

GET SMART: Take the Challenge!

What is the Challenge?

Did you know that Americans throw away 14-25% of all food they purchase to eat? For a family of four, this can translate to over \$2,000 lost annually due to only to food waste!

Research shows that nearly everyone wastes more than they think they do. Not only that, but the majority of food wasted is easily preventable! The **FOOD: TOO GOOD TO WASTE CHALLENGE** will help you figure out how much food is really going to waste in your home and what you can do to waste less. By making small shifts in how you shop for, prepare, and store food, you can save time and money, and keep the valuable resources used to produce and distribute food from going to waste!

What do you need?

1. Pen/pencil
2. Recording worksheet
3. Small food waste collection bags (provided)
4. A small scale (provided)



GET SMART: SEE HOW MUCH YOU ARE REALLY THROWING AWAY

Weeks 1-2	Measure how much food your family wastes in a week and record the weight on the recording sheet. Eat like normal and do NOT make changes. This will allow you to see how much you are wasting and what you are wasting in order to apply strategies effectively.
Weeks 3-5	Try out one or more of the Smart Strategies listed below while continuing to measure how much goes to waste each week. Keep notes on what works to reduce food waste and what doesn't.
Week 6	Measure and record your final weekly food waste amount. See how much food (and money) you saved compared to weeks one and two. Hopefully you can see a significant decrease in food wasted!

Reducing Food Waste Strategies

Handouts that explain each of the following strategies can be downloaded to print at riley.ksu.edu

- ❖ **SMART SHOPPING: BUY WHAT YOU NEED** – Make a shopping list with the Meals-In-Mind Shopping List template based on how many meals you expect to eat at home before your next shopping trip. By buying no more than what you expect to use, you will be more likely to use it up and keep it fresh.
- ❖ **SMART STORAGE: KEEP FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FRESH** – Store produce so it stays fresh longer with the help of the Fruits and Vegetable Storage Guide.
- ❖ **SMART PREP: PREP NOW, EAT LATER** – By preparing perishable foods as soon as possible, preferably post shopping, you'll make it easier to serve snacks and meals later in the week, saving time, effort and money.
- ❖ **SMART SHELVES: EAT WHAT YOU BUY** – This involves being mindful of leftovers and old ingredients that need using up. The “Eat First” prompt can be used to designate an area in your refrigerator for leftovers and food that won't keep long.

Guidelines and Tips for Taking the Challenge

1. Explain the challenge to members of your household and ask for their participation. It is important that everyone is on board and everyone knows the rules!
2. At the start of each week, line one paper bag or a plastic storage bin with one of the green compostable bags provided. Over the course of the week, have each family member place all their **EDIBLE** food waste into the bag. **Discard NON-EDIBLE** food in the usual manner. See notes below on edible vs. non-edible.
3. At the end of each week, measure the weight of food waste in the bag using the scale provided. Record the weight for the week on the attached worksheet. Once you get started, it should take no more than 15 minutes a week to measure and record your food waste!
4. If the bag fills before the end of seven days, weigh the full bag and record how many days you collected food in that bag. Then begin collection in a new bag. At the end of the week, total your weight of food waste for the entire week.
5. After you record the weight of food wasted for the week, dispose of the collection bag, including food, appropriately.
6. Except for the new strategies you try starting in week 3, keep to your usual routine as much as possible during the challenge. For example, unless you regularly clean out your freezer, do not clean it throughout the challenge.
7. At the end of week 6, compare your totals for weeks 1 and 2 to weeks 3 through 6 and see how much food you saved from going to waste! Many families have reduced their food waste by 25% or more.

What Counts as Food Waste?

Edible	Non Edible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Food purchased or prepared that has spoiled- Food leftover on your plate at mealtimes that you would normally scrape into the trash- Edible portions of fruits, vegetables, and other food items that you would normally eat but went to waste- Food grown in a garden and taken inside that has spoiled (do not count if it spoiled in your garden- only if you had taken it inside and had planned on eating it)- Liquids such as milk or soup that spoiled. If you are concerned with leakage, double bag or feel free to use a separate designated "liquid collector".	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Food you wouldn't normally eat. Including but not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Chicken/pork/beef bones- Watermelon rind- Orange, banana, or other fruit peel- Coffee grounds- Egg shells- Cores, seeds, and rinds of other fruits and vegetables- Nut shells <p>*Note, foods that you <i>could</i> eat but prefer not to, like the heels of bread for example, count as edible food waste</p>

Where do I Send My Results?

At the end of the 6 weeks, you have the option of submitting your results a couple different ways:

- Submit online via the following google form: <https://goo.gl/i2KFDm>
- Return data to Julia Lambert
- Mail in your data to:
 - K-State Research and Extension- Riley County Office
 - 110 Courthouse Plaza
 - Manhattan, KS 66502

Remember, each family that completes the challenge and returns their data will receive a **gift card** to one of the local grocery stores!

Questions, comments, or feedback?

Email Julia Lambert at juliaalambert16@gmail.com