

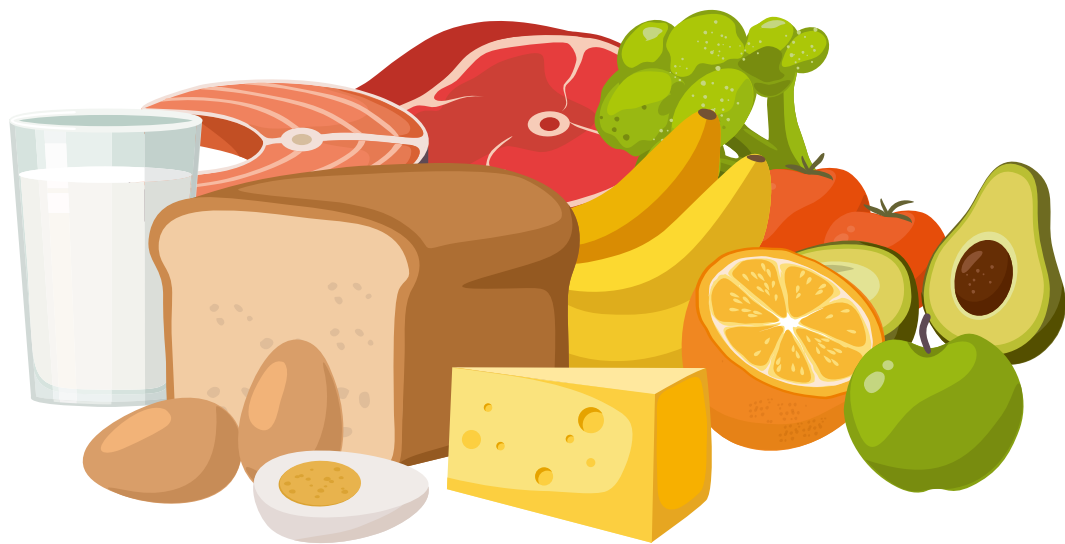


Tips on how to reduce your food waste at home

Introduction

Around 40 per cent of the rubbish in an average West Sussex waste bin is made up of food waste. Most of this is avoidable and 70 per cent could have been eaten at some point. When you throw away food you aren't just wasting the product, you are wasting the energy and water that goes into creating, transporting, and packaging the product, significantly contributing to climate change.

Here in West Sussex, we're focused on reducing food waste where we can. This booklet contains our top tips to help residents reduce their food waste.



How to reduce your food waste



Choose what you'll use!

Choosing loose fruits and vegetables and only buying what you need is a crucial step in reducing food waste. Pre-packaged items often lead to overbuying, with portions larger than necessary. Buying loose allows you to choose the fruits and vegetables you will use and cuts down on plastic packaging! In addition, loose fruit and vegetables tend to be fresher, allowing you to inspect their quality before buying.

Did you know?

The average family of 4 throws away £80 worth of food per month!



Meal planner

Use this meal planner to plan your weekly meals and ingredients, helping you to reduce food waste and buy only what you need.

Meals

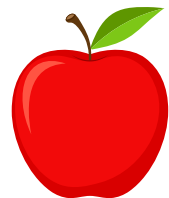
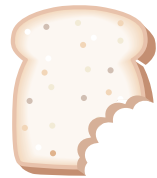
Groceries

Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Top 5 most wasted food items and how to avoid throwing them away

(According to Love Food Hate Waste)

- 1. Bananas** – To avoid wasting bananas, make sure you are storing them correctly. Storing bananas separately from each other will keep them fresher for longer. If your bananas have gone brown why not pop them in a smoothie or get baking and make banana muffins?
- 2. Potatoes** – Did you know storing potatoes with onions makes them sprout quicker? Always store your potatoes and onions separately (potatoes last even longer if you store them in the fridge). If your potatoes start to sprout, then remove them and use the potato as normal.
- 3. Bread** – We're all guilty of wasting bread. Why not try freezing your bread to extend its life? Once defrosted frozen bread tastes just as good as the fresh stuff, lots of toasters even have a defrost setting so you can defrost your bread and cook your toast at the same time.
- 4. Cheese** – If your cheese is mouldy just scrape it off and use the rest in cooking. Cheese sauce is easy, just make a béchamel and add leftover scraps of any cheese - essential for lasagne, macaroni or cauliflower cheese and lots of other favourites. Finally, most cheese can be grated and frozen too.
- 5. Apples** – The best way to store apples is in a cold dark place. Make sure they aren't touching each other as this makes them go off quicker. If you have lots of apples on the turn why not consider using them to make an apple crumble?





