

# Food waste tips for the home

Did you know that in the UK we throw away the equivalent of 24 meals a month?<sup>1</sup>  
Or that nearly a fifth of household waste is packaging?<sup>2</sup>

The good news is there are some simple steps we can take to minimise the amount of food waste and packaging we produce – just remember the 3Rs. Here are some ideas to share with your family:

## Reduce

- ▶ Help plan family meals so food gets used up in time.
- ▶ Freeze extra food (e.g. bread and meat – even cheese and butter can be frozen).
- ▶ Buy fruit and veg loose, rather than in lots of unnecessary packaging.
- ▶ Don't put too much on your plate – you can always have seconds!
- ▶ Eat leftovers the next day or freeze portions to have another day.

## Reuse

- ▶ Become a wizard at using leftovers – see our [Waste tips for the home factsheet](#), which has some leftover recipe ideas.
- ▶ Reuse plastic bags – not just for shopping, but also muddy football boots, covering school bags in the rain, etc!
- ▶ Jam jars don't have to be thrown straight into the recycling bin; they can be turned into containers for raisins and other foods, vases for flowers or holders for tea lights.

## Recycle

- ▶ Always check packaging before you throw it away to see if it can be recycled.
- ▶ Visit [recyclenow.com](http://recyclenow.com) to find out what your council collects and what recycling facilities you have locally.

- ▶ Stick the list of items you can recycle by the bin, so everyone in the family knows what packaging they shouldn't be throwing away.
- ▶ Have you heard of Terracycle? They specialise in recycling things that have traditionally been hard to recycle (e.g. biscuit wrappers, ballpoint pens and wet wipe packets). Visit [www.terracycle.co.uk/en-UK/](http://www.terracycle.co.uk/en-UK/) and they'll direct you to where you can recycle these tricky items near you.
- ▶ Consider composting, even if space is tight. It's a great way to get rid of things like teabags and veg scraps, and the result will be rich soil you can use for window boxes, if nothing else!



\*Sources: <sup>1</sup> <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/use-your-loaf-and-save-billions>; <sup>2</sup> <http://www.lesswaste.org.uk/reduce/think-packaging/>; <sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/29/uk-consumers-told-to-keep-apples-in-fridge-as-part-of-wider-labelling-shake-up>

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## Waste-free packed lunch ideas

The goal of a waste-free packed lunch is to avoid unnecessary packaging:

- ▶ Look for a lunch box with compartments – or use reusable containers / recyclable wrap to prevent food getting damaged.
- ▶ Use leftovers for lunch e.g. pesto pasta becomes pasta salad with the addition of some extras (e.g. olives, sweetcorn etc.).
- ▶ Avoid individual items (e.g. crisps, raisins, biscuits); instead, buy bigger packs and put a few in loose or in a reusable container.
- ▶ Instead of individual drinks cartons, use a reusable drinks bottle instead.
- ▶ Fruit is a zero-waste item, especially if the waste is composted afterwards!
- ▶ Put cream cheese, houmous and other dips into a reusable container and include some breadsticks for a DIY dipping snack.



Why not share your waste-free packed lunch ideas in a blog?

## Know your labels

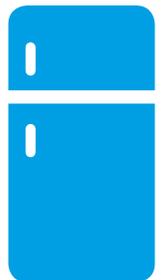
**Use by date** means that it's not safe to eat the food past this date – it could make you ill – **don't ignore it!**

**Best before date** means that the food will be at its tastiest and freshest before this date; but it's safe to eat it beyond this still.

The **snowflake logo** denotes food that can be frozen – handy if you're not going to eat it before the use by date.



**Little Blue Fridge icon** is a new label to remind shoppers to put these products in the fridge and make sure their fridge is below 5°C. Did you know that storing the right foods in the fridge can give them an extra three days' life<sup>3</sup>?



**Display until date** – If you see it, ignore it! The label tells shop staff when they need to remove a product from the shelves.

**Pssst... Why not play a game on your family and test them to see if they know what each icon represents? You might know more than they do!**