



Food Storage Guide

**Giving you the tools to reduce food waste and save money
by keeping the food you have viable for longer.**

Introduction

Uneaten food is approximately 18.5% of the waste generated in Anoka County, this waste goes to landfills or waste to energy facilities. Instead of throwing food away, prevent it in the first place. Proper food storage is an easy way to prevent food waste. Use this guide to prevent food waste at your home.

As much as 40 percent of the food in this country goes to waste — more than \$162 billion worth every year — accounting for nearly a quarter of U.S. water consumption and 4 percent of our oil consumption.

- A 4-person family loses \$1,500 a year on wasted food. Saving that would basically be a raise.
- 20% of the food we buy never gets eaten.
- 90% of us throw away food too soon.

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FRUIT



Apples - Store apples in the fridge to extend shelf life. One bad apple can ruin the whole bunch, so eat the bruised ones first!

Avocados - To speed up ripening, place in a paper bag and place an apple in the bag with them. Once ripe, store avocados in the fridge.

Bananas - Store bananas on the counter away from other fruit.

Berries - Before storing berries, remove any spoiled or crushed fruits, and store unwashed in an airtight container. Do not wash until ready to eat.

Cherries - Store cherries in the fridge. Don't wash until ready to eat.

Citrus (Grapefruit, Lemon, Limes, Oranges) - Keep citrus loose or in an open container in the fridge. Never store citrus in an airtight container.

Figs (fresh) - Keep figs in a paper bag or on a plate in the fridge and away from moisture.

Grapes - Remove spoiled or soft grapes and do not wash them before storing in the fridge in an airtight container.

Melons - Store in a cool, dry place out of the sun. Once ripe, store melons in the fridge.

Pears - Store pears in the fridge to extend shelf life. (Overripe or damaged fruits can still be used in sauces or baked goods if you do not want to freeze them.)

Persimmon - Store at room temperature until ripe (Fuyu will still be firm, Hachiya will be mushy) and then store in the fridge.

Pomegranate - You can store pomegranates on a cool counter, but they will keep longer in an open container in the fridge.

Stone Fruits (Includes peaches, plums, nectarines, and apricots.) - Store in a cool place out of the sun until ripe. Once ripe, store open in the fridge.

Tropical Fruits - If unripe, store whole on the counter at room temperature. Once ripe, store loose on a refrigerator shelf or in the low-humidity drawer. If cut, place in an airtight container.

VEGETABLES



Artichokes - Place in an airtight container with a damp towel for moisture and store in the fridge.

Asparagus - Store asparagus in the fridge. Trim the base of the stalks and place upright in a jar filled with an inch of water, or wrap the cut ends of the stalks in a moist paper towel or rag.

Beets - Store beets in the fridge (greens removed) in an airtight container with a paper towel inside to absorb moisture.

Broccoli - Store broccoli loosely in the fridge. You can wrap in a damp towel or cotton bag. The stalks can be eaten, too! Store the stalks in an airtight container with a paper towel.

Brussels Sprouts - If brussels sprouts are on the stalk leave them on that stalk. Put it in the fridge or leave it in a cold place. If they are loose, store them in an open container in the fridge with a damp towel on top.

Carrots - Cut the tops off carrots to keep them fresh longer. Store carrots in the fridge either in a container of water or unwashed in an airtight container in the crisper drawer with plenty of moisture.

Cabbage - Store cabbage in the crisper drawer of the fridge. Peel off outer leaves if they start to wilt. Eat cabbage first as it goes bad more quickly than other produce.

Cauliflower - Store cauliflower in an airtight container in the fridge, but eat cauliflower first as it goes bad more quickly than other produce.

Celery - Store celery in the fridge either in a container of water or in an airtight container. Use the leaves in soups and stews for extra flavor.

Corn on the Cob - Leave husks on fresh corn and store open in the fridge. Eat as soon as you can, as it loses flavor and texture quickly.

Cucumber - Store cucumbers in the fridge by standing them upright in a container of water with the stalk down, or wrap in a moist towel in the fridge.

