



WAYS TO RECYCLE FOOD WASTE

Food loss and waste is a growing problem.

The amount of food Americans throw away each year is staggering.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates more food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other single material in our everyday trash, creating 24% of the amount dumped into landfills. What can you do with food waste instead?



VEGETABLE SCRAPS

1. Save carrot peels, potato skins and celery tops to add to a homemade stock or broth.
2. Make potato peel chips out of potato scraps.
3. Retain the seeds, pits and cuttings of your veggies and regrow them at home.
4. Save veggie peels for all-natural fabric dye. Use beet ends for reds and purples, red cabbage for blues, yellow onions for oranges and spinach for greens.
5. Place cucumber peels at entrance points in your home to deter ants.
6. Keep the green “trunks” of your broccoli. They make for a delicious soup.
7. Mince and freeze leftover herbs in oil or water before they go bad.
8. Don't throw away the delicious guts of your Halloween jack-o-lantern. Scoop out the insides and blend into pumpkin puree for pie.
9. Keep tomato peels, cores and juice. Turn them into a tomato sauce. Just blend and simmer with the oils and spices of your choice.
10. Reserve kale stalks for soups that call for chopped greens.



FRUIT SCRAPS

1. Make jam from apple peels and cores. You can also do this with strawberry tops and apricot peels.
2. Rub the soft side of a banana peel on the leaves of houseplants to shine them up and remove dust. This is great for plant health.
3. Make a homemade air freshener. Save leftover fruit scraps to boil in a little water. This will make your home smell sweet and fresh.
4. Dry lemon or orange peels, then add them to your homemade vinegar cleaning solution. The citrus oils will help dissolve grease and add some antibacterial power.
5. Drop a few banana peels into a bucket of water and let sit for a few days. This will become a potassium and phosphorus-rich “compost tea” for your garden and house plants.
6. Toss a couple of citrus peels down the garbage disposal to remove odor.

BREAD CRUSTS AND CRUMBS

1. Turn dried bread crusts into croutons and breadcrumbs.
2. Use a small, dried bread crust to soak up oils and scrub hardened food from your cast iron pans.
3. Add a bread heel to your brown sugar container to soften it and make it scoopable.
4. Save your cracker crumbs to top a casserole.

OTHER

1. Use fine coffee grounds as an exfoliant. Whip up a DIY face or body scrub.
2. Cook with old wine before you pour it down the drain.
3. Use dried-out cheese that has not yet gone bad to make macaroni and cheese.
4. Grind cleaned and cracked eggshells into a calcium powder for use in the garden or to remove limestone deposits in your bathroom.
5. Use tea bags twice. Add a couple of used teabags together and you'll have a tea strong enough to brew.

WASTED FOOD PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- **Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation** provides resources on commercial, industrial and residential composting.
- **Get Food Smart TN** is a statewide initiative whose mission is to promote using food wisely and to enhance the sustainability of Tennessee's food resources. Get Food Smart TN provides technical assistance and resources to consumers, restaurants, grocers, businesses, government entities, nonprofits and other entities to help combat food waste in Tennessee.



tn.gov/wfhtn
WFHT.TN@tn.gov