

Transforming your Leftovers and Garden Excess



Learning to Reduce Food Waste

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Preface

At Eden Garden we've all been working hard over the years to provide healthy organic produce to families in need. In the process, we've been learning how to grow and use many different types of vegetables and fruits. This year we have gone a step further to educate our volunteers and community members about another aspect of growing food—how to reduce food waste and the resources used to produce food. In wealthy countries, especially in the U.S. and Canada, about 40 percent of food is wasted. The average American household throws out 25 percent of the food they purchase—over \$1,000 worth of food. The United States as a whole wastes \$160 billion a year in food.

In the spring of 2019 StopWaste awarded Eden Garden a \$10,000 grant for implementing a program to teach people about the food waste problem and how to reduce food waste. This cookbook is part of our program. Its purpose is to help you find ways to use leftovers instead of tossing them, and to give you some ideas for how to handle the bumper crops of vegetables and fruits that might be coming from your gardens.

We recommend that you also check out the following websites:

- <http://stopfoodwaste.org> provides a wealth of information about reducing food waste. It includes a number of recipes and tips about preserving the life of your food. Among other materials, you can download a Fruit & Veggie Storage guide that tells you whether particular fruits and vegetables are best stored on the counter or in the refrigerator.
- <http://stopwaste.org>, another StopWaste website, provides information about composting and reducing other types of waste.
- <https://www.stilltasty.com/> provides information about how long specific foods and beverages stay fresh and tasty. You can find out the shelf life of foods in several categories—including meats, seafood, dairy and eggs, fruits and veggies, nuts, grains, pasta, condiments, and oils.
- www.greatist.com/health/leftovers-meals-healthy-recipes includes recipes you can make with leftovers.
- www.allrecipes.com/recipes/everyday-cooking/everyday-leftovers Allrecipes provides access to over 800 recipes for using leftovers.
- www.bigoven.com/recipes/leftover Use Up Leftovers (Big Oven) has a wide variety of recipes for using up leftovers.
- <https://www.budgetbytes.com/> Budget Bytes is a site with recipes provided by blogger Beth Montel, who learned to slash her grocery bill after having worked at Whole Foods. She observed how they repurposed food to reduce waste and how they mixed expensive and inexpensive ingredients to create good food at the best prices. This site brings in the focus of reducing cost as well as reducing waste. Here is the link to an article that gives Beth's story.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-budget-savvy-food-blogger-learned-how-to-save-more-and-waste-less-heres-how-you-can-too-2019-09-06?siteid=yhoof2&yptr=yahoo> We want to thank all of the people who have taken this journey with us to learn about reducing food waste. They have attended our educational events, participated in our food waste Challenge week, and supported us in so many other ways. At the end of this cookbook you'll find tips that the 25 Challenge week participants want to pass on about how you can reduce food waste.

We also want to thank our contacts at StopWaste for all their support: Maricelle Cardenas, Jeanne Nader, Jeannie Pham, and Trevor Probert. We are grateful for the funds we received from the StopWaste grant. These funds are being used to purchase supplies to run our garden, to purchase new equipment, and to make other improvements.

Karen, Barbara, and Beth

On the Road to Reducing Food Waste



Sauces

Tina Higashi suggests some ingredients that can be used for making sauces.

- You can make a sauce using spinach, mint, arugula, shiso, baby kale for the greens.
- You can use sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and almonds for nuts in sauces like pestos.

Basic pesto

This herb-centered sauce from Tina Higashi can be used with meats, pastas, salads, pizza and sandwiches. You can try the recipe with only one herb like this ingredients list shows or mix a couple different herbs.

Ingredients

2 cups basil
¼ cup toasted pine nuts
½ cup Parmesan cheese
2 cloves garlic
½ to ¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Pulse all ingredients except the olive oil in a food processor and blend. Then blend in the olive oil.

Chimichurri sauce

This is another herb-centered sauce from Tina Higashi that can be used with meats and seafoods. Try the recipe with only one herb like this recipe shows or mix a couple different herbs.

Ingredients

¾ cup chopped parsley
Minced garlic cloves
tsp. oregano
½ cup olive oil
2 tbsp. vinegar or 2 tbsp. lemon juice
½ tsp. crushed red pepper
½ tsp. sea salt

Directions

Mix well and serve with meats and seafood.

