



Food Waste
Prevention

Food Waste Prevention 101 April 2022

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Food Waste Prevention 101

- What is food waste?
- Why does it matter?
- How much food is wasted?
- Where does food waste happen?
- What can I do?



Food is Too Good to Waste!

By making small shifts in how we shop, store and prepare food...

We can toss less, eat well, simplify our lives, save money...

And keep valuable resources used to produce and distribute food from going to waste.



Food Waste:

A Social Problem

Wholesome, nutritious food should feed people, not landfills.

37.2
Million
Americans

live in food
insecure
households

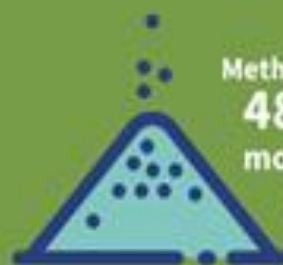
An Economic Problem

It is estimated that at the retail and consumer levels in the United States, food loss and waste totals \$161 billion dollars.

The
average
family of 4
throws out

\$1,600
in produce
each year

An Environmental Problem



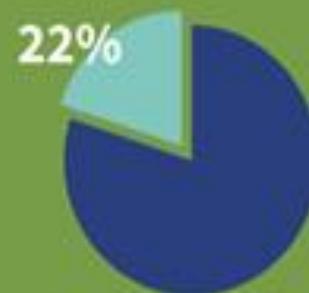
Methane is
48x
more potent
than CO₂

Once wasted food reaches
landfills, it produces
methane, a powerful
greenhouse gas.



4.4
Gigatons of
CO₂

If food waste were a country,
it would be the third largest
greenhouse gas (GHG)
emitting country in the world.

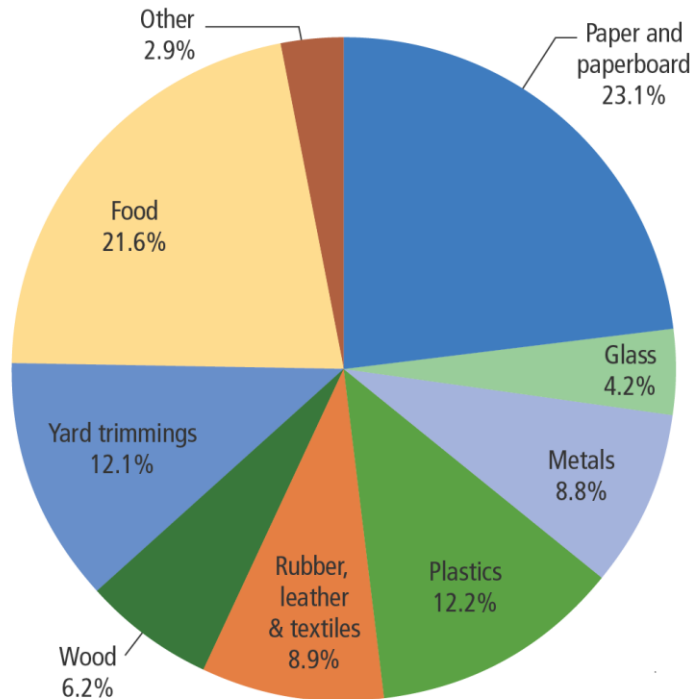


Food is the largest
stream of materials in
American trash.

