. Add 1/4 – 1/2 cup vermouth, cooking sherry or wine and boil off for 1-2 minutes. This step is optional, but it deepens the flavor. Then add everything else to the pot, including the rinsed and drained beans. Add more broth if you like your chili soupier.
4. Simmer everything for about 40-45 minutes and enjoy. The chili gets better and better the longer it sits!

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Per serving: Calories: 120; Fat: 4g (Saturated Fat: 1g); Sodium: 270mg; Carbohydrate: 16g; Fiber: 6g; Protein: 7g