Soups

Chilled avgolemono soup

Ingredients

2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
½ medium onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 cup cooked rice (can use leftover)
2 cups chicken broth
3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice (juice from about 3 lemons)
3 tbsp. chopped dill
Salt and pepper
—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Directions

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook the onion until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook until soft, about 2 minutes. Add rice and stir to coat. Remove the pan from the heat and add broth.

Working in 2 batches, purée the soup in a blender until smooth. Add more chicken broth or water for desired consistency.

Transfer mixture to a bowl, stir and place in refrigerator for 20 minutes to cool.

When ready to serve, stir in lemon juice, dill and salt and pepper.

Chicken chowder

This soup recipe from Kathy Ann in Penzey's magazine uses leftover chicken.

Ingredients

¼ cup butter
1 small onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
½ bell pepper, chopped
¼ cup flour
Salt and pepper
1 cup boiling water
1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
1 apple, peeled and chopped
1 tsp. thyme
¼ cup chopped parsley flakes
3 cups milk
1 cup cooked chicken, diced

Directions

Melt the butter in a stock pot over medium high heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery and green pepper and cook until tender, 2 to 3 minutes.

Sprinkle with flour, salt and pepper, stirring gently to combine. Gradually mix in the boiling water, ¼ at a time, stirring until smooth. Stir in tomatoes.

Reduce the heat to medium low, then add the apple, thyme and parsley. Simmer for 30 minutes.

Add the milk and chicken and cook until heated through, another 5 to 10 minutes.

Heirloom tomato soup

This recipe from Karen Abbruscato works well for using up your bumper crop of tomatoes.

Ingredients

6 large heirloom tomatoes
1 small cucumber
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
Fresh basil
Salt and pepper

Directions

Core tomatoes and cut into quarters. Peel and seed the cucumber, then cut into 5 or 6 pieces and combine with tomatoes. Dress with vinegar, extra virgin olive oil, and salt and pepper. Let it sit for 30 minutes. Add basil and puree the mixture in a blender until smooth. Chill for at least an hour. Garnish with extra virgin olive oil and, if desired, basil strips.

New potato simmer

This recipe from Karen Abbruscato uses leftover turkey or chicken for this soup.

Ingredients

1 ½ lbs. tiny new potatoes
1 lb. turkey or chicken breast, cooked and shredded
28 oz. chicken broth
1 medium leek, sliced
1/3 cup whipping cream (or milk)
3 tbsp. Dijon mustard
1 tbsp. fresh thyme (or ½ tsp dried thyme)
1 ½ cups Napa cabbage, cut into ¼ inch strips (or spinach)

Directions

Cut potatoes in half. In a 4 qt Dutch oven, combine potatoes, turkey, broth and leek. Bring to boiling, reduce heat. Simmer, covered for 15 minutes

In a small bowl, stir together the cream and mustard. Add this mixture and thyme to Dutch oven. Simmer, uncovered for 5 minutes more or until potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally.

To serve, ladle into individual bowls. Top each with ¼ cup Napa cabbage.

Tortilla soup

This recipe from the Kaiser Permanente newsletter uses leftover tortillas or pita bread and chicken, corn, or both.

Ingredients

Tortillas or Pita Bread
1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1 Jalapeño, seeded and minced
1 tbsp diced mild green chilies
2 heaping tsp. oregano
2 heaping tsp. ground cumin
2 tomatoes, diced (or an 8 oz can)
8 cups chicken broth
Half of a chicken, boned and shredded
1 ½ cups corn, fresh or frozen
Salt and pepper

Garnish: ¼ cup cilantro, chopped; 2 avocados, diced; 4 limes

Directions

Cut tortillas (or pitas) into triangles, sprinkle with oil and a dash of salt, and bake at 350 degrees on a baking sheet until crisp.

Heat the oil in a large soup pot. Sauté the onion, garlic, jalapeño and green chilies until soft. Stir in the oregano and cumin. Add tomatoes and broth. Bring to a boil, then simmer for about 10 minutes. Add the chicken and continue simmering for 5 minutes. Add the corn and simmer another 3 minutes. Season to taste.