Eggplant - Store eggplant unwashed in the crisper drawer of the fridge. Eggplant doesn't like any extra moisture.

Fennel - Place in the fridge in a closed container with a little water or upright in a cup of water.

Garlic - Store in a cool, dark place away from other produce.

Ginger - Refrigerate, either unwrapped or in an airtight container, in a dark section of the refrigerator. Freeze whole in an airtight container and cut off slices as needed. The texture will be slightly mushy, but the flavor is fine for adding to cooked dishes.

Green Beans, Snap Peas, and Fresh Peas - Green beans and peas are fragile vegetables; they quickly degrade in quality, even at cold temperatures. Store unwashed peas and beans in the refrigerator in a breathable bag in the high-humidity drawer, but try to eat them as quickly as possible.

Green Onions or Scallions - Store in the fridge wrapped in a damp towel or upright in a glass of water just to cover the white parts. Make sure to remove any bands on the bunch.

Greens, Hearty - Do not wash until ready to use. Remove twist ties and store loosely, with a damp cloth, in an airtight container in the high-humidity drawer of the refrigerator.

Greens, Salad - Store salad greens in the fridge in an airtight container with a damp paper towel. Soak leaves that have gone limp for 30 minutes in cold water to revive crispness.

Herbs other than Basil - Store herbs in the fridge upright in jars (stems down) filled with 1-2 inches of water.

Herbs, Basil - Basil is a warm weather crop and turns black quickly in the fridge. Store on the counter in a glass of water like a cut flower with the stem in the water, or wrapped in a dry paper towel in an airtight container.

Leeks - Store leeks in an open container in the crisper drawer of the fridge wrapped in a damp cloth or in a shallow cup of water.

Mushrooms - Keep mushrooms in a paper bag in the fridge to avoid getting "slimy."

Okra - Okra doesn't like humidity. Store with a dry towel in an airtight container. Eat as soon as you can after purchasing, as it does not last as long as other produce.

Onions - Store whole onions in a cool, dark place somewhere slightly warmer than the fridge. Good air circulation is best, so don't stack them. Store partially used onions in the fridge in an airtight container, leaving the papery outer layer on. Onions cause potatoes to sprout, so keep them separate.

Parsnips - Do not wash until ready to use. Store in a breathable bag in the high-humidity drawer of the refrigerator.

Peppers (Red, Green or Hot) - Only wash peppers right before eating them. Partially-eaten peppers can be stored in the fridge with the seeds and stems attached to extend shelf life.

Potatoes - Store potatoes in a cool, dark place somewhere slightly warmer than the fridge. A box in a dark corner of the pantry or a paper bag work well. Moisture and exposure to light causes spoilage.

Radishes - Do not wash until ready to use. Separate green tops from radishes. Store radishes in a breathable bag in the high-humidity drawer of the refrigerator, and store the greens as you would other dark greens.

Rhubarb - Wrap in a damp towel and place in an open container in the fridge.

Root Vegetables - Remove any greens and store separately. Store in a cool, dark, humid root cellar or in an airtight container with a damp towel in the fridge.

Shallots - Store in a cool, dark place away from other produce.

Squash, Summer and Zucchini - Wrap whole or cut ends in a damp cloth and keep in the fridge.

Squash, Winter - Store in a cool, dark, well ventilated place. Many growers say winter squashes get sweeter if they're stored for a week or so before eaten.

