



HOW TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE *at* HOME

Waste and
Resource Recovery

CONTENTS

Summary	P. 2
Benefits	P. 2
Opportunities for Action	P. 3
A. Reduce And Reuse	P. 3
1. Shop smart to prevent food waste	
2. Storage tips to help food last its longest	
3. Understand date labels to avoid wasting food	
4. Don't toss food scraps	
B. Compost	P. 5
1. Participate in an LASAN Workshop	
2. Start a Worm Compost Bin	
3. Find a Composting Site Near You	
4. Spread the Word About Food Waste	
5. Walk the No Food Waste Talk	
6. Host a Composting Workshop	
Helpful Links	P. 7
Partner Organizations	P. 7



SUMMARY

In an average year, the U.S. wastes about 40% of food and a typical household wastes about \$1,500 per year on food that is never eaten! When this food ends up in landfills, it creates greenhouse gases that have a negative effect on the environment. **There are many ways to reduce our food waste, but the most effective way is to prevent creating the waste in the first place. Second to waste prevention comes reuse and composting.**

BENEFITS

- Save money on groceries through food waste prevention
- Help reduce our need for landfills
- Increase the health of our local soil by composting food scraps and returning nutrients back into the ground

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

REDUCE & REUSE

The most effective way to address food waste is to decrease it at the source, meaning prevent it from going to waste in the first place. Doing so reduces harmful emissions and saves you money in the long-run!



Shop smart to prevent food waste

- Plan your meals ahead of time: this can be as simple as deciding what to cook for dinner or make a full week's plan.
- Shop at home first: Check your pantry, refrigerator, and freezer, and then make a shopping list.
- Shop with a list: Shop with a list and a budget and stick to it! A good portion of our wasted food comes from impulse purchases that aren't built into a meal plan.



Storage tips to help food last its longest

- In the fridge: The bottom of your fridge tends to be the coldest and is good for meat; and the door is usually the warmest and is best for condiments. Vegetables tend to do best in a high-humidity crisper drawer and fruit in lower humidity.
- In the freezer: Frozen food will keep longer. Portion it out, label, and date your food so it is easy to serve later.
- On the counter and in the pantry: Some foods, like avocados, peaches, bananas, and tomatoes, fare better on the counter. Potatoes, onions, garlic, and squash are usually best stored in a cool cabinet or pantry.
- **Use these tools to learn more and further optimize the life of your food:**
 - [Deciphering food labels.](#)
 - [Interactive storage guide with tips, tricks, and information to keep food fresh.](#)
 - [Fruit and vegetable storage guide: 1 & 2.](#)



Understand date labels to avoid wasting food

- Food date labels (best by; use by; enjoy by) refer more to quality than food safety. It's the date before which the brand stands by its product (unless it has been opened or left out in improper storage conditions).
- The [USDA's free FoodKeeper App](#) will help you maximize the freshness and quality of food items. By doing so you will be able to keep items fresh longer (and out of the landfill) than if they were not stored properly. The FoodKeeper App was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Safety and Inspection Service, with Cornell University and the Food Marketing Institute. Look up specific foods and beverages.

Don't toss food scraps

- Learn to regrow vegetables and herbs from your kitchen scraps. Many common vegetables and herbs — such as green onions, lettuce, cilantro and other herbs — are able to sprout again right in your kitchen with the right care. [Visit this link](#) to learn more. To learn more about growing your own food, be sure to reference the [How to Grow Your Own Food action guide](#).



COMPOST

For food scraps you cannot reduce at the source or reuse, composting is nature's way of recycling these scraps back into our soil. During the composting process, bacteria, fungi, and other microbes feed on organic materials like leaves, garden trimmings, and food scraps, to break them down and turn it into **compost**. Compost is a dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling material that is a soil amendment rich in nutrients that are essential to plant growth and health.

Participate in an LASAN workshop

- Participate in free composting workshops provided by LA Sanitation & Environment (LASAN), or watch an educational video to hone your skills. To learn more go to [this site](#) or call Customer Care at (800) 773-2489.

- To prevent the spread of COVID-19, LASAN has suspended in-person workshops until further notice. LASAN has launched an educational video series on home composting:

Part 1: [Why Composting?](#)

Part 2: [Compostable Materials and Methods](#)

Part 3: [How to Compost](#)

Part 4: [How to Use Your Compost Citywide Food Waste Reduction Efforts](#)



Walk the no food waste talk

- Ensure your own Neighborhood Council events and meetings are zero waste events. [Here are some tips.](#)



Host a composting workshop

- Invite LASAN or non-profit organizations focused on composting, such as LA Compost, to one of your meetings to teach members about the various ways to compost at home.

DID YOU KNOW?

As part of L.A.'s Green New Deal, Mayor Eric Garcetti set targets to launch a citywide food scrap collection program and launch food scrap drop-off sites at all farmers markets in the city.