Juice half a lime in the bottom of each serving bowl, along with 3 tortilla triangles.

Ladle soup and generously top with cilantro and avocado. Garnish with chips around the edges.

Winter greens and white bean soup

This recipe, from Sunset Magazine February-2005, is a great way to use extra greens from your garden or leftover ham.

Ingredients

8 oz. winter greens, rinsed, drained and cut into strips
1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup chopped ham or prosciutto (about 1 oz.)
5 cups chicken broth
1 can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
Salt and pepper
Grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

Heat the oil in a 4-to-5 quart pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onion, garlic and ham. Stir often until the onion is limp, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Add the broth and beans, cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Stir in winter greens and cook until they are just wilted, about 1 minute. Add salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into bowls and offer cheese on top.

Thai fried egg and pork soup

This recipe from Sunset Magazine uses leftover pork chop or pork tenderloin.

Ingredients

4 eggs
1 tbsp. salad oil
1 lb. cooked pork, cut into 1/8 inch strips
4 cloves garlic, chopped
48 oz. chicken broth
1 tsp. sugar
1 tsp. vinegar
1/2 tsp. soy sauce
6 green onions, thinly sliced

Directions

In a bowl, beat together the eggs. Heat the oil in a skillet, add the eggs to the skillet and cook. When the egg is set on the bottom, flip the eggs over to finish cooking. Cook until lightly brown. Remove from the pan and cut the egg into strips 1/2 inch wide and 2 inches long.

In a large pot combine the broth, sugar, vinegar and soy sauce; bring to a boil. Add the egg, pork and onions. Cook just until pork is heated, 1 – 2 minutes.

Makes 6 servings

Turkey pasta winter greens soup

Ingredients

2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
2 leeks (white and light green parts only, thinly sliced)
3 stalks celery, chopped
3 carrots, chopped
2 parsnips
4 qts. turkey broth
1+ cup winter greens, chopped
2 wide strips of lemon zest
3 cups chopped leftover roast turkey
1 cup small pasta such as farfalline
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Directions

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium high heat. Add the leeks, celery, carrots and parsnip. Cook about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the broth and bring it to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes.

Add the greens and lemon zest to the pot and simmer until the greens are tender, about 10 minutes more.

Add the turkey and pasta. Cook until the pasta is partially cooked, about 4 minutes. The pasta will continue to cook in the hot soup.

Remove from the heat, then stir in lemon juice. Discard the lemon zest.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Scrap vegetable broth

One way of reducing food waste is to save top/bottom/skin from your vegetables—whatever you would normally trash—and turn it into a vegetable broth. Make sure that what you're saving is washed and trash anything that still looks dirty or has gone bad. Collect the scraps in the freezer until you're ready to use them. Suggested scraps to save are:

- Carrot, parsnip and potato peels
- Ends from asparagus, green beans, celery, squash and scallions
- Mushrooms stems
- Onion and garlic skins
- Herb stems (parsley, cilantro, dill)

The obvious use for the vegetable broth is to add it to soups. However, you can add more flavor to dishes like beans and grains by substituting the broth for the water. See the recipe "Onion rolls with vegetable broth" for another usage.

This recipe is from Ariella. She has written an interesting article about saving food scraps at <https://www.perspectiveportions.com/reason-save-scraps/>

Ingredients

2 lbs. frozen vegetable scraps (for example, red and white onion skins, asparagus plus scallion ends, and carrot peels)

10 cups of water

½ to ¾ tsp. of salt

Directions

Put vegetable scraps and water in a large soup pot. Season with ½ teaspoon salt. Cover with a lid and bring to a boil. Then simmer for 1–2½ hours before removing from heat.

Strain out the vegetables and adjust the broth seasoning to taste (may taste a little bitter). The broth can be used immediately or cooled and kept refrigerated (1-2 days).

You can freeze any extra broth.

Salads

Strawberry-balsamic vinaigrette

Without meaning to we end up wasting a lot of food that comes in jars because we can't get those last bits out of the jars. This recipe for vinaigrette from *Cooking with Scraps* by Lindsay-Jean Hard enables you to use that last bit of jam in the jar. The recipe uses strawberry jam but you can substitute other flavors of jam (for example, raspberry) if that is all you have.

