

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.



Avoid Food Waste and Save Money

by Jennifer Kerr, MS, RD, CDN

Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is essential for good health, but many Americans are frustrated with the amount of food waste produced from their spoiled produce. If you notice that much of your fresh produce is spoiled before your family gets to eat it, you're not alone. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports that almost

32 tons of food is tossed out annually by Americans

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Report

Each U.S. family throws out 1.28 pounds of foods each day, that's 470 pounds in a year! This translates to hundreds of dollars lost!

Of course, to prevent food waste, you could practice menu planning, and only buy what your family will eat between grocery store trips. However, smart food storage is often a neglected tactic against food waste.

Storing fresh produce is not as simple as you think. Produce will stay fresh longer when stored in its preferred environment. Store your fresh produce as outline below.

STORE IN:

>> The Refrigerator

Apples (a week or more), apricots, artichokes, asparagus, beets, blueberries, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cantaloupe, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cherries, corn, grapes, green beans, green onions, herbs (not basil), honeydew, lima beans, leafy greens, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, okra, peas, radishes, raspberries, summer squash, zucchini

>> A Cool Dry Place

Acorn squash, butternut squash, onions, potatoes, pumpkins, spaghetti squash, sweet potatoes, winter squash

>> A Single Layer

Blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries

>> A Paper Bag

Mushrooms, okra

>> A Plastic Bag

Broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, corn, green onions, lettuce, peas, radishes

STORE ON:

>> The Countertop

Apples (less than a week), bananas, basil, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger, grapefruit, jicama, lemons, limes, mangoes, oranges, papayas, peppers, persimmons, pineapple, plantains, pomegranates, tomatoes, watermelon

RIPEN ON:

>> The Counter, then transfer to Refrigerator

Apples (less than a week), bananas, basil, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger, grapefruit, jicama, lemons, limes, mangoes, oranges, papayas, peppers, persimmons, pineapple, plantains, pomegranates, tomatoes, watermelon

MORE QUICK TIPS FOR STORING FRESH PRODUCE

Keep ethylene producers away from other fruits and vegetables

Once picked, fresh fruits and vegetables produce an odorless, harmless gas known as ethylene. All fruits and vegetables make ethylene, but some foods release larger quantities of it. When heavy ethylene-producing foods are kept in close proximity with others in a confined space, the gas will speed up the ripening process of the other produce. You can use this to your advantage if you want to speed up the ripening process of an unripe fruit, but if you want your ripe foods to last longer, keep them away from heavy ethylene-producers like, apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, cantaloupes, figs, honeydew, nectarines, onions, peaches, pears, plums, tomatoes.

Sources:

Fruits and Veggies More Matters

<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>