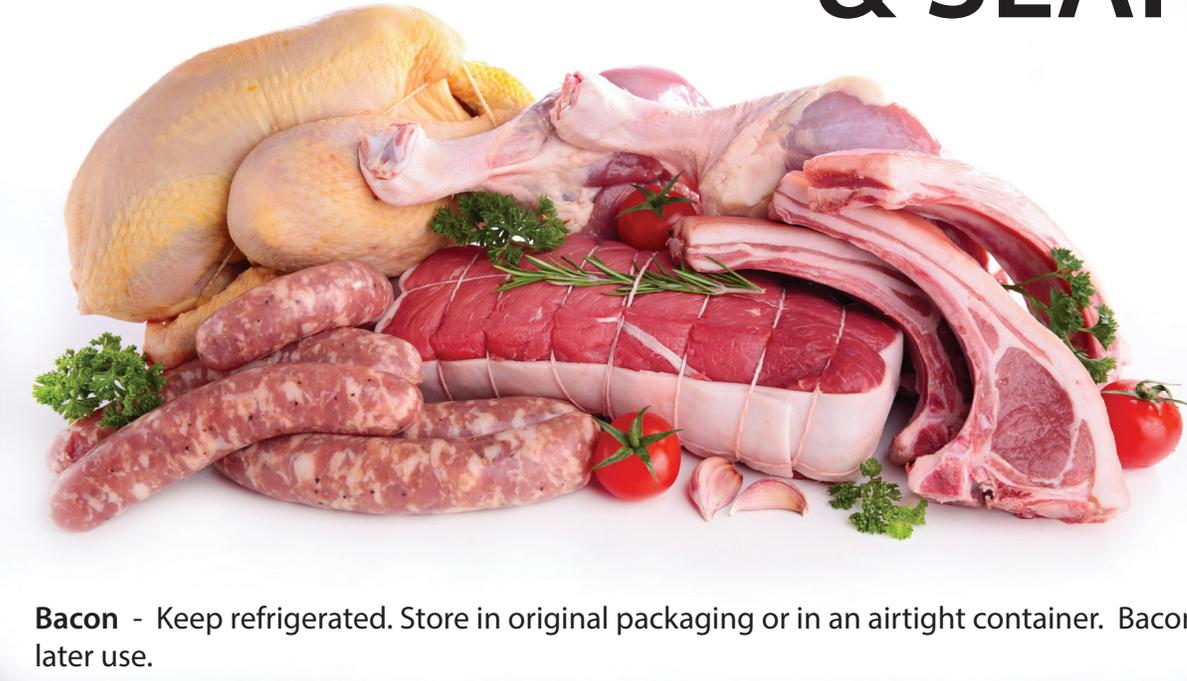
Sweet Potatoes - Store in a cool, dark, well ventilated place. Never refrigerate—sweet potatoes don't like the cold.

Tomatoes - Tomatoes can be frozen either raw or cooked. Tomatoes should be stored on the counter unless very ripe, at which point transfer them to the fridge. Tomatoes give off ethylene gas that causes other produce to deteriorate, so store them separately.

Turnips - Do not wash until ready to use. Separate from their green tops. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator, unless a root cellar is an option. Store the greens as you would hearty greens in the refrigerator.



MEAT, POULTRY & SEAFOOD



Bacon - Keep refrigerated. Store in original packaging or in an airtight container. Bacon can be frozen for later use.

Canned Fish - Store unopened cans in a cool dry place. Refrigerate once opened.

Canned Meat - Store unopened cans in a cool dry place unless label says refrigeration is required. Refrigerate once opened, covered in an airtight container.

Deli Meats - Keep refrigerated. Store in original packaging or in an airtight container. Deli meats can be frozen for later use.

Fresh Fish - Keep refrigerated. Remove from package, remove any guts, and pat dry with paper towels. Fish can be frozen for later use.

Fresh Meat - Keep refrigerated. Store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, wrapped tightly in airtight packaging. Meat can be frozen for later use. Bones can be used to make stock or add flavor to beans.

Hot Dogs and Precooked Sausage - Store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, wrapped tightly in airtight packaging. Hot dogs and precooked sausages can be frozen for later use.

Sausage - Keep refrigerated. Store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, wrapped tightly in airtight packaging. Sausage can be frozen for later use.

Shellfish - Keep refrigerated or on ice. Do not store live shellfish in airtight containers. Oysters can be frozen in shell or shucked. To freeze shrimp, remove heads but keep shells on.

DRY GOODS & PANTRY ITEMS



Bread - If using bread within two days, store at room temperature in a bread box or paper bag to reduce moisture loss while allowing the crust to remain crisp. Do not keep at room temperature in a plastic bag, as this encourages mold. If using beyond two days, freeze individual slices. Keep in the refrigerator, well wrapped, only if you plan to toast it.

