

Reducing Food Waste: Facts and Solutions

Food Waste Facts and Figures

Nearly 40% of all food in the United States goes uneaten, reaching a value of \$444 billion. Much of this occurs at the consumer level and is due to issues such as food spoilage, oversized portions, transportation failures and packaging breaches.

A 2023 [meta-analysis](#) conducted through Cornell University reveals that most consumers attribute food waste from products in the refrigerator to the 'food product was no longer edible' (51%), 'too much was prepared' (44%), and/or 'the food product was forgotten' (40%). This food waste comes at a price for consumers. A [study](#) published in the *Nutrition Journal* finds that the average American consumer spends roughly \$1,500 per year on food that ends up being wasted. Spoilage, buying more than needed, expiration, and over and/or under ripened produce top the list of reasons why consumers say they waste food, according to a 2022 study conducted by the American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI).

The cost of food waste goes beyond consumers' wallets and impacts our environment. Food that goes into landfills produces a greenhouse gas known as methane, which is a major contributor to climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency reports that food waste is [responsible](#) for 58% of fugitive methane gas emissions among solid material landfills. The [World Wildlife Fund](#) estimates that 6-8% of greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced if food waste were eliminated.

Solutions to Help Reduce Food Waste

Most consumers say that buying frozen food is a good way to limit food waste; [Rosanne Rust](#), an internationally recognized nutrition expert, registered dietitian, and author, agrees. "Freezing is a food waste solution that offers year-round quality and availability. It's also a preferred method of food preservation because it maintains the integrity, nutritional value, and freshness of foods."

Consumers also say buying frozen food saves them money. The 2022 AFFI study finds the [majority](#) (90%) of shoppers say frozen ingredients allow them to have more food on hand without the worry of it spoiling before use. Because of its longer shelf life and the ability to prepare only what you need, frozen foods save money, can stay in the freezer when plans to prepare a meal go awry, and reduce risk of unused leftovers.

There are many [ways to reduce food waste](#). Following are five easy tips that will cut down on wasted foods while saving time and money:

- **Create a weekly meal plan** and make a grocery list.
- **Include frozen foods on your grocery list.** Frozen entrees and sides make main meals convenient and easy; ingredients such as frozen vegetables ensure you have the essentials on hand. Frozen foods have a long shelf life.
- **Store food properly** to maximize its life.
- If suitable, **freeze unused foods.** Freezing is a natural and easy way to preserve food.
- **Implement good inventory management** to avoid spoiled food, such as regularly keeping stock of upcoming expiration dates and planning your meals accordingly. This includes taking stock of your frozen foods also and planning to incorporate them into your meals.

Taking simple measures such as those outlined above will help reduce food waste and mitigate its economic and environmental impact.

