

MANAGING FOOD WASTE AT HOME

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WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT FOOD WASTE?

Wasted food and its effects on people, the environment, and the economy have become a major topic of national conversation, and for good reason.

When we waste food, we also waste all the water, energy, labor, agricultural chemicals, and other resources that go into growing, storing and transporting it.

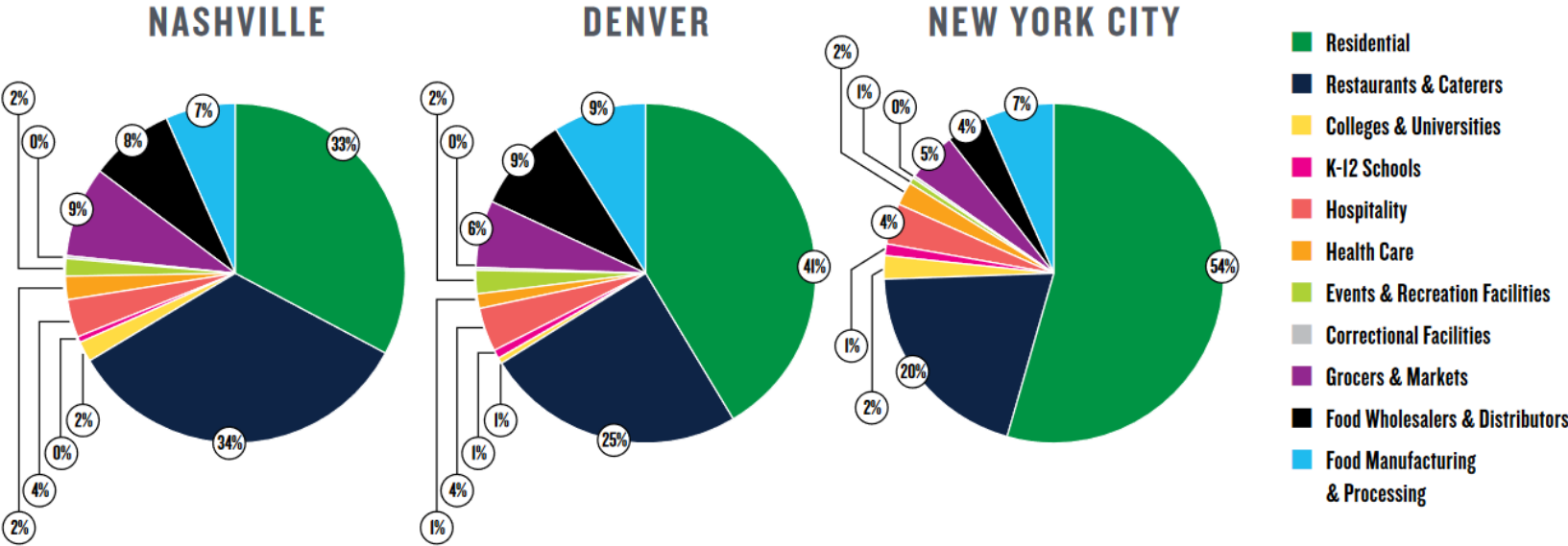
That adds up to an economic loss of \$250 billion each year (globally).

Most of the food wasted ends up in landfills, where it generates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that is up to 86 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

