

Save Money & Reduce Food Waste



These days, everyone is looking to save money – especially on food costs. As products become more expensive, we wonder how we can make the most of each dollar.

One place to save is in the kitchen. That's where uneaten food goes straight from the refrigerator to the trash all too often. Studies show that Americans waste 30% to 40% of the foods we buy. That's a lot of time and resources being frittered away.

By being more cognizant about what we buy and making sure to actually cook it, we can help our pocketbooks and our planet.

Go to the grocery store with a plan

The supermarket is full of temptations. It's easy to just keep throwing things into the cart. So be intentional about what you buy. Here are some things to consider before your next grocery store run:

- » What do you already have in your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer that could be used in this week's menu?
- » How much time will you have to cook?
- » How often will you make simple deli sandwiches or frozen pizza? Will you have leftovers or get takeout?

» By counting the nights that you'll actually be home with the time, energy and inclination to cook, it may affect how many fresh ingredients you buy.

» Consider how many servings will likely be eaten from each meal you cook.

» Then go to the grocery store with a list and stick to it.

» Once you have brought those groceries home, make a point of using them up before returning to the market for more.

Use the freezer

Lots of foods can be frozen. So if you find yourself getting tired of that big pot of chili or soup, throw it into a freezer-proof container before it's too late.

It's a win/win. You won't dump it out, wasting time and cash. And when hunger strikes in the weeks ahead, you'll have a healthy, homemade dinner waiting for you in the freezer.

Repurpose food that's past its prime

Some foods can get a little dried out or stale in the refrigerator. But that doesn't mean they aren't completely fine to eat. Think loaves of bread, pita, or corn tortillas.

So, transform them into something more inviting.

» Cut bread into cubes for homemade croutons. Toss in oil, lemon juice, and herbs. Bake or air fry until toasty brown. They'll take your salads and soups up a serious notch.

» Cut pita into wedges. Toss in oil, lemon juice, and dried basil. Bake or air fry until crisp around the edges. Homemade pita chips are perfect for salads or dipping in hummus.

» Cut corn tortillas into strips. Spray with oil. Then air fry or bake until crisp. Crispy tortilla strips are delicious sprinkled on chili, tortilla soup, or salads.

Use odds and ends in smoothies

Smoothies are a great way of using up the ends of things. Whether it's a browning banana, the last scoop of nut butter, a handful of spinach, or that last leaf of kale, it can add a lot of nutrition while giving you the satisfaction of knowing nothing was wasted. Remember to peel and break up browning bananas before throwing them into the freezer. They make smoothies wonderfully full bodied.



About

CADRY NELSON // Cadry is the writer, photographer, and recipe creator at Cadry's Kitchen, a vegan food and lifestyle blog. She shares plant-based comfort food classics that are ready in about 30 minutes. Cadry has been featured on Today, NBC News, Mashable, Reader's Digest, Shape, and Huffington Post. For more, visit cadryskitchen.com.