

Still Good to Eat:

A guide to reducing food waste at home & saving on your grocery bill



No Waste. No Hunger.

We have a food waste problem in Canada. It's a big one.

Nearly **60% of the food produced in Canada** is lost and wasted every single year. That's 35.5 million metric tonnes. Of that total amount, 32% (or 11.2 million metric tonnes) is avoidable.

If we rescued and redirected all of the avoidable food loss and waste in Canada, it would be enough to **feed every Canadian for almost five months**.

It's especially important that we pay attention to these figures when grocery and food prices continue to rise.

The average Canadian household wastes almost

\$2000

of food every year

Did you know that nearly 21% of avoidable food waste happens at a household level? In fact, the average Canadian household wastes nearly \$2,000 worth of food every year.



In this guide:

Demystifying best before dates

Best Before Dates are often misinterpreted as expiry dates, when in fact they are the manufacturer's best guess as to how long a food item will be at its peak quality.

Food storage tips and tricks

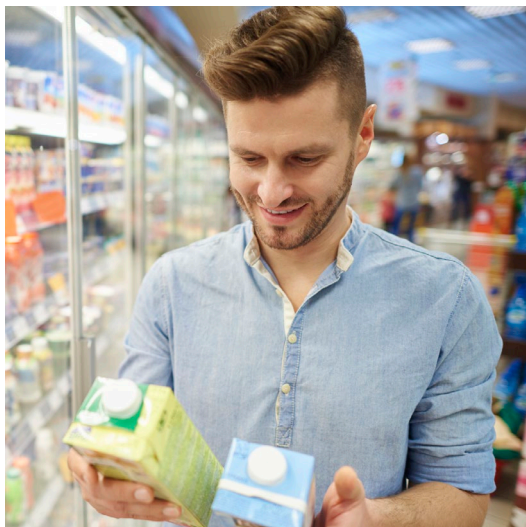
Extend the life of the food you love.

Tips for shopping on a budget

Food costs continue to rise and every dollar counts. Find out how you can reduce waste and lower your monthly grocery bill.

Demystifying best before dates

Let's take a look at the three most common myths about best before dates and debunk them.

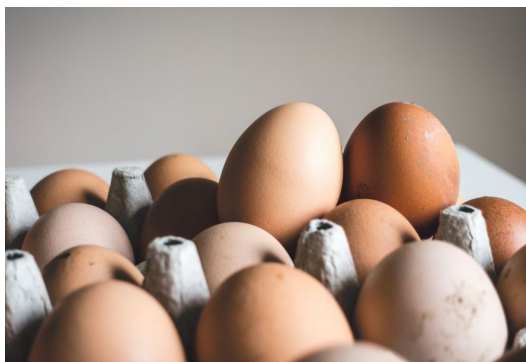


Myth #1 "Best-before dates and expiry dates are the same thing."

This is the biggest—and most persistent—myth out there. In Canada, there is a legal distinction between “best-before” and “expiry.” Only five types of food in Canada have true expiry dates. They are:

1. Baby formula
2. Meal replacements or supplement bars
3. Meal supplement drinks
4. Formulated liquid diets
5. Foods used in low-energy diets

Best before dates do not guarantee product safety they only give information about the freshness and potential shelf-life of the unopened food you are buying. "Best before" does not mean "bad after."



Myth #2 "I can't eat eggs or drink milk after the carton date."

Eggs and milk are safe to consume up to two weeks after their best before date. In fact, you can even freeze milk and get up to three extra months of use past its best before date.



Myth #3 "When in doubt, throw it out."





Trust your senses, and don't be afraid to give foods the sniff test before deciding they shouldn't be eaten. It's not safe to eat foods that smell bad or show signs of rot and mold. But in many cases, foods have a lot more life left than what we've been conditioned to believe.

Also, if your senses have told you food shouldn't be eaten, be sure to throw it in the compost instead of the garbage. Food that's left to rot in landfills has devastating environmental consequences.

Best Before Date Timetable

Most people confuse the terms "expiry date" and "best before date." This confusion continues to be a major source of avoidable food waste in Canada. Always use your senses to evaluate food quality if food is past the best before date.





