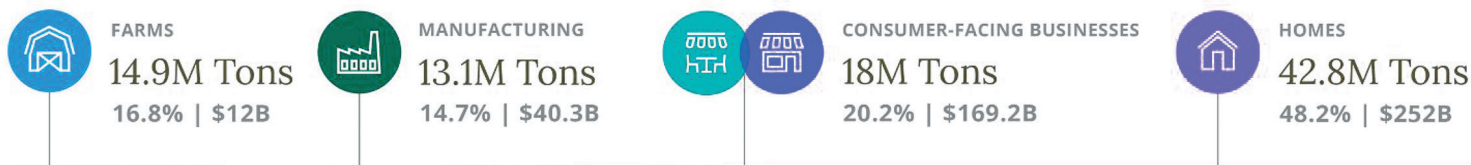


WHY WORRY ABOUT WASTED FOOD?

Because in the United States the scale of food waste is staggering, with significant consequences for people, the planet, and the economy. Reducing food waste at home is an essential step in mitigating these impacts.

THE IMPACTS OF FOOD WASTE

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, about 40 percent of food in the U.S. is wasted every year — that's equal to about 130 billion pounds of food worth more than \$160 billion. This massive waste happens at various stages, from production to consumption, but surprisingly, households remain the largest contributors (see graphic from ReFED below). The Natural Resources Defense Council has reported that the average American family of four throws away between \$1,500 and \$2,200 worth of food annually.



Source: Food Waste Problem | ReFED (2023)

PRACTICAL STEPS TO REDUCE WASTED FOOD AT HOME

Reducing food waste at home doesn't require drastic lifestyle changes. By making small shifts in how you shop for, prepare, and store food, you can toss less, eat well, save money, and reduce your environmental and climate footprint. Here are some effective strategies to get started:

USE LEFTOVERS CREATIVELY

Transform leftovers into new meals and creative treats instead of discarding them. Soups, grain bowls, smoothies — and even croquettes — are excellent ways to use up ingredients that might otherwise go to waste.

SHOP WITH MEALS IN MIND

Before heading to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week and create a shopping list. This helps avoid impulse buys as it directs your purchases toward what you need. Consider the portions and the ingredients you already have at home.

STORE FOOD PROPERLY

Proper storage can significantly extend the shelf life of your food. Learn the best ways to store produce and other food items, and don't forget to use your freezer strategically to make sure food doesn't end up in the compost.

UNDERSTAND FOOD LABELS

"Sell by," "use by," and "best by" dates can be confusing. Most often, these dates are indicators of quality rather than safety. Use your judgment and know that many foods are still safe to consume after these dates.

COMPOST

For inedible food scraps and unavoidable food waste, make sure you toss the packaging (including those pesky produce stickers) and put the food scraps in the compost bin. Keeping our compost clean is essential to providing farmers with a nutrient-rich soil amendment that is free of plastic and other debris.

STOP WASTE
at home • at work • at school

For more tips, resources, and recipes to help reduce wasted food at home, including how to upcycle ingredients to make delicious dishes, visit Stopfoodwaste.org (a project of StopWaste).