Reduce food waste

Why food waste matters

Save money

Imagine buying five bags of groceries and throwing one straight into the garbage. That's money out of your pocket after each grocery trip. That's how much food is wasted in Canada. If you use the food you bought, **you'll spend less** buying meals.

Help the environment

Food waste in landfills creates greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change. Think of the resources used to create all that food that doesn't get eaten... fertilizer, water, packaging, transportation. Reducing food waste helps **protect our environment**.

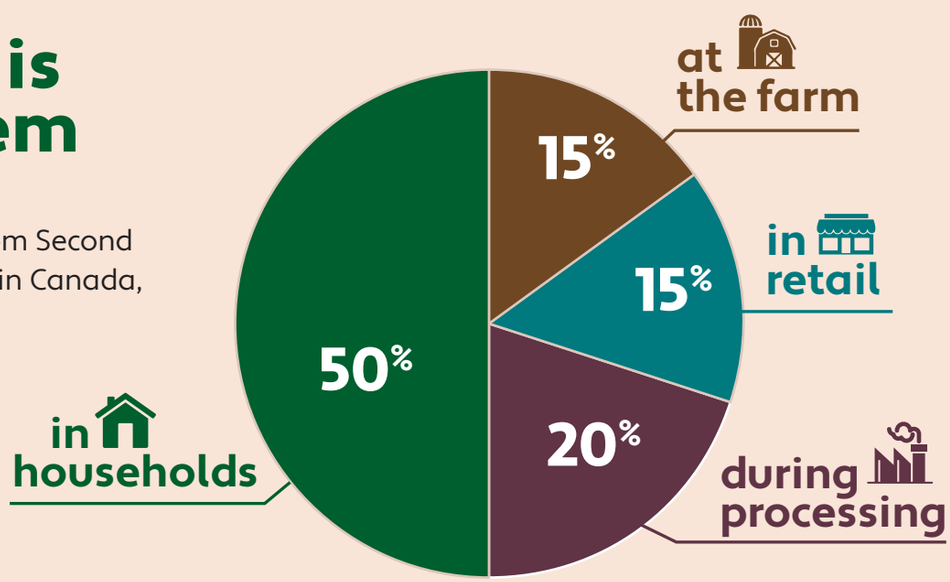
Eat healthier

Planning your meals and using the food you buy instead of throwing it out means **you'll eat healthier**.

Food waste is a big problem

According to a 2024 report from Second Harvest, of all food produced in Canada, over **46%** is wasted.

Over **41%** of this waste is avoidable, which works out to saving about **$50 billion**.



25.7 million Food waste contributes about metric tonnes of CO^2 emissions each year to the atmosphere. This is equal to **253 thousand** flights from Toronto to Vancouver

According to the United Nations, household waste world wide would provide over **1 billion** meals a day.

Of the avoidable waste, **23%** is caused by people throwing food out because of "best before" dates.

Best-by dates

Sell by, best before, packed on, expiration dates... Most of these dates are unscientific and misleading. They are not about food safety, but about peak quality as determined by the manufacturer. If food looks, smells and tastes okay, it probably is, even if it may be less flavourful, crunchy or colourful.

Tips for preventing food waste

- **Plan your meals** and make your grocery list based on your menu plan. It could be as simple as "supper: chicken, carrots, rice." Consider including meatless meals that contain protein like beans or tofu.
- Shop with a **grocery list** and stick to it. It will help minimize impulse buys and lead to healthier choices. Keep a running list so you can add things as you run out or think of them.
- Be **realistic** with your meal planning. Plan a meal you know you have time and energy to cook, based on your weekly routine.
- **Categorize** your shopping list and write it out based on where things are in the store.
- **Store** food correctly in your fridge or in the cupboard.
- Cut up a **bunch of veggies** for use in lunches, snacks and meals.
- Try **bulk or batch cooking**, which means cooking a lot of food when you have time, then packaging it up and freezing it for easy meals later on.
- Get creative with leftovers. "**Garbage soup**" made with various leftovers is more delicious than it sounds, and it's a great way to clean out the fridge. Label and freeze leftovers. Your future self will thank you for the easy meal!
- Make **soup or broth** with bones and veggie scraps and carrot ends, onion skins.
- Use over-ripe fruit in **smoothies or baked goods**, like banana bread.
- Look for **deals** in flyers, both paper and online.
- Consider buying **imperfect or oddly shaped** produce. It can be cheaper, but tastes just as good.
- Consider **cheaper alternatives**. For example, when you want coleslaw, buy a cabbage instead. You can use it for coleslaw and in many other recipes.
- Choose **less expensive cuts of meat**, like chicken thighs instead of breasts.
- When something you know you'll use is on sale, **buy extra and stock up**. Cook and package it in meal-size portions and freeze it.
- Fresh veggies too expensive? Try **frozen or canned**. They can be just as good and just as nutritious.
- **Rotate your stock**: Put the newest food at the back of the fridge or cupboard.
- Think there's nothing to eat in the house? Try **shopping the pantry** and look for websites that give you recipes based on ingredients at hand.
- **Share extra food**. Donate to members of the church, food banks, buy-nothing Facebook groups, neighbours, or local food-sharing groups.
- Ideas for using up **extra vegetables**:
  - Make veggie chips
  - Scramble into an omelette
  - Make refrigerator pickles
  - Add to pasta sauce
  - Roast or stir-fry
  - Grate to make veggie fritters or patties
  - Use for smoothies
  - Use for soup

Resources

foodsharingottawa.com: Reduce the amount of food that gets thrown away locally by providing and promoting alternative uses.

www.oddbunch.ca: Reduce food waste and ensure fruits and vegetables are affordable for households across the country.

lovefoodhatewaste.ca: Inspire and empower people to make their food go further and waste less.

canadianfoodfocus.org: Find out what best-by dates mean and how long to safely store food.

Canada's Food Guide: Provides guidance on what and how to eat.

Flashfood app: Fresh produce, meat, and more at up to 50% off.

supercook.com: Generate recipes based on what you have.

Epiphany Anglican Church

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Epiphany is a parish of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, Canada, and the Anglican Church of Canada, rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our faith calls us to uphold the dignity of all people. All are beloved children of God and are welcome to fully participate in the life of our worshipping community.

Our Diocese of Ottawa was founded on the homeland of the Anishinaabe Algonquin. May we dwell on this land with respect and peace.

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