

Create an Eat First area

**TRASH
OR
CASH**

Choose cash over trash by using up the food you have. Making an Eat First area in your fridge will help you keep track of food that needs to be eaten quickly.

Use these labels on a bin or part of a fridge shelf to designate your Eat First area. Cut out the label that works best for you!



Label for an Eat First bin

Label for kids or creative types to color and customize

**EAT
FIRST**

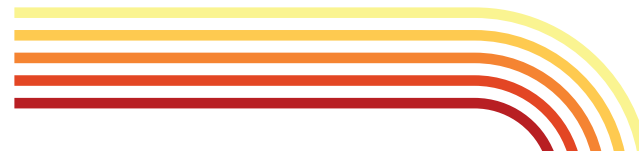
**TRASH
OR
CASH**

**EAT
FIRST**

Label for a fridge shelf



EAT FIRST





When you waste food, you waste money. Choose cash over trash by making simple changes to how you plan, store, and cook.

Learn why food went to waste

When you clean out your fridge, make note of what food you toss and why.

Today's date: _____

1. Look in your fridge and remove all items that are spoiled or not edible.
2. Check off the types of food you pulled out to toss:
 - ☐ Vegetables
 - ☐ Fruit
 - ☐ Dairy
 - ☐ Eggs
 - ☐ Meat and fish
 - ☐ Leftovers
 - ☐ Bread, tortillas, or other grains
 - ☐ Sauces, dips, or canned goods
 - ☐ Other: _____

Optionally, include details about specific items you tossed:

3. Check off reason(s) why food items went to waste, then discover ways to tweak your habits to save money and enjoy your food.

Reason for wasted food	How to save
<input type="checkbox"/> Forgot about it	Figure out a way to keep track of your food. Make an Eat First area, create a Use It Up list, put newer items behind older items, use clear containers.
<input type="checkbox"/> Date shown on package has passed	Use your senses – smell, see, taste – to check if food has gone bad. Except for baby formula, dates on food have nothing to do with safety and are only loosely related to quality.
<input type="checkbox"/> Bought with no plan	Add the items you have to your Use It Up list. For future shopping trips, plan your meals and snacks and use that to create a grocery list.
<input type="checkbox"/> Only used part of ingredient	Keep track of and use up your food. Make an Eat First area, put these items on your Use It Up list, add extras into meals like soups, stir fries, omelets, or smoothies, freeze ingredients to use later.
<input type="checkbox"/> Leftovers not used	Make a plan for your leftovers. Label to-go containers or put food into a clear container, and add them to your Use It Up list. Plan a leftovers dinner and call it something fun, like Encore Night or Eat It Up Meal.
<input type="checkbox"/> Produce spoiled too quickly	Store food to make it last longer and use things up before they go bad. Use the fruit and veggie storage guide and make sure your fridge is set to 40 degrees. Use anything close to going bad in meals like soups, stir fries, omelets, or smoothies, or freeze it to use later.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Try a strategy already listed above or come up with your own: _____

Use It Up list

When checking your fridge, make note of items that need to be used up. Include ingredients, leftovers, and other items that need to get eaten quickly and make a plan for how you will use them in meals or snacks.

Food item	How will we use it up

Tip: Have ingredients that don't fit into your plan? Freeze them to use later.



What did it cost?

Remember that throwing away food is throwing away money.

Here's how your uneaten food might add up in a week:

Half gallon of 2% milk: \$2

Leftovers from dinner out: \$9

Bag of salad greens: \$4

Total: \$15 tossed

Tip: Track your costs and savings by keeping your grocery and takeout receipts. Cross out the items you used to see the cost of the food you didn't eat.

Save money by wasting less food. Storing fresh produce correctly is one of the easiest and best ways to keep it fresher, longer.

Where

Refrigerator



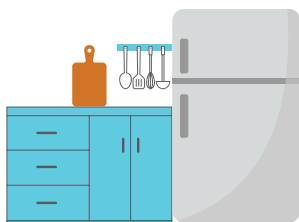
What



How

- Set your fridge to 40 degrees or below.
- Store veggies separately from fruit.
- Don't wash berries until you are ready to eat them.
- Put a damp paper towel or cloth in container with salad greens.

Counter then refrigerator



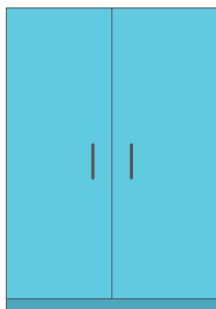
- Ripen these items on the counter, away from sunlight, heat, and moisture.
- Store in refrigerator loose or in a paper or cloth bag once ripe.
- Keep ripe and unripe fruit separate.

Counter



- Store basil in a cup of water, like flowers.
- Separate bananas from other produce since they promote ripening.
- Move overripe tomatoes to the fridge.

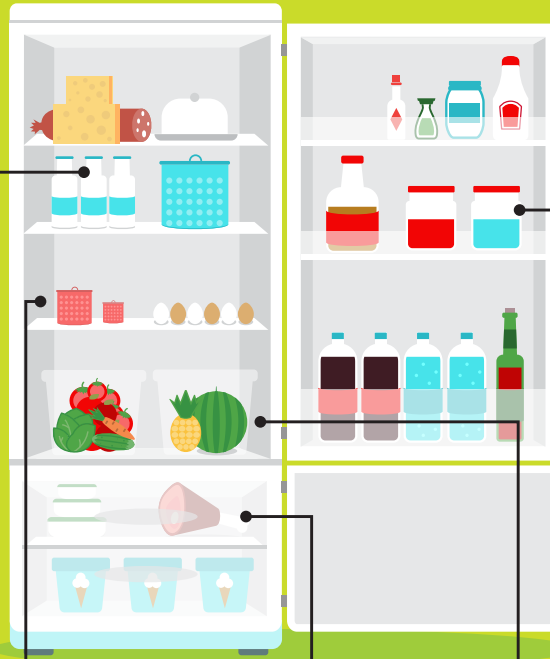
Pantry



- Store these items in a cool, dark place like a cupboard or pantry.
- Keep potatoes separate from onions to prevent sprouting.
- Store an apple with potatoes to prevent sprouting.

Refrigerator insider:

help your refrigerator save food



Top shelf

This area has the most consistent temperature in the fridge. Store cheese, butter, and cooked meats here

Freezer

Prepare and freeze items for use throughout the month. Freeze foods you won't be able to eat in time, such as bread, sliced fruit, or meat.

Door

The warmest space in the fridge. Good for condiments, but **not** good for perishables (like milk and eggs)

Bottom shelf

The coldest part of the fridge. Store eggs, milk, and raw meat here.

Crisper drawers

Can help control humidity levels for better storage (e.g., high humidity for lettuce, low humidity for fruits and veggies).



Keep fridge temp at 40 degrees or below. Bacteria do not like the cold.