

Waste Not, Want Not: A Hopeful Guide to Reducing Food Waste

Every year, millions of tonnes of perfectly good food end up in the trash—even though it could have been eaten, shared, composted, or repurposed. But here’s the good news: **we all have the power** to change that waste trajectory, one meal at a time.

Continue reading for gentle encouragement and practical tips (including how to turn scraps into broth!) to help you reduce food waste in your kitchen—and inspire others to do the same.

Why It Matters

- Food waste doesn’t just cost households money—it also strains the environment. When food decomposes in landfills, it releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas.
- Globally, around one third of all food produced is wasted between farm and fork.
- If we each make a few small shifts in how we shop, cook, and store, the ripple effect is huge.
- In Canada, the Love Food Hate Waste campaign encourages small changes as a way to build momentum. [Love Food Hate Waste](#)

When we waste less, we save money, reduce emissions, ease pressure on food systems, and honor food as a gift, not a disposable commodity.

A Mindset Shift: From “Use or Lose” to “Use With Purpose”

The first step is a mindset shift. We move from “I bought it, so I’ll try to use it all” to “I’ll plan, store, and repurpose so that nothing goes unused.” Saving food starts with becoming intentional about what you buy and how you use it.

Here are practical strategies to help you live that mindset.

Six Practical Tips to Cut Food Waste (and Boost Kitchen Joy)

1. Plan, Inventory, and Shop Smart

- **Do a “kitchen audit”** before you head to the store. Check the fridge, freezer, pantry so you don’t accidentally double-buy.
- **Meal-plan for the week**—even loosely. Choose recipes that reuse ingredients (e.g. roast vegetables one night, then toss leftovers into a soup).

- **Adopt the “first in, first out” (FIFO) rule:** put older items toward the front so you see them.
- **Resist “just in case” bulk buys,** unless you know you’ll use or preserve the surplus.
- **Buy imperfect produce**—those funny, odd-shaped fruits and veggies are just as tasty and often cheaper.
- Use apps or food-sharing platforms (where available) to pass along surplus, instead of discarding it.

2. Store Well & Learn the Labels

- Store produce in the right environment: leafy greens in high-humidity crisper, ethylene-producing fruits (bananas, apples) away from sensitive veggies. Wait to wash berries, grapes, and soft fruit until just before using—moisture speeds spoilage.
- Understand “best before” vs. “use by” labels—many “best before” foods are still safe after the date, just less optimal in texture or flavour.
- Use clear, labeled containers for leftovers (with date) so they don’t vanish into the back of the fridge and get forgotten.

3. Eat (or Freeze) Leftovers Promptly

- Plan for leftovers: cook double the grains or proteins if you know you’ll rework them into another meal.
- If leftovers won’t be eaten in 2–3 days, **freeze them** in portioned sizes.
- Turn leftovers into fresh meals: sheet-pan dinners, burritos, stir-fries, or grain bowls.
- Share extras with neighbors, friends, or local food rescue organizations (where available).

4. Love Your Scraps: Make Broth from Leftovers

This is one of our favourite kitchen tricks—minimal effort, maximum impact.

How to Make Vegetable Broth from Scraps

1. **Collect scraps** in a jar or freezer bag: onion peels, carrot ends, celery leaves, mushroom stems, herb stems, etc. Avoid bits that spoil quickly (e.g. soft tomatoes) or starchy bits (potato peels in large quantities).
2. **Store them in the freezer** until you accumulate enough (e.g. ~1 quart to 1 gallon capacity).

3. **Make broth:** Put the frozen scraps into a pot, cover with water, add bay leaf, peppercorns, a splash of salt, and gently simmer for 30 minutes to 1 hour. (Don't overcook or it may get bitter.)
4. **Strain** through a fine mesh or cheesecloth. Use immediately or freeze in cubes for soups, stews, sauces, or cooking grains.
5. If you also use bones or meat, you can combine vegetable scraps in the final 10–15 minutes of simmering to preserve flavor balance.

Bonus: you reduce waste and avoid buying packaged broth—with better flavour.

5. Compost What You Can't Eat

If scraps or food won't be eaten or repurposed, composting is the next best thing. Instead of sending them to a landfill, composting turns them into nutrient-rich soil.

- In many municipalities, there's a green bin or curbside organics program.
- If you have space, set up an indoor or backyard compost system.
- Balance your "greens" (fruit/veg scraps) with "browns" (leaves, paper) to keep your compost happy.

6. Measure, Reflect, and Improve

- **Track your food waste** for a week (e.g. what got thrown out and why). This helps you identify patterns (e.g. you always toss limp spinach).
- **Set small targets**—for example, reduce your kitchen scraps by 20% in a month.
- Share your successes (or failures) with family, friends, or on social media—encouragement can motivate you to keep going. **TAG US on [Instagram](#) & [Facebook](#)**
- Advocate for systemic change: request your workplace, school, or local government adopt compost or waste-reduction programs.

A Call to Action

Every meal presents a choice: waste or reclaim. And those choices add up.

Here's your action checklist:

1. Tonight, start a scrap-collector for broth.

2. Before your next shop, do a kitchen inventory and meal plan.
3. Share leftovers rather than letting them get lost.
4. If composting is possible where you live, make use of it.

Encourage someone else to join you—your partner, friend, neighbour, or even your city council. Every bit of momentum helps.

When enough of us adopt small, everyday habits, we send a signal: wasting food is not inevitable—it's preventable. Let's transform our kitchens, reduce our footprints, and lift up a more sustainable food culture.

Together, we can turn the tide on food waste—one broth, one meal, one community at a time.