Hint: If the recipe as shown is a little thick, add a bit more water. Also, BPA-free thin spatulas are available to help get those last bits of foods out of jars.

Ingredients

1 tbsp. very hot water
1 jar of strawberry jam, with only a little bit left in it (or use 1 tbsp. of jam)
1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp. minced shallot
2 tsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
Pinch of fine grain sea salt

Directions

Add the hot water to the jam jar, then replace the lid and shake vigorously. Use a fork or spatula to scrape around the sides and release all of the lingering jam bits.
Add the vinegar, shallot, lemon juice, olive oil and sea salt to the jar. Then shake vigorously again to combine the ingredients.
This dressing will keep up to 3 days in the sealed jar in the refrigerator.

Aida's corn, tomato, and avocado salad

This recipe was adapted from Aida Mollenkamp's recipe for Food Network Magazine.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups fresh cilantro (or parsley)
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. lime juice
1 tsp. finely grated lime zest
2 tsp. salt & pepper to taste
3 cups corn
1 ½ lbs. cherry tomatoes, halved
1 lb. fresh mozzarella, diced
2 medium avocados, diced

Directions

Combine cilantro, olive oil, lime juice and zest, and salt and pepper in a blender. Process until smooth.
Combine the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and toss with the dressing.
Let it sit at least 15 minutes before serving, or cover and refrigerate up to 4 hours.

Broccoli stem salad

Ingredients

About 1 lb. of broccoli stems (you can use any part of the broccoli for this salad)

½ cup chopped onions, green onions or any other onion you have on hand.

2 stalks celery, chopped

6 slices of bacon, cooked and crumbled

1 cup mayonnaise

1 tsp. vinegar

¼ cup sugar

½ cup sunflower seeds, sliced almonds, or cashews

Directions

Peel the broccoli stems if they have tough fibers on the outside, then chop into small pieces, mix with onions celery and bacon.

In a small bowl, mix mayonnaise, vinegar and sugar into a dressing. Add the dressing to the broccoli and let set overnight.

Just before serving add the seeds.

—Recipe from Tina Case.

Corn salad

Ingredients

5 ears of corn (If you already have cooked corn, start at the **)

½ cup diced red onion

3 tbsp. cider vinegar

3 tbsp. olive oil

½ tsp. kosher salt

½ cup fresh basil leaves, cut into strips (chiffonade)

Directions

In a large pot of boiling water, cook the corn for 3 minutes until the starchiness is just gone. Then drain, and immerse the corn in ice water to stop the cooking and set the color. When the corn is cool, cut the kernels off the cob, cutting close to the cob.

**Toss the cooked kernels in a large bowl with the red onions, vinegar, oil, salt and pepper. Just before serving, toss in the fresh basil. Taste for seasonings and serve cold or at room temperature.

—Recipe from Diane Dunwoodie

Corn and onion salad

Ingredients

1 cup onion, finely chopped
3 tbsp. vegetable oil
6 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen
½ cup broth, vegetable or chicken
¼ cup lemon juice
1 tsp. sugar
Salt and pepper

Directions

In a 10 to 12 inch skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook until brown, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Add the corn and broth to the skillet. Stir until the liquid has evaporated, about 8 to 9 minutes. Pour into a bowl and add lemon juice, sugar and salt and pepper to taste.

Serve warm or cold. You can make it one day ahead.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Eggplant salad

Ingredients

8 Asian eggplants
2 tbsp. Asian Sesame oil
2 tbsp. soy sauce
2 tbsp. rice vinegar
1 tbsp. garlic minced
¼ cup green onions, minced

Directions

Place eggplants in a 12" x 15" baking pan. Pierce each eggplant several times with a sharp knife. Bake at 400 degrees until very soft, about 40 to 50 minutes.

When the eggplant is cool enough to handle, cut off the stems and slice the eggplant in half lengthwise. Use a fork to remove flesh in long shreds. Discard stems and peels.

In a bowl, mix oil, soy sauce, vinegar and garlic. Add eggplant and mix gently to coat. Cover and chill at least 30 minutes or up to 4 hours. Sprinkle green onions on top when ready to serve.