Keep food fresher for longer

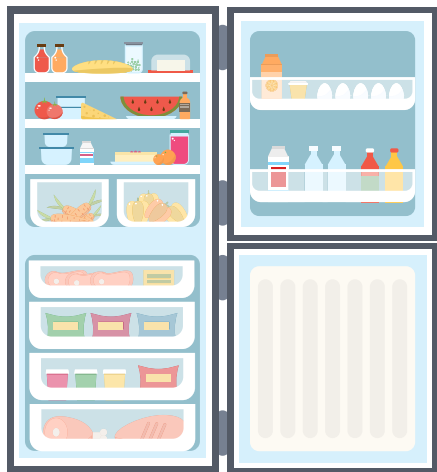
One of our favourite tips for keeping food fresher for longer is to make sure you are storing it correctly. When you buy food at the supermarket check the packaging to see how it should be stored for maximum freshness. More information can also be found on the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) website.

Did you know for your fridge to work effectively it should be at 5 degrees Celsius or below? From time to time, you should check your fridge's built-in thermometer against a freestanding one to ensure accuracy.

As with your fridge, your freezer needs to be at the right temperature to work effectively. Your freezer should be set at -18 degrees Celsius or below.

Here are our top 10 tips for freezing food

- * Make sure food is cooled before freezing to avoid increasing the temperature of the freezer and causing other foods to defrost.
- * **Freeze food in manageable portions so that they can be used according to need - label them so they can be easily identified, and include the date of freezing.**
- * Defrost food in the fridge and use within two days or according to the instructions – you may be able to use a microwave on the ‘defrost’ setting immediately before cooking and follow the microwave manufacturer’s instructions.
- * **Do not refreeze food unless it’s been cooked in between, for example, mince for Bolognese – cooking will kill off any bacteria.**
- * Wrap your food properly to avoid freezer burn which happens when food loses moisture in the freezer – use sealed containers so that this occurs more slowly, this also limits the amount of single-use plastic used and makes it easier to store more effectively.
- * **Freeze food at its prime not when it’s old to avoid wastage.**
- * A full freezer is more economical to run, it may be worth using everyday items such as frozen peas or other vegetables to fill the space.
- * **Defrost your freezer regularly so it works effectively – whilst defrosting, place the frozen food in the fridge where most things will remain frozen for up to two hours. You may need to consider other options for ice cream or similar items.**
- * If you have a power cut try not to open the freezer door – food should stay frozen for up to 24 hours.
- * **Keep your freezer organised – this will allow you to see exactly what you have in there and allow you to plan meals around it, saving you some money on your shopping too!**



Myth busting

Myth 1: Reheating rice is unsafe.

Many people think reheating rice is dangerous, but that's not true if you do it right. The problem is not reheating but how you store rice before reheating it.

Here's how to do it safely:

- **Cool It Fast:** After cooking, cool the rice quickly. Don't leave it out for more than an hour.
- **Fridge Storage:** Put the cooled rice in the fridge and eat it within one day.
- **Heat It Well:** When reheating, make sure the rice is steaming hot all the way through.

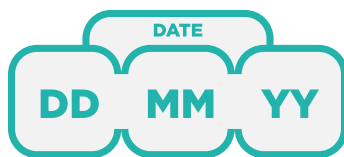
Follow these steps, and reheated rice will be safe and tasty.



Myth 2: "Use by" and "sell by" dates mean the same thing

There's a lot of confusion about the dates on food packages. Here's what they really mean:

- **Use By Date:** This is the most important date for safety. It's for things like meat, dairy, and salads. Don't eat these foods after this date because they might make you sick.
- **Sell By Date:** This date is for stores. It tells them how long to keep the food on the shelves. It's not about safety.
- **Best Before Date:** This date is about quality, not safety. Food might not taste as good after this date, but it's usually still safe to eat.
- **Knowing what these dates mean helps you decide if food is still good to eat and reduces waste.**



Myth 3: Frozen vegetables are less nutritious

The truth is that frozen vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh ones. Here's why:

- **Quick Freezing:** Vegetables meant for freezing are picked at their peak ripeness, when they are most nutritious. They are then quickly frozen, which locks in their vitamins and minerals.
- **Nutrient Retention:** The freezing process helps retain nutrients. Fresh vegetables can lose some of their nutrients during transportation and storage, especially if they are not consumed soon after harvesting.



Myth 4: You must peel potatoes and vegetables

Many people believe that potatoes and vegetables must be peeled to be clean and safe to eat. However, this isn't the case:

- **Proper Washing:** Thoroughly washing your vegetables under running water can remove dirt, bacteria, and pesticides from the surface. Using a vegetable brush can help with tougher skins.
- **Nutrient-Rich:** The skins of many vegetables, including potatoes, carrots, and cucumbers, are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibre. For example, potato skins contain a significant amount of fibre, potassium, and vitamin C.



