

Tips to Reducing Food Waste

Save money and slash your contribution to the landfill with these tasty tips

A staggering [30% of food produced](#) ends up in landfills in the US. The average household in Toronto discards about 275 kilograms of food every year which is more than [\\$600 dollars worth](#). Toronto residents spend \$10 million a year on dealing with food waste. [20% of the methane](#) produced in Canada comes from landfills, so food waste isn't just costing you money, it's bad for the environment too.

Here are some tips to help you keep food fresher and reduce the amount of food you contribute to the landfill every week. You'll save money on groceries and help Mother Nature too!

- Say no to plastic bags. Pack fruit and vegetables right into your reusable shopping bags instead of into the clear bags you find in the veggie aisle. [Plastic doesn't allow produce to breathe](#) so it goes off faster.
- Don't wash your fresh produce until you are ready to use it. [Moisture encourages microorganisms](#) to grow and cause rot. If you do wash your fruit and veggies, be sure to dry them properly before storage.
- Keep fruit and veggies in the fridge. While a bowl of fruit on your counter does have aesthetic appeal, exposure to summer heat and oxygen [will accelerate decay](#).
- Keep your fridge operating efficiently to keep food from spoiling. Ensure that your fridge is away from the wall to allow circulation of air around the coils. Vacuum coils twice a year (more often if you have pets). You will save money on repairs and [\\$5-\\$10 a month](#) on hydro as your fridge works more efficiently.
- Decide what you need from the fridge and take it all out at once. Standing in front of the fridge gazing wistfully at the contents only causes a loss of cold air and an increase in your hydro bill.
- Plan your meals, make lists and stick to these when you go shopping. Be sure to list quantities on your grocery list and buy only what you need. If you're making a dish which requires three carrots and you buy a whole bag, chances are the rest of those will go off. Buying loose fruit and vegetables instead.
- Don't like planning meals? There's an app for that! [Cooksmart](#), [Pepperplate](#), [Ziplist](#) and [Plan to Eat](#) will help you to plan meals and create shopping lists.
- Place foods which have a shorter shelf life at the front of the fridge so you'll see them (and hopefully use them) first.
- [Check your fridge and freezer first](#). Plan your meals around what you already have.
- Is your food safe? Know the difference between ["expiration date"](#), ["sell-by date"](#), and ["use-by date"](#).
- Eat left-overs for lunch the next day or freeze them. Don't put them in a plastic container in the fridge where you'll forget them and they'll go off. Casseroles and stews are great ways to use leftover foods.
- Freeze or [preserve foods](#) that you have an excess of to ensure longevity.
- Despite your best efforts, it's inevitable that some food will be destined for the garbage. Get a composter or [make one of your own](#) to compost food scraps so you save money on gardening.

<http://ecoliving.scotiabank.com/tips-reducing-food-waste/1731>