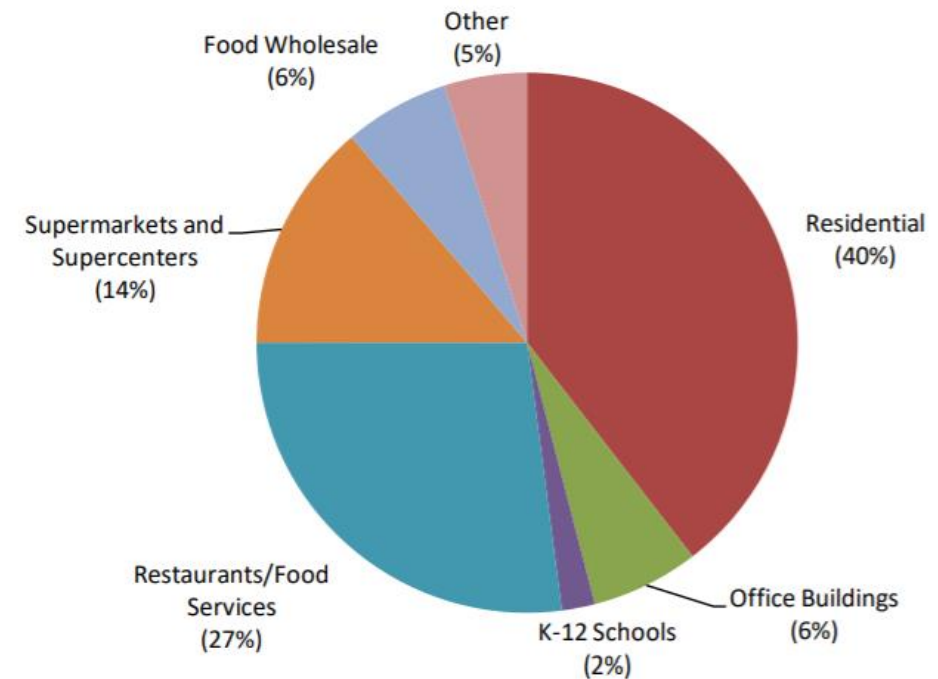


How much Food is Wasted?

Food accounts for over 21% of the municipal solid waste we generate



And 40% of wasted food in the U.S. comes from households



Wasted food = Wasted resources

- By wasting food we waste 5.9 trillion gallons of fresh water
- 665 billion KWH of energy- 10% of total energy use
- 139 million acres of land—50% of land use
- 14.3 billion pounds of fertilizer

25%
of all
our fresh
water use.

Enough
energy to
power the
country for
more than
a week.

Enough land
to feed the
world's hungry
twice over.



How much Food is Waste in the U.S.?

40%

OF ALL FOOD PRODUCED
IN THE U.S. IS WASTED

EXPENSIVE



\$161 BILLION

Uneaten food at retailers,
restaurants, and homes
costs \$161 billion annually



**133 BILLION
POUNDS**

Food wasted per year.
That represents 1,249
calories per person, per day.



\$1,500

Per capita, this amounts
to over \$1,500 for a
family of four



In one month a family of 4 wastes:



Why are we tossing food?

Household Loss Reason	% of Wasted Edible Food	
	Oregon Wasted Food Study Diary (2017)	NRDC Diary (2015/16)
Moldy/Spoiled	32.1%	36%
Don't like/tired of eating	16.4%	9%
Not good as leftovers	14.1%	20%
Other	10.2%	4%
Past date	8.4%	7%
Too little to save	7.8%	7%
Worry about illness	7.4%	n/a
Contaminated ¹	1.4%	n/a
Damaged (stale, soggy, freezer burned) ¹	1.1%	n/a
Improperly cooked	1.0%	<1%
Unrefrigerated too long ¹	<0.1%	13%



Why do we waste food?