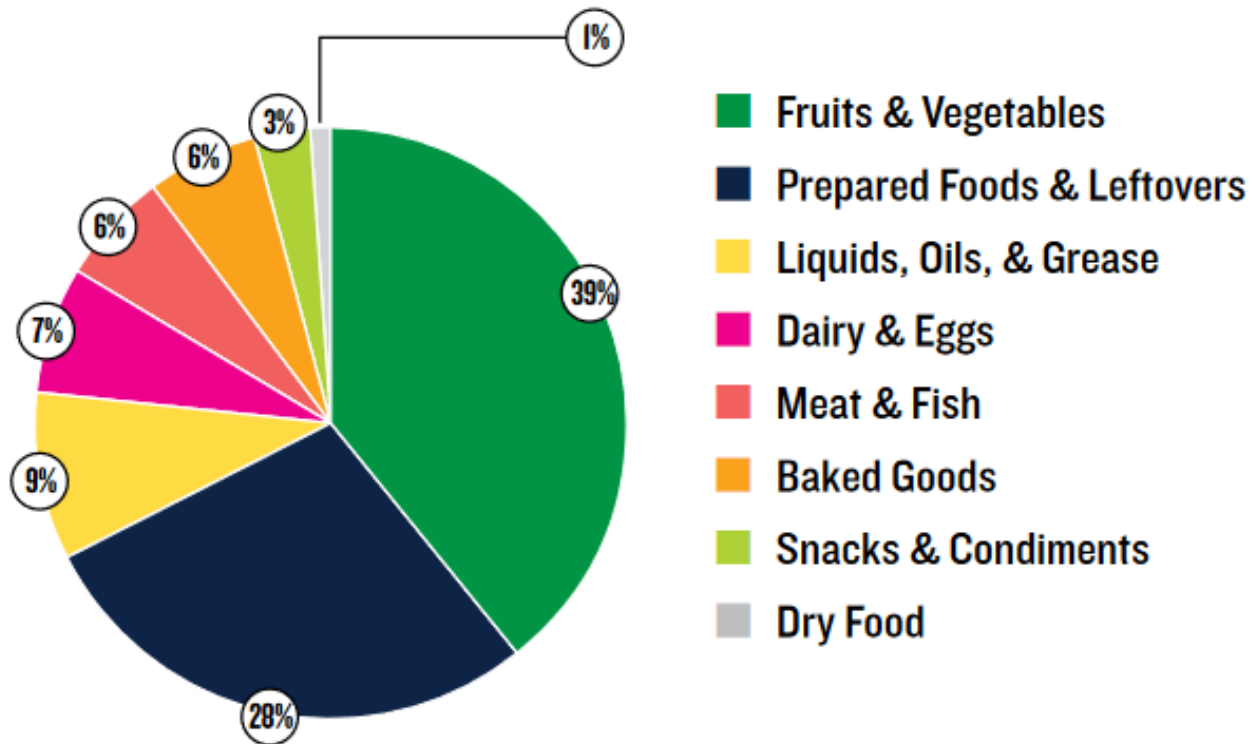
If “Food Waste” were a country it would be the world’s 3rd largest emitter of CO2 after China and the US.

WHERE IS THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF FOOD WASTE COMING FROM?

ESTIMATED FOOD WASTE GENERATED BY SECTOR



EDIBLE FOOD WASTED BY CATEGORY



MANAGING FOOD WASTE AT HOME

- Shop with intention and a list – purchase what you need. Example buy portions to match your family not excess
- Getting to Know your Refrigerator
- Keeping Food Fresh Longer with Proper storage
- Repurposing and Usage
- Preservation

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR REFRIGERATOR

- Cold air sinks so the lower level should be for more perishable foods – dairy, eggs, fresh meat.
- The door is the warmest area so avoid perishable items and store condiments and soft drinks here
- The Mysterious Crisper Drawers
 - Low Humidity for fruit – never leave fruit in the plastic they come in as this traps humidity
 - High Humidity for vegetables - such as greens and root vegetables. Wrapping greens in damp towels then in plastic also retains humidity

PROPER STORAGE IS KEY

- Keep apples away from other fruits and vegetables as they produce the highest levels of ethylene gas which speeds up the ripening process
- Store soft fruit (berries) in glass jars
- Store tomatoes and bananas on the counter
- Potatoes and Onions should be stored in a cool dark place but not the refrigerator and never together
- Place herbs, scallions, and asparagus in glass with small amount of water

<https://savethefood.com/storage>

CREATE AN EAT THIS FIRST SHELF

- The top shelf is the most visible so this should be designated as the “eat this first” shelf – leftovers and fruits and vegetables on the verge of going bad
- Determine what recipes can use these items – soups, stews, pasta, and hashes can be made of anything and taste amazing
- Turn fruit and vegetables into smoothies
- Turn leftovers into something new – casserole or hash
- Small batch chutney, jams and quick pickles are also great ways to extend the life of produce
- Let’s not forget items can be thrown into the freezer for use within 3-6 months
- This concept of the “eat first shelf” can also be utilized in the pantry

<https://savethefood.com/recipeslisting/scraps?id=24>

TAKE INVENTORY OF STAPLES

In the Vein of “Eat this First shelf” doing an inventory of your staples also helps you use up what you have and to not over buy – basically shop your refrigerator, freezer and pantry first

- Every 3-6 months investigate the back of your pantry and pull-out things that should get used
 - Cans of soup, vegetables, and condiments can get pushed to the back and forgotten
- Dig deep into those freezers
 - Partial bag of vegetables – make a casserole or stir fry
 - Oh, that is where that chili went to – defrost and have for a quick lunch or dinner that week

We all lose sight of items; these tips help us use these items before buying more