Myth 5: Defrosting frozen meat is complicated and unsafe

Some people believe that defrosting meat is difficult and increases the risk of foodborne illnesses. However, proper thawing methods make this process simple and safe:



- **Refrigerator Thawing:** The safest way to thaw meat is in the refrigerator. This method takes longer but keeps the meat at a safe temperature throughout the process.
- **Cold Water Thawing:** For faster thawing, place the meat in a leak-proof plastic bag and submerge it in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes to keep it cold.
- **Microwave Thawing:** You can also thaw meat in the microwave if you plan to cook it immediately afterwards.

Myth 6: composting is the best solution for food waste

While composting is a great way to deal with food waste, there are even better ways to reduce your food waste before composting! For example, use the tips in this booklet to prevent food waste, donate unopened foods to a food bank or neighbour, or even feed leftovers to pets or wildlife (just be sure to check that it's safe for them to eat first!).



Apps to help you fight food waste

Get digital with your food waste prevention and make use of some of the most popular food sharing apps:

- **OLIO:** OLIO lets people share leftover food and household items with neighbours. This includes food reaching its expiration in stores, home-grown vegetables, bread, or items from your fridge before you go away.
- **Too Good To Go:** Too Good To Go reduces food waste by offering unsold food from supermarkets, cafes, and restaurants at big discounts. You choose a place and time, and get a surprise 'magic bag' of food for about a third of its regular price.
- **Karma:** Karma helps users buy fresh food that restaurants, cafes, and wholesalers would otherwise throw away. Like Too Good To Go, it offers discounted food (up to 50% off), but you can select what you want so you know exactly what you're getting.
- **BBC Good Food:** The BBC Good Food app has lots of easy recipes for using leftovers, so you can avoid wasting food and make the most of what's in your fridge.



Leftover recipes

Banana Bread

Use up over ripe bananas with this delicious banana bread recipe.

Ingredients

- 140g butter, softened, plus extra for the tin
- 140g caster sugar
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 140g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 very ripe bananas, mashed
- 50g icing sugar
- Handful of dried banana chips, for decoration

Recipe

1. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.
2. Butter a 2lb loaf tin and line the base and sides with baking parchment.
3. Cream 140g softened butter and 140g caster sugar until light and fluffy, then slowly add 2 beaten large eggs with a little of the 140g flour.
4. Fold in the remaining flour, 1 tsp baking powder and 2 mashed bananas.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for about 50 mins, or until cooked through. Check the loaf at 5-min intervals from around 30-40 mins in the oven by testing it with a skewer (it should be able to be inserted and removed cleanly), as the time may vary depending on the shape of your loaf tin.
6. Cool in the tin for 10 mins, then remove to a wire rack.
7. Mix 50g icing sugar with 2-3 tsp water to make a runny icing.
8. Drizzle the icing across the top of the cake and decorate with a handful of banana chips.



Potato Curry

Use up excess potatoes with this vibrant potato curry.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp brown or black mustard seeds
- 3 long dried red Indian chillies
- 12-15 curry leaves
- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 500g tomatoes, quartered
- 800g potatoes, peeled and cut into very large chunks
- 400g can of coconut milk
- Chapatis, rotis or naan bread, to serve

Recipe

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the mustard seeds, chillies and curry leaves until the seeds start to pop. Add the onions and fry until softened and starting to brown. Stir in the spices, add the tomatoes and fry for 5 mins. Add the potatoes and stir to coat. Pour in the coconut milk with 200ml water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20-25 mins, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are just tender.
2. If the curry looks a little too saucy, scoop out the potatoes with a slotted spoon into another dish, then boil the sauce until reduced a little. Stir the potatoes back in to heat through, and season well (this curry needs a good sprinkling of salt).
3. Serve with warmed bread.



Bread Pudding

Use up spare bread with this simple bread pudding recipe.

Ingredients

- 500g white or wholemeal bread
- 500g mixed dried fruit
- 85g mixed peel
- 1½ tbsp mixed spice
- 600ml milk
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 140g light muscovado sugar
- Zest 1 lemon (optional)
- 100g butter, melted
- 2 tbsp brown sugar

Recipe

1. Tear 500g white or wholemeal bread into a large mixing bowl and add 500g mixed dried fruit, 85g mixed peel and 1 ½ tbsp mixed spice.
2. Pour in 600ml milk, then stir or scrunch through your fingers to mix everything well and completely break up the bread.
3. Add 2 beaten large eggs, 140g brown sugar and zest of 1 lemon, if using. Stir well, then set aside for 15 mins to soak.
4. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter and line the base of a 20cm non-stick square cake tin (not one with a loose base).
5. Stir the melted butter into the pudding mixture, tip into the tin, then scatter with demerara.
6. Bake for 1½ hrs until firm and golden, covering with foil if it starts to brown too much. Turn out of the tin and strip off the paper. Cut into squares and serve warm.