Poor planning

Lack of time to prepare fresh food

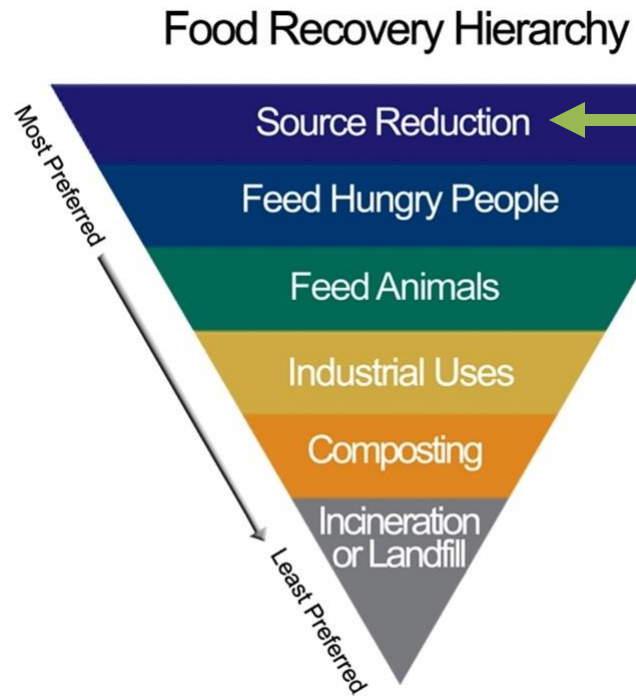
Lack of time to learn new skills

Forget what food we have on hand

Don't understand food labels



STRATEGIES TO REDUCE WASTED FOOD



**Everyone can
start here by...**

- 1. SMART Shopping**
- 2. SMART Storage**
- 3. SMART Preparation**
- 4. SMART Saving**



