

## Cutting down on food waste and saving money

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Friday 9 March 2018

Having lived in university accommodation for half a year I can say that one of the most terrifying experiences is opening the fridge and having to face the horrendous smell and sight of rotten food. This is not only bad from a hygienic point of view but also from a one Here are some tips on how to avoid wasting ingredients and save money.

### **1. Know the difference between 'best before' and 'use by'.**

When you buy products from a supermarket they will have a date and the phrase 'best before' or 'use by' on them. 'Best before' means that a product is safe to eat after the date indicated but it's quality and taste deteriorates rapidly. This is usually found on items such as mushrooms and vegetables. It is ideal to eat them before the date but you can still consume them after the date has passed if every-thing seems okay. If you taste the food and it tastes odd then just spit it out and throw it away. Do note that, usually with ingredients that say 'best before', it can take months for the product to be completely unusable. An exception to this is eggs where you can still eat them 24-48 hours after the best before date but you will have to cook them thoroughly as the salmonella in them starts multiplying quickly. On the other hand, the use by date means that you cannot consume a product after that date as it is unsafe to do so. This is found in "high risk" foods such as meat and fish. Do note that even if the ingredient seems safe it is still not safe to eat when it is a 'use by' food. You can end up in hospital with serious food poisoning as you can't see the harmful bacteria in the food. It is important not to confuse the two and throw away food that is perfectly good to use.

### **2. Buy reasonably.**

When you go to the supermarket you should ensure you do two things: make a list of the foods that you need based on the recipes you have selected and go to the super-market after having eaten. If you have a *l i s t*, you are less likely to grab unnecessary food (which is likely to go to waste) as you know exactly what you need. Having eaten before go-ing to the supermarket ensures that you will stick to that list and not buy junk food that you can eat at the moment and/or looks tasty even if you don't need it.

### **3. Take note of what you throw away.**

Every time you open the fridge and realise that food has gone bad, take it out open notepad on your phone and write down how much you have thrown away. Next time you go shopping you can buy less of that food or choose another recipe to use up the whole of that ingredient.

### **4. Use apps and technology to find innovative ways to use your food.**

Technology can be used to ensure that you use up the food that you have in various creative ways. The website [whatsinmyfridge.com](#) allows you to input all the ingredients you have in your fridge, and suggests recipes that you can make out of them. It also suggests buying other ingredients and making an even better meal. On the other hand app Handpick can suggest various recipes based on individual ingredients you have.

By using these you can reduce food waste and the trips to the supermarket. There are many more tips on how to cut down on food waste and everyone needs to see what works for them. Some of these take longer to implement, but trust me, it really is worth it.



Fresh Food in a bin by U.S. Department of Agriculture



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