

Cut Down Food Waste While

Maintaining Food Safety



Food waste disposed of at landfills not only depletes our valuable land resources, but also releases a potent greenhouse gas called methane to the atmosphere as it decomposes. Methane contributes to global warming and climate change. In recent years, there is an international consensus that a sustainable food system is indispensable to achieve climate objectives like reducing carbon emission, thereby facilitating the progress towards carbon neutrality.



Buying too much



Improper storage



Overproduction



Confusing food labels



**Best before
20.10.22**

Common causes of food waste



Reducing food waste and practising food safety are never mutually exclusive. In fact, proper handling of food can maximise its shelf-life and avoid spoilage. All of us can therefore participate to help cut down food wastage and achieve carbon neutrality at no cost of food safety. Here are some practical tips that you could follow:

Plan meals ahead

- Upon grocery shopping, get into the habit of checking what you already have at home. Make a shopping list to avoid buying duplicates and over-purchasing, and stick to your shopping plan.
- Follow the 'first-in-first-out' principle and consume foods that are approaching their use by dates and other fresh foods that can go off over time and try to use them up first.

Use by and best before dates

A use by date on food is about safety. This is the most important date to remember. You can eat food until and on the use by date but not after. You will see use by dates on food that go off quickly, such as meat products or ready-to-eat salads. For the use by date to be a valid guide, you must carefully follow storage instructions. After the use by date, do not eat your food, which could be unsafe to eat or drink, even if it has been stored correctly and looks and smells fine.

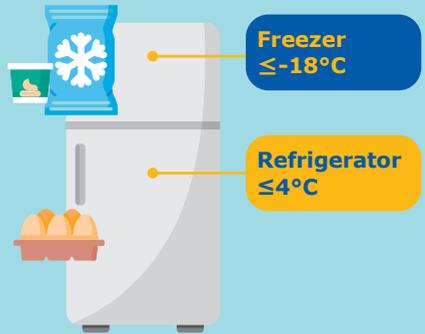


A best before date, on the other hand, is about quality but not safety. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best. Its flavour and texture might not be as good. Best before dates appear on a wide range of foods including frozen foods, dried foods and canned foods. The best before date will only be accurate if the food is stored according to the instructions on the packaging.



Store and handle food correctly

- Keeping food stocks under proper storage condition can secure food quality and safety. For example, refrigerated and frozen food should be stored at 4°C or below and at -18°C or below respectively.
- Once food has been defrosted, use it within 24 hours and cook it until steaming hot before serving.
- Check packet instructions to ensure that foods are suitable for freezing, especially for ready-to-eat foods.



Store leftovers correctly

- To minimise spoilage, leftovers should be kept in clean and airtight containers, and refrigerated within two hours of finishing preparation.
- All leftovers should be reheated thoroughly with the core temperature of food reaching at least 75°C.



Charity food banks and community kitchens

- If you are supplying people with packaged food from food banks, remember to check and follow the use by dates.
- To make better use of surplus food resources for organisations that conducts food recovery programmes, the Centre for Food Safety has issued 'Food Safety Guidelines for Food Recovery' to assist these organisations in ensuring food safety while recovering food for the people in need.



The cost of throwing away food can add up quickly, both in terms of the money you wasted and the damage this has on the environment. With these tips above, and a bit of clever planning, you can help strive towards carbon neutrality while reducing food waste and maintaining food safety.