Food Waste Audit



Measure food waste in your household



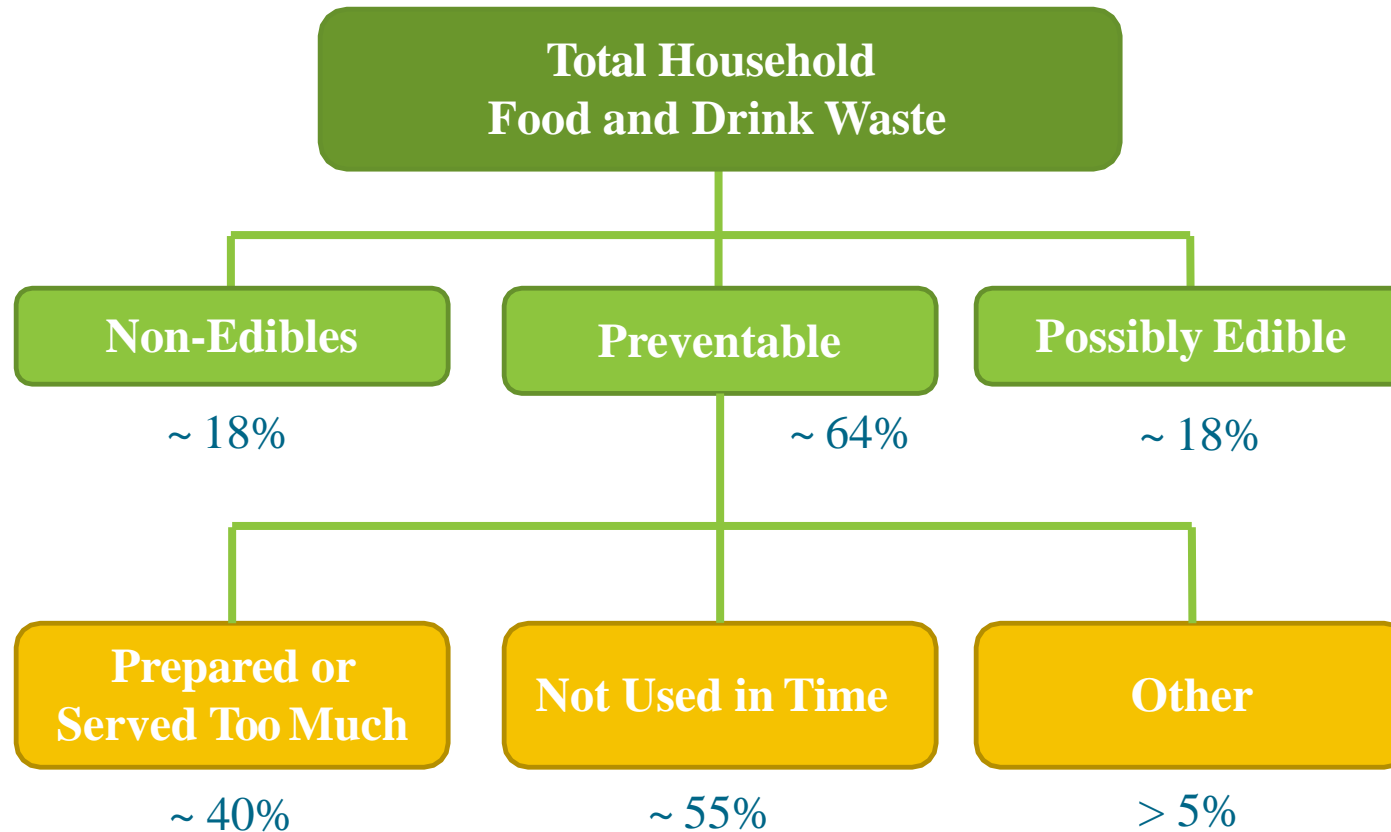
Adopt SMART strategies



Compare waste generated



Research shows that...



- Quested and Johnson, 2009



Yet ... we all hate to waste



Brain on automatic



Dynamic lifestyles



93% acknowledged buying foods they never used.

– Cornell University Food and Brand Lab study



SMART SHOPPING: BUY WHAT YOU NEED

SMART STRATEGY:
Make a Shopping List
with Meals in Mind

- Think about how many meals you'll eat at home this week and how long before your next shopping trip.
- Next to fresh items on the list, note the quantity you need or number of meals you're buying for.
- Shop your kitchen first and note items you already have.

FOOD ITEM	AMOUNT NEEDED	ALREADY HAVE
Salad greens	Lunch for a week	Enough for one lunch
2% milk	Gallon	None



SMART STORAGE:

KEEP FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FRESH

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE STORAGE GUIDE

INSIDE THE FRIDGE

- Apples, berries, and cherries
- Grapes, kiwi, lemons, and oranges
- Melons, nectarines, apricots, peaches, and plums (after ripening at room temperature)
- Avocados, pears, tomatoes (after ripening at room temperature)
- Almost all vegetables and herbs

OUTSIDE THE FRIDGE

- Bananas, mangos, papayas, and pineapples: store in a cool place
- Potatoes / onions: store in a cool, dark place
- Basil and winter squashes: store at room temperature—once cut, store squashes in fridge

MORE STORAGE TIPS

- If you like your fruit at room temperature, take what you will eat for the day out of the fridge in the morning.
- Many fruits give off natural gases that hasten the spoilage of other nearby produce. Store bananas, apples, and tomatoes by themselves and store fruits and vegetables in different bins.
- Consider storage bags and containers designed to help extend the life of your produce.
- To prevent mold, wash berries just before eating.



SMART PREP: PREP NOW, EAT LATER



Image courtesy of Grant Cochrane/FreeDisitalPhotos.net



SMART SAVING: EAT WHAT YOU BUY



Learn about food product dating

- Many consumers misunderstand the purpose and meaning of the date labels that often appear on packaged foods. **Confusion over date labeling accounts for an estimated 20 percent of consumer food waste.** That's not surprising when you consider the variety of terms used with date labels, such as "use before," "sell by," "expires on," and many more.



Partner Events:

April 2, 2022--Food for Thought Workshop

- Join KTMB, *Full Circle Soils & Compost*, and *Down to Earth Composting* on **Saturday, April 2nd from 10am-12pm** at the Landscape Seminar Room at 1190 W Moana Ln. to learn ways to prevent food waste at home, as well as composting basics.
- April 22, 2022—UNR Douglas County Cooperative Extension and The Food Closet: Home Composting and Much More!
at The Food Closet 1251 Waterloo Lane, Gardnerville
 - 12:30-1:15 - Dehydrating
 - 1:30-2:15 – Meal Planning
 - 2:30-3:15 – Composting/Vermicomposting
 - 3:30-4:30 – Planting



Go to our website: [Nevada Recycles
| NDEP \(nv.gov\)](https://www.ndep.nv.gov/nevada-recycles)

Join our Facebook group:
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Nevada Recycles

Nevada Division of
Environmental Protection

ndep.nv.gov/nevada-recycles

