

Energy City Insights – Food Waste Prevention

Save the Food

Most of us don't realize just how much food we throw away, whether it is uneaten leftovers or food that has gone bad before it is consumed. It is estimated that 40% of all food in America is wasted. This includes food lost in transportation, in stores, and in our refrigerators. You can take simple steps in your home to help reduce food waste, and in turn money wasted.

Food Planning

- Plan out your meals for the week so you know what to buy, rather than buying without a plan. This will help ensure you actually use the food you purchase, also saving you money.
- Know what you have at home to avoid buying extra ingredients you don't need.
- Check the pantry for items that may expire soon and incorporate them into your meals for the week.

Food Storage

- Store your produce appropriately so it lasts longer. [Check out this list of produce-storing specifics here.](#)
- Freeze, preserve or can items that you won't eat before they spoil.
- Many fruits give off natural gases as they ripen which causes other nearby produce to spoil faster. Store bananas, apples, and tomatoes by themselves.
- Avoid washing berries until you want to eat them, this will prevent them from getting moldy.

Food Organization

- Store items in the fridge based on their expiration date. Move items to the front that you want to eat first to keep them visible when you open the fridge. Consider adding a [EAT FIRST sign](#) to encourage family members to use certain items before others.
- Prepare and cook perishable foods and then freeze them for consumption later.
- Eat your leftovers! It may sound simple but often leftovers are forgotten and wasted. Find a [leftover food recipe](#) based on what you have at home online!

The Natural Resources Defense Council has created the [Save The Food campaign](#) with more information and resources to help reduce food waste at home. Check out their video [The Extraordinary Life and Times of Strawberries](#), which illustrates the common issues with food purchasing, storage and consumption that can lead to food waste.