LA Sanitation and the Environment (LASAN) is working to implement both programs and in May 2019 launched Curb Your Food Waste LA, a food waste prevention and recycling pilot that includes approximately 18,000 households in 25 neighborhoods across the City of Los Angeles.

These households have been asked to place their food scraps into their green bins as a pilot. If you have not been notified as a Curb Your Food Waste LA pilot participant, please do not place food waste in your green bin at this time.

To learn more about LASAN's food waste efforts, visit www.lacitysan.org/organics.



Start a worm compost bin

- There are many ways to compost, including with worms! This method is great for apartment dwellers because you don't need too much space. You can store your food scraps in a small container in your freezer until they are ready to compost. This will ensure they do not go bad before they are composted. Visit the [Natural Resources Defense Council's site](#) to learn how to make your own worm bin.



Find a composting site near you

Don't have the space to start your own at home compost?

- Find a community composting drop-off near you.
- Store your food scraps in a small container in your freezer until they are ready to compost.
- Visit [LA Compost](#) to find a community composting site near you or visit [Make Soil](#) and [Share Waste](#) to find neighbors in your area that may be composting and looking for additional food scraps.



REMEMBER! You can always add an extra incentive for your Neighborhood Council events by including a tree, mulch, or compost giveaway at your event. Learn more about how to give away free mulch and trees at www.cityplants.org.

Spread the word about food waste

- Identify a Business Representative(s) to contact local businesses to raise awareness of food rescue opportunities. California state law and the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health allow the donation of surplus foods that are still fit for human consumption. Permitted food facilities such as restaurants, hotels, grocers, food processing facilities, food distributors, and caterers may donate¹ the following to nonprofits and directly to individuals:
 - Whole produce
 - Food prepared by a permitted food facility
 - Prepackaged food
- You can also help local businesses by putting together a list of local food rescue organizations and pantries that serve your neighborhood.
- Visit [LA City San](#) to identify the local waste hauler servicing businesses in your area. Contact their customer service line to learn more about their food rescue options.
- To learn more about how to help local businesses become more sustainable, be sure to reference the [Green Business action guide](#).

¹ Foods previously served to a consumer generally cannot be donated. Individuals and private households can donate uncooked, pre-packaged food products (e.g. canned food items, box cereals, etc.) to local nonprofit organizations.



DID YOU KNOW?

On January 1, 2018, California enacted the California Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (AB 1219), which provides liability protections for entities that make good faith donations of surplus food. The law clarifies and expands liability protections for donated surplus food by:

- Creating a more comprehensive list of entities covered by the law
- Explicitly stating that donation of past-date food is subject to liability protection
- Expanding liability protection to donations made by food facilities, which are subject to food safety regulations and regular inspections, directly to individuals for consumption (direct donations).



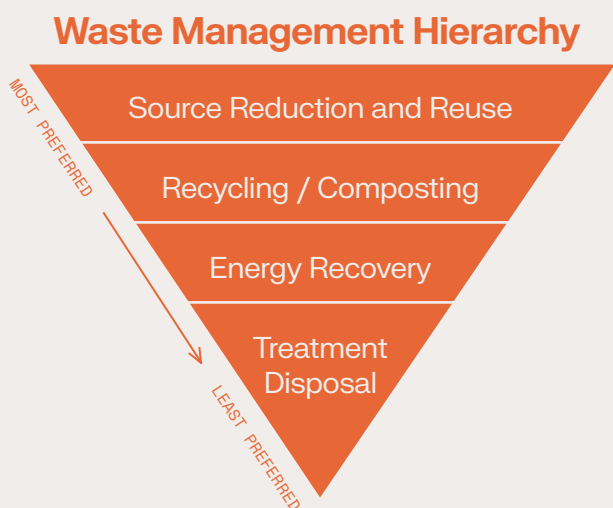
PARTNERS

Below are some LA-based organizations working to build a more resilient local food system by reducing food waste and diverting food scraps from landfills. If you know of other organizations that should be included, please email sustainability@lacity.org

HELPFUL LINKS

LA Food Policy Council guide:
[Reducing Food Waste: Recovering Untapped Resources in Our Food System](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Waste Management Hierarchy (shown below) ranks the various management strategies from most to least environmentally preferred. The hierarchy places emphasis on reducing and reusing first, followed by recycling/composting, as key to sustainable materials management.



LA Compost is a network of community composters maintaining compost hubs throughout LA County. Their team of educators and soil enthusiasts build and facilitate cohesive composting communities for individuals and communities in shared spaces. LA Compost is both the compost hub and the people that contribute to composting in LA. Visit [LA Compost](#) to learn more about composting.



Food Forward collects fresh fruits and vegetables that would normally go to waste from backyard fruit trees, public orchards, farmers markets, and the downtown Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market. One hundred percent of the produce recovered is donated to hunger-relief agencies across eight counties in Southern California. Have a backyard fruit tree with too much fruit? Visit [Food Forward](#) to donate your excess fruit.