BBD = Best Before Date

FOOD CATEGORY	ITEMS	CONSUME BY
PRODUCE 	Perishable fresh fruits and vegetables	No spoilage, blemishes, visible decay, mold or bio-degrading smell
	Shelf stable canned fruits and vegetables, pickles, sauces, or pastes	1 year past BBD
DAIRY 	Perishable milk (including dairy alternatives), butter, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, sour cream	2 weeks past BBD IF FROZEN 2-3 months past BBD
	Shelf stable evaporated, powdered, or milk alternatives	1 year past BBD
	Shelf stable baby formula, supplemental beverages (i.e.: Ensure)	Expiry date
MEAT & FISH / EGGS & SOY / LEGUMES / NUT PRODUCTS & NUTS 	Raw meat and fish	BBD or IF FROZEN : Beef, lamb, pork, whole poultry: 1 year past BBD Poultry pieces: 6 months past BBD Ground meat: 2-3 months past BBD Fish: 2-6 months past BBD
	Cooked luncheon meats, tofu, eggs	1 week past BBD
	Shelf stable canned meat, fish, beans, chickpeas, nuts, nut butter, peanut butter, seeds, spam	1 year past BBD
BREAD / CRACKERS & CEREAL / GRAIN 	Perishable bread, buns, bagels, pitas, tortillas, flat bread, na'an, matzah	No spoilage, blemishes, visible decay, mold or bio-degrading smell
	Dry, shelf stable cereal, crackers, flour, oats, pasta, rice, quinoa, meals or sides, energy bars	1 year past BBD
	Meal replacement or supplement bars	Expiry date

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FOOD CATEGORY	ITEMS	CONSUME BY
BAKED GOODS/ SNACKS / DESSERTS 	Perishable cakes, cookies, pies, danishes, chocolate, pudding	72 hours past BBD IF FROZEN 1 month past BBD
	Shelf stable cookies, chips, popcorn, bagged snacks, snack cakes, granola bars	1 year past BBD
PREPARED 	Pre-cooked or ready-to-eat meals; deli salads, pizza, sandwiches	72 hours past BBD IF FROZEN 1 month past BBD
	Frozen dinners, microwavable meals	1 year past BBD
	Shelf stable canned soups, stews, meals	1 year past BBD
	Shelf stable baby food	1 year past BBD
CONDIMENTS 	Frozen sauces, gravies	6 months past BBD
	Shelf stable mustard, relish, ketchup, jam, margarine, mayonnaise, oil, salad dressing, vinegars, spices, sauces, toppings	1 year past BBD
BEVERAGES 	Juice, water, coconut water	3-6 months past BBD
	Other drinks; coffee, tea, sport or energy drinks, crystals	3-6 months past BBD

Food storage tips and tricks



Tomatoes

Freeze tomatoes whole and grate them into a pot when you are ready to use. You can also roast them with garlic and thyme then puree and freeze into portions.



Tofu

Cut in cubes, freeze and store. Alternatively, transfer into airtight containers and replace the water every few days.



Leafy Greens

Don't wash your greens until you are ready to use them. Wrap your leafy greens loosely in a tea towel and refrigerate.



Lemons/Limes

Wash, slice and lay on a tray to freeze. Once frozen, pack them into bags and store in the freezer. You can also dry your peels until they snap, then crush or grind into a powder for lemon zest.



Excess Fruit

Soft produce? Cut it up and freeze it in bags for smoothies or home-made ice cream.



Spinach

Chop up spinach and freeze it in ice cube trays to use in smoothies or to make a delicious spinach dip.



Half an Avocado

Do you want to save half an avocado for later? Submerge it in water and put it in the fridge until you are ready to eat it.



Odds and Ends

Don't throw away those odds and ends. Keep them in an airtight freezer bag and use them to make soup stock.



Left over herbs

Dry your herbs on a windowsill or on a baking sheet in the oven until dry and crush them up for quick seasoning.



Unused Milk

Make sauces like bechamel or white sauce and freeze in handy sizes so you can whip up a macaroni and cheese or lasagna with no hassle.



Green Onions

Place the root ends in water near plenty of light. Replace the water every other day and watch it grow!



Garlic

Purée and refrigerate or freeze and grate garlic until you're ready to use it. You can also sauté some olive oil and cook until soft, then place in a jar in the fridge for a spreadable treat!

Tips for shopping on a budget



Plan what you can

Choose the store that best fits your budget, travel and food needs. Make a list and buy only what you need.



Find sales and discounts

Price match or shop on student/senior discount days. Choose discounted items like imperfect produce and no-name brands.



Buy in bulk

Compare the “per 100g” price between two items to get more bang for your buck.



Buy in season

Fresh fruits and vegetables are cheaper when in season.



Consider canned and frozen

Canned fruits and vegetables are just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts. Plus, they're often packaged at peak ripeness.



Try plant-based proteins

Fibre and protein keep you feeling full longer and have a whole host of health benefits. Choose dried or canned lentils, pulses or beans. Nuts and seeds also have healthy fats and protein.



About Second Harvest

Second Harvest is Canada's largest food rescue organization and is a global thought leader on perishable food redistribution. We operate at the intersection of hunger relief and environmental protection, tackling food loss and waste through food redistribution, research, awareness, and education, continually innovating and collaborating to ensure a more sustainable planet. We work with thousands of food businesses from across the supply chain utilizing logistics and technology to reduce the amount of edible food going to waste, thereby diverting unnecessary greenhouse gases from entering the environment. Our inclusive model ensures this healthy surplus food is redirected to thousands of charities and non-profits across the country, providing millions of Canadians experiencing food insecurity access to the nourishment they need.

To make a donation or learn more about our impact, visit secondharvest.ca