Bread Crumbs - Store in an airtight container in a dry cool place.

Cereal, Cold/Dry - Store cereal in a dry place in an airtight container. If cereals have gone a little soft or stale, lay them out on a cookie sheet and pop them in the oven for a bit to remove some of the excess moisture.

Flour, White - Store in an opaque, airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place. For longer storage, place in the refrigerator. Store away from foods with strong odors.

Flour, Whole Wheat - Store in an opaque, airtight, moisture-proof container in the refrigerator or freezer away from foods with strong odors.

Oats - Store in an airtight container in a cool dry place.

Pasta - Store dry pasta in original packaging or an airtight container; wrap fresh pasta in airtight wrapping.

Quinoa - Store in an airtight container in a dry, dark, cool place, or freeze.

Rice, Brown and Wild - Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Brown rice will eventually go rancid because of the oils in its outer hull; this happens more quickly when stored in a pantry.

Rice, White - Store in an airtight container in a dry, dark, cool place. Cooked rice should be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Sugar, Brown - Store in an opaque, airtight, moisture-proof container in a cool location. Try keeping a few marshmallows or a slice of bread on top of the sugar to keep it from drying out and getting hard.

Sugar, White - Store in an opaque, airtight, moisture-proof container in a cool, dry location.

Whole Grains - Store in an opaque, airtight, moisture-proof container in a cool, dry location or freeze in an airtight container.

DAIRY, EGGS



Butter - Butter can be kept at room temperature if it will be used up within several days, but only if kept out of the light. When storing butter in the fridge, do not keep it in the door because it is often warmer than other parts of the fridge, and could make it spoil more quickly. Butter can be stored in the freezer.

Cheese - Cheese is best stored loosely wrapped in wax paper or parchment paper to allow it to breathe, which likely means rewrapping it once you get it home to get it out of plastic wrapping. Wrapping it tightly in plastic traps moisture, thus encouraging growth of bacteria and mold. Store in the refrigerator drawer, if possible, to reduce the chance the cheese will absorb other flavors.

Cream - When storing cream in the fridge, don't put it in the door, because that is often warmer than other parts of the fridge, and could make it spoil more quickly. Cream can be frozen. Lightly whip the cream before freezing to prevent it from getting grainy. Freeze in ice cube trays then transfer cubes to an airtight container.

Cottage Cheese - Store in a closed container in the refrigerator.

Eggs - Keep in a cold part of the refrigerator in their original carton, but not in the door even if there is a space for them. You can freeze eggs, just not in the shell. They are best if frozen in portions you will use, like in ice cube trays. If freezing whole eggs or yolks, whip up the yolk with a fork and put in tray. If freezing just yolks, to keep them from clumping, add a ½ tsp. of salt per cup of yolks or 1 tbsp. of sugar per cup of yolks. You can freeze whites as they are. Store portions in an airtight container.

Egg Substitutes - Store in a cold part of the refrigerator, sealed in the original container. If the original container is not airtight once opened, transfer to an airtight container to extend life.

Milk - Keep milk in a cold part of the refrigerator (not the door), closed in its original container. It keeps its flavor better in opaque, sealable containers. Milk that comes in a shelf-stable carton has gone through ultrahigh-temperature pasteurization and can be stored in the pantry until opened, then refrigerated. Milk can be frozen, but it will separate if left frozen for long periods. Low-fat and nonfat milk separate less than whole milk. Thawed milk is best for cooking or baking purposes.

Milk Substitutes - If in shelf-stable carton, refrigerate only once opened. In the pantry, store in a cool, dry spot. Once in the refrigerator, store sealed in the original carton in the middle of the refrigerator, where the temperatures are not too warm or too cold. Freeze for cooking or baking purposes.

Yogurt - Store covered in the refrigerator in the original container. Freeze for cooking or baking purposes.