PRESERVATION FOR LONG TERM STORAGE

- Turn Bread into breadcrumbs by dehydrating
- Learning how to pickle or ferment is a great way to extend the life of fruits and vegetables
- Dehydrating herbs during the height of summer allows you to enjoy them all winter long (way better than any store-bought seasoning)
- Trimmings or “scraps” should not be wasted either. Place them in a freezer bag and keep collecting until you have enough to make stock. This goes for bones as well.
- Get more tips at <https://zerowastechef.com/>



DONATE FOOD BEFORE IT IS WASTED

- Good Samaritan laws protects individuals when donating food
- Donate to Food Banks, Local Church Food Pantries, and even soup kitchens
- Buy Nothing Flash Gives – needed only a tablespoon of Sesame Oil but you know you won't use the rest of the bottle?
- Go one step further and start a Community Refrigerator.

DATES ON LABELS

Regulated and consistent everywhere, Right?

No. Neither the US FDA or USDA have defined these dates with the one exception, infant formula.

- **“production” or “pack” date** — date on which the food was manufactured or placed in final packaging.
- **“sell by” date** — used by retailers for stock control.
- **“best if used by” or just “use by” date** — generally indicates when the food will no longer be at its highest quality.

Treat Food Date Labels More as Suggestions than Commands.

Food Waste Reduction Tips

Follow these tips to reduce food waste at home, and visit us online at <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/food-waste/> to learn more!

Inventory refrigerator
before shopping



Eat your leftovers!

Donate excess food
to a local food pantry!



Don't go by the date label.
Taste & smell food to determine
if it's edible.



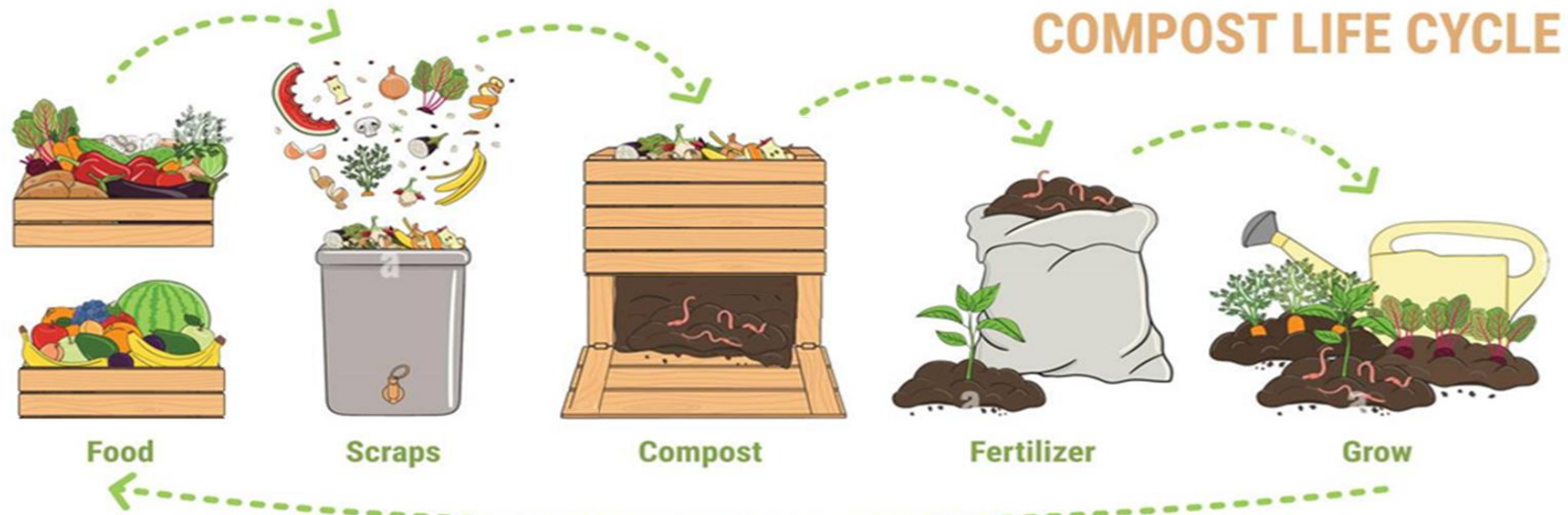
Avoid buying in bulk unless
you're sure you'll eat it!



#ERASEFOODWASTENJ



ERASE
FOOD
WASTE
NEW JERSEY



LAST RESORT - COMPOSTING

- Backyard Composting
- Vermicomposting – indoor with worms
- Countertop systems such as Lomi
- No interest in composting or don't have the room – use a service

THANK YOU

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