

Reducing Food Waste: Repurposing leftovers

American households throw away approximately 27 million metric tons of food each year, with fruits and vegetables making up nearly half of that waste (1). Lessening the number of products that end up in landfills is not only beneficial for the environment, its beneficial for family budgets. While planning ahead and utilizing ingredients efficiently is an effective method for reducing waste, it is not fail-safe. Wondering what to do with that leftover pasta or wilted produce in the fridge? You have come to the right place. Below are a few tips on getting the most use out of food items that have seen better days.

Tip 1:

Get Creative with Veggies

Vegetables can still be utilized even if they look a little past their prime. Check for obvious signs of spoilage. Items that are wilted but free of slime or mold can still be used.

- For wilted greens, try blending with nuts, Romano, and oil to make a pesto.
- Limp veggies can be used in stir-fry, to make soup stock, and thrown in smoothies/vegetable juices.
- Try roasting sturdier vegetables like carrots and potato with oil and herbs for a flavorful side dish
- Lastly, try pickling. Asparagus tips, kale stems, celery, onions, carrots, cauliflower, and cucumbers are all great options.

Recipe: Quick Pickled Onions

1/2 cup apple cider vinegar

1/2 cup water

2 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon salt

1 red onion, sliced

Directions:

Whisk together vinegar, water, salt and sugar until all ingredients are fully dissolved. Add sliced onion and refrigerate for at least one hour prior to serving. Enjoy on eggs, in salads, or on sandwiches/wraps.

Recipe source: <https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/quick-pickled-onions>



Image source: Flickr/Nathanael Coyne.

Tip 2:

Rethink your fruit

Overly-ripened fruit (not yet spoiled) might not be the most appetizing due to the softened texture and increased sweetness, however these items work well for a number of recipes. Try

- Try replacing the sweetener in baked goods or smoothies with ripened bananas, berries, or peaches
- Try using mushy fruits be made into jams, fruit syrups, or compotes.
- For a more savory take, try blending with vinegar and oil for salad dressing (think: berry vinaigrette) or mixing with herbs and freezing into ice-cube trays to flavor water.

Tip 3:

Repurpose that Pasta

As the saying goes, even the best laid plans can go awry. Sometimes a meal doesn't go over quite as well as anticipated. Do not fret! Many leftovers can be repurposed into something completely new. Lackluster protein? Try shredding chicken for enchilada or taco filling. Add leftover proteins to grains or greens to make a grain bowl or a quick salad. Add to soups. Make a pizza crust, casserole, or frittata, with leftover pasta.

Rethink your fruit

Overly-ripened fruit (not yet spoiled) might not be the most appetizing due to the softened texture and increased sweetness, however these items work well for a number of recipes including: crumbles, fruit pies, breads, jams, smoothies, fruit syrups, and compotes. For a more savory take, try blending with vinegar and oil for salad dressing (think: berry vinaigrette) or mixing with herbs and freezing in ice-cubes to flavor water.

1. Source: <https://www.statista.com/topics/1623/food-waste>

Recipe of the Month

The trickiest part of building a healthy salad is often the dressing. Store bought dressings can be high in sodium or full of added sugars. Play with your other salad ingredients to determine the best dressing. For example, if you already topped your salad with a flavorful, marinated chicken, you may only need a drizzle of olive oil.

Tip: Use a spoon for drizzling dressing on your salad. When we pour from a larger bottle or jar it can be easy to add too much, and a little goes a long way!

Recipe of the Month: Ultimate Autumn Salad

Adapted from

Ingredients

- 1 small butternut squash
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 1 bunch chopped kale (about 6 cups)
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 1/2 cups cooked farro
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 2 cups chopped apples (about 2-3 apples)
- 4 ounces shredded Pecorino-Romano cheese
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons shallots

Directions:

1. Peel, scoop out seeds, and cube butternut squash. Toss in 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon ground pepper. Spread on baking sheet and roast for 30 minutes at 400, or until squash is tender and golden brown.
2. In a medium skillet over medium heat, toast walnuts until golden brown and fragrant.
3. Combine kale, farro, apples, squash, walnuts, cheese, and cranberries in a bowl.
4. For the dressing, whisk 1 tablespoon olive oil, orange juice, mustard, shallot, 1/4 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp pepper in a bowl until fully combined. Serve salad and drizzle dressing as desired.



Nutrition Facts

servings per container
Serving size (228g)

Amount per serving
Calories **420**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 23g **29%**

Saturated Fat 6g **30%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 5mg **2%**

Sodium 520mg **23%**

Total Carbohydrate 49g **18%**

Dietary Fiber 4g **14%**

Total Sugars 15g

Includes 0g Added Sugars **0%**

Protein 15g

Vitamin D 0mcg **0%**

Calcium 295mg **25%**

Iron 1mg **6%**

Potassium 385mg **8%**

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.