—Recipe is from Cindy Wu and Sunset Magazine.

Kale salad

Ingredients

1 bunch Kale, rinsed and cut into 1” pieces, remove tough ribs
1 ½ tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tb Asian sesame oil

Directions

In a 5 to 6 quart pan, bring 1 qt of the water to a boil. Add kale, then cover and cook it until it is slightly wilted, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain.

When the kale is cool, squeeze the excess liquid from it and put it in a bowl. Mix the kale with soy sauce and oil. Serve at room temperature. Add ginger and/or garlic if desired.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Parsley Salad

Some recipes call for parsley. The problem with buying parsley at the store is that you have to buy it in a bunch—much more than is typically needed for a recipe. Often the rest of the bunch is eventually thrown out. This recipe from Karen Abbruscato will help you use up all that extra parsley.

Hint: This recipe tastes better when made with flat parsley. The curly parsley does not soften with the dressing like the flat parsley does.

Ingredients

About ¾ bunch of parsley, preferably flat parsley
2 hardboiled eggs
Half an onion
Creamy dressing. Creamy cucumber dressing is best but any creamy dressing works.

Directions

Wash and drain the parsley, then chop it coarsely, discarding the main stems. Dice the eggs and thinly slice the onion. Add both to the parsley. Add dressing to taste, toss and serve.

—Serves 3-4

Meal in a Bowl/Salad

Tina Higashi passes on these tips for how to use a variety of ingredients to make a meal in a bowl. Mix and match ingredients according to what you feel like eating. This is a good way of using up leftovers in your refrigerator before they go to waste.

How to mix and match

- Choose a green** spinach, kale, arugula, lettuce, mixed greens
- Pick a starch** rice, quinoa, potatoes, yams, pumpkin or winter squash, farro, barley, corn, bulgur, couscous, garbanzos
- Load with color** broccoli, cabbage, tomato, carrot, bell pepper, cucumber, summer squash, cauliflower, asparagus, beets, radish, onion, fruit
- Add protein** edamame, lentils, tofu, beans, meat, fish, shellfish, eggs
- Spice it up** hot sauce, cilantro, lime juice, garlic, onion, basil, sesame oil, soy, salsa, pesto

Examples:

Asian bowl: spinach, brown rice, carrots, tofu, edamame, sesame seeds, soy, sesame oil, lime juice

Mediterranean bowl: kale, quinoa and farro, tomatoes, bell peppers, summer squash, white beans, balsamic vinaigrette, pesto

Quinoa salad

Ingredients

Leftover quinoa, 1 – 2 cups
1/3 cup lemon juice
1/3 cup minced onion, red preferred
¾ tsp. salt
½ to 1 cup chopped cucumber
2 stalks celery, finely chopped
1/3 cup chopped fresh mint

Directions

In a medium sized bowl, stir together the lemon juice, onion and salt. Add the cooked quinoa and mix in the dressing. Add cucumber celery and mint, then toss to combine. Add black pepper if desired.

Serve at room temperature.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Quick quinoa salad

Ingredients

2 cups quinoa, cooked
2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 small red bell pepper, finely diced
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ cup fresh basil diced
½ tsp. parsley, sage, rosemary or thyme
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. black pepper

Directions

In a medium skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, peppers and garlic and cook until just until tender. Add the quinoa and warm it up, then add the basil and optional herbs. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve hot or cold.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Rice salad

Ingredients

2 to 3 cups cooked white or brown rice
1 cup peas (frozen works best)
½ lb. meat (pork loin, sirloin), cooked and cubed
2 tsp. Asian sesame oil
2 tbsp. soy sauce
½ tsp. grated ginger
½ tsp sugar
1 egg
2 to 3 green onions, thinly sliced
2 Roma tomatoes, cut into ½ inch cubes
4 cups cabbage, shredded

Directions

Place rice in a bowl, then add peas and toss.

Place meat in a bowl, add sesame oil, soy sauce, ginger and sugar and stir to coat.

In a small bowl, beat egg lightly. Pour oil in a skillet, add egg, tilt pan to spread thinly.

When the egg appears almost set, slide it onto the rice and break the egg into ½ inch pieces.