BEANS, NUTS & VEGETARIAN PROTEINS



Beans, Canned or Cooked - Store canned beans in pantry. Store cooked beans in refrigerator in their cooking liquid or water in an airtight container. Cooked beans can be frozen in their cooking liquid or water in an airtight container.

Beans, Dry - Store in airtight containers in a cool, dark, dry place. Do not wash until just before use.

Peanuts - Store in a cool, dry, dark place in an airtight container. If using only occasionally, it's best to refrigerate or freeze them. Peanuts in the shell keep longer.

Seeds - Make sure the seeds are dry before storing. Store in airtight containers in the refrigerator or at least in a cool, dark, dry place. If using only occasionally, store in the freezer (not necessary for sunflower seeds).

Tempeh - Keep refrigerated. Store in original packaging until opened, an airtight container after opening. Tempeh can be frozen.

Tofu - Refrigerate in original package until opened. Once opened, keep submerged in water in an airtight container in the refrigerator and change the water daily. Freezing tofu causes moisture to drain from it and changes its consistency, making it more firm and dense. This is helpful for marinating but may not be desired for some uses. If marinating, rinse, drain, and place in a sealed zip-top freezer bag. Thaw in the refrigerator and drain, squeezing out excess moisture.

Tree Nuts (Almonds, Pecans, Walnuts, etc.) - Wait to shell or chop until ready to use. Store shelled nuts, even if roasted, in an opaque, airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer. If you must keep them in the pantry, store in a cool, dark place in an airtight container and use within a few months. Store pine nuts tightly wrapped in plastic wrap in an airtight container.

OILS, CONDIMENTS & SPICES



Coconut Milk - Refrigerate once opened. Store in a covered airtight container. Do not store metal cans in the refrigerator or freezer. Coconut milk can be frozen, but its consistency may change. Use frozen coconut milk for smoothies or other dishes that don't rely on its consistency.

Coffee - Purchase only as much coffee as you will use within two weeks to experience it at its top quality. Store in an airtight glass or ceramic container in a dark, cool location. If purchased in larger quantities, freeze a portion of it.

Honey - Store in a sealed container away from direct sunlight in a cool, dark, dry place (as cold as 50°F). Storing honey in the refrigerator accelerates crystallization.

Maple Syrup - Refrigerate once opened. Pure maple syrup should not actually freeze, making the freezer a great place to store it as it will keep indefinitely. Store in an airtight container. Mix in any condensation on the top before use, and place back in the freezer after thawing, if desired.

Mayonnaise - Refrigerate once opened. Commercial mayonnaise uses pasteurized eggs and has a high acidity level, which means it's safe when stored at room temperature. However, quality and flavor are improved by keeping the jar in the refrigerator once opened.

Nut Butters - Commercial nut butters can be kept in a cool, dry spot in the pantry but will last twice as long if kept in the refrigerator. Natural nut butters, once opened, should be stirred and then stored in the refrigerator in a sealed container. Freezing is not recommended.

Oils - All oils should be stored in a cool, dark, dry place. For best quality, buy olive and vegetable oils in small quantities to use within a couple of weeks. If you do buy larger amounts, transfer what you need for a week or two in the kitchen into a small, opaque bottle, and store the rest in a cool, dark place to minimize exposure to heat and light, then refill your small bottle as needed. Coconut oil is solid at room temperature and generally lasts longer than other oils. Sesame oil and other flavorful nut oils are very sensitive and should be bought in small quantities and kept in the refrigerator after opening.

Spices, Dried and Ground - Buy spices whole when you can and grind just before using. Also, buy them in small amounts. Keep in a cool, dark, dry place (not near the stove) in airtight containers.

Tea - For loose leaf teas, store in an airtight ceramic container or tin away from coffee and strong-smelling spices. Store tea bags in original packaging in a cool, dry, dark place.



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Sources:

Eureka Recycling. Make Dirt, Not Waste. <http://makedirtnotwaste.org/at-home/prevent-wasted-food>.
8/19/2016.

Save the Food. <http://savethefood.com/>. 8/19/2016.