

Six ways to waste less food and save money

(NaturalNews) Several decades ago, wasting food was once considered a serious no-no. Now, homeless or jobless dumpster divers forage for edible foods behind restaurants and grocery stores. And they manage to salvage food that is not completely spoiled.

Today, there's a tendency to allow for more wastefulness with all the fast foods grabbed on the run. Add poor home kitchen management and careless shopping to keep the wasted edible food volume on par with our national food waste level of 27 percent.

Of course, that high percentage of wasted food does include waste that's beyond our individual responsibility. Big Ag mega-corporations, super market chains, and restaurants handle food distribution without much regard for waste while many go hungry.

But we can opt out of excess food waste for solely selfish purposes. It's to our benefit to "waste not want not" with the costs of food continually rising. We need to have our food dollars count, especially those of us who shop for mostly organic foods.

Six easy ways to not waste food and stretch your food dollars

(1) Never buy more than you can prepare or eat before spoilage occurs. Large bags of potatoes, avocados, and citrus fruits may be cheaper than buying them individually, but if you cannot consume them all before some spoil, you'll wind up tossing enough to nullify your savings.

For example, when potatoes start sprouting or turning green, they're becoming toxic. Buy them in small enough quantities to be eaten and/or make sure they're stored in a cool, dark space.

(2) This relates to the previous item: Try to buy produce that hasn't been shipped from long distances and/or stored in warehouses for long periods of time. You can figure out which stores sell produce like that by how quickly it goes bad.

You may have to make more shopping stops or trips, but visiting nice organic food stores is more pleasant than shopping at Walmart or most average supermarkets. An ideal option would be buying from local farmer's markets. Another would be gardening as much of your produce as possible.

(3) Reading ingredient labels is important, and so is noticing the dates on perishables, especially dairy. Those usually have "sell by" date or just a date. If the date stamped is vague, ask a store clerk or manager what it designates.

Purchase according to how long you intend to keep the product in your fridge, but realize that it will often keep for a few to several days in the refrigerator after that date.

(4) Be conscious of what you have in your kitchen, and schedule preparation or consumption accordingly. For instance, some apples, lemons, other citrus fruits, avocados, and bananas will show spots starting to go bad before others that were recently purchased. Notice them and consume those first.

Certain fresh veggies don't hold up as well as others. Chard, lettuce, and spinach fade faster than broccoli, cauliflower, and kale. Use the fast fading ones sooner and the others later.

(5) Be creative with foods on the verge of spoiling. For example, a bunch of kale was never used as intended and it's starting to wilt. Use it with carrots and apples in your juicer. Bananas going too soft can be used in smoothies or for making banana bread. Those are just two examples. Look up some recipes online.

(6) Ditch the plastic bags as soon as you get home from shopping, or don't bother using them at all. Use paper bags, no bags, or those re-usable mesh bags sold in some grocery stores and online.

If you want details on storing specific veggies and fruits, go here: (<http://www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com>)

Sources for this article include:

<http://www.organicauthority.com>

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

<http://www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com>