Macaroni Cheese

Use up leftover cheese with this creamy mac and cheese.

Ingredients

- 350g pasta shapes
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tsp mustard powder
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper (optional)
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 500ml milk
- 250g mix of cheeses you have around, plus extra hard cheese for the topping

Recipe

1. Cook the pasta according to pack instructions, drain and set aside.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the garlic and cook for a min until softened, then add the mustard powder and cayenne pepper and cook for 1 min more. Add the flour and stir to make a paste, cooking for about 1 min, until the mix starts to bubble a little. Take off the heat and gradually pour in the milk, whisking with every addition so the sauce doesn't go lumpy. Return to the heat and cook for 5 mins until thickened, then add the cheeses, stir until melted, and fold in the pasta.
3. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Tip the pasta into a baking dish, and top with additional cheese, preferably some hard cheese such as cheddar or parmesan, then bake for 25-30 mins, until golden and bubbling.
4. Allow to cool for 10 mins or so then serve.



Egg fried (leftover) rice

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp groundnut oil
- 3 free-range eggs, beaten
- 400g/14oz cooked long-grain rice, chilled until completely cold (perfect for leftover rice)
- ½ small head of broccoli, cut into small florets
- 1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
- 3 tomatoes, sliced
- 3 tbsp light soy sauce
- Freshly ground black pepper (or pinch of white pepper)
- 1 large spring onion, finely sliced

Recipe

1. Heat a wok until smoking and add half the groundnut oil, then add the eggs and scramble for 1-2 minutes. Transfer the scrambled eggs to a warm plate and set aside. Wipe away the excess oil from the wok.
2. Reheat the wok and add the remaining groundnut oil. When the work is hot, add the broccoli florets and carrot and stir-fry for 3 minutes until tender, but still crunchy. Add the cooked rice and stir well to break up the grains, then add the tomatoes and stir fry for 1-2 minutes.
3. Return the egg to the wok with the rice and vegetables and season, to taste, with the soy sauce, sesame oil and pepper. Stir in the sliced spring onion.
4. Pile the rice onto a plate and serve immediately.



Apple pie

Use up your apples with this homemade apple pie recipe.

Ingredients

For the filling:

- 1kg Bramley apples
- 140g golden caster sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 3 tbsp flour

For the pastry:

- 225g butter, room temperature
- 50g golden caster sugar, plus extra
- 2 eggs
- 350g plain flour, preferably organic
- softly whipped cream, to serve

Recipe

1. Put a layer of paper towels on a large baking sheet. Quarter, core, peel and slice the apples about 5mm thick and lay evenly on the baking sheet. Put paper towels on top and set aside while you make and chill the pastry.
2. For the pastry, beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl until just mixed. Break in a whole egg and a yolk (keep the white for glazing later). Beat together for just under 1 min – it will look a bit like scrambled egg. Now work in the flour with a wooden spoon, a third at a time, until it's beginning to clump up, then finish gathering it together with your hands. Gently work the dough into a ball, wrap in cling film, and chill for 45 mins. Now mix the 140g/5oz sugar, the cinnamon and flour for the filling in a bowl that is large enough to take the apples later.
3. After the pastry has chilled, heat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Lightly beat the egg white with a fork. Cut off a third of the pastry and keep it wrapped while you roll out the rest, and use this to line a pie tin – 20-22cm round and 4cm deep – leaving a slight overhang. Roll the remaining third into a circle about 28cm in diameter. Pat the apples dry with kitchen paper, and tip them into the bowl with the cinnamon-sugar mix. Give a quick mix with your hands and immediately pile high into the pastry-lined tin.

4. Brush a little water around the pastry rim and lay the pastry lid over the apples pressing the edges together to seal. Trim the edge with a sharp knife and make 5 little slashes on top of the lid for the steam to escape. (Can be frozen at this stage.) Brush it all with the egg white and sprinkle with caster sugar. Bake for 40-45 mins, until golden, then remove and let it sit for 5-10 mins. Sprinkle with more sugar and serve while still warm from the oven with softly whipped cream.



Scan for more leftover recipes



Leftovers recipes | [BBC Good Food](#)

Food Waste Recipes | [LoveFoodHateWaste.com](#)



Waste prevention blog | [West Sussex County Council](#)

UKHarvest food rescue and education charity



Fight Against Food Waste | [West Sussex County Council](#)