Add the meat mixture to the skillet to warm up the meat, then add the meat to the rice mixture

Add the tomatoes and green onions and toss.

Spread the cabbage over the bottom of a large shallow serving bowl. Mound the rice mixture on top. Add soy sauce to taste.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Wild rice salad

Ingredients

2 to 3 cups cooked wild rice
1/3 cups extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. vinegar, raspberry or wine
2 tbsp. finely chopped shallots (or mild onion)
2 tsp. Dijon mustard
Pepper

Directions

In a small bowl, mix the oil, vinegar, shallots, mustard and pepper. Pour the dressing over the cooled wild rice and mix lightly. Serve at room temperature. If it is made ahead, cover and refrigerate it for up to 2 days.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Veggies

Green tomato preserves

This is Sondra Bierre's adaptation of a recipe in 'Il Talismano della Felicità' by Ada Boni. (<https://www.domenicacooks.com/recipes/green-tomato-preserves/>)

These green-gold preserves go well with both sweet and savory dishes. Enjoy them on toast for breakfast, or spread them on crostini along with a good runny cheese. They also make a delicious filling for jam crostata.

You can find green tomatoes from early summer through early fall in many farmers' markets. Sondra likes to use small (4-ounce) jars for these preserves, but you can use 1/2-pint size jars if you prefer.

Ingredients

2 pounds firm green tomatoes (about 6 medium)
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 organic lemon (about 1/4 cup juice)
2 1/2 cups sugar
1/3 cup mild honey
2 pinches coarse sea salt
1/2 vanilla bean

Directions

Wash and then sterilize seven 4-ounce jars (or three 1/2-pint jars and one 4-ounce jar) and their lids by immersing them in boiling water for 10 minutes.

Remove the cores from the tomatoes and cut them lengthwise into quarters. If the seeds are small, leave them be. If they are mature, taste to see if they are bitter. If so, scrape them out. Cut each quarter crosswise into thin slices.

Put the tomatoes, lemon zest and juice, sugar, honey, and salt in a large nonreactive saucepan or heavy-bottomed pot. With a small paring knife, slice the vanilla bean open lengthwise. Scrape the seeds into the pot and toss in the pod.

Set the pot over medium heat and bring it to a boil, stirring to combine the ingredients. Cook at a fairly lively simmer for 40 to 45 minutes, or until the preserves are glossy and thick enough to spread. Be sure to stir often to prevent burning. Reduce the heat to medium-low if necessary. Remove the vanilla bean pod at the end of cooking.

Funnel the preserves into the sterilized jars, screw the lids on tightly, and process for 15 minutes in a boiling water bath. Store in a cool dark place for up to 1 year. Or store the preserves in the refrigerator, where they will keep for at least 2 months.

—Makes 3 1/2 pints

Dilly beans

Dan Reesor shares this recipe from America's test Kitchen *Foolproof Preserving*.

Ingredients

¼ cup canning and pickling salt
2 lbs. green beans, trimmed and cut into 4" lengths
2 cups chopped dill
3 cups distilled white vinegar
3 cups water
6 tbsp. sugar
1 tbsp. black peppercorns
6 garlic cloves

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 30 minutes

Process: 10-25 minutes

Yield: four 1 pint jars

Directions

Fill large bowl with ice water. Bring 6 qts. water and 1 tbsp. salt to boil in dutch oven over high heat. Add beans and cook until crisp-tender but still crunchy at the core, about 1 minute. Transfer the beans to ice water and let cool for 2 minutes. Drain well, discard ice, pat dry with paper towels.

Bundle dill in cheesecloth and secure with kitchen twine. Bring dill sachet, vinegar, water, sugar, peppercorns, and remaining 3 T salt to boil in large saucepan over medium- high heat. Cover, remove from heat, let steep for 15 minutes; discard sachet.

Meanwhile, set a canning rack in large pot, place four 1-pint jars in rack, add water to cover by 1 inch. Bring to simmer over medium-high heat, then turn heat off and cover to keep hot.

Place a dish towel flat on counter. Using jar lifter, remove jars from pot, draining water back into pot. Place jars upside down on towel and let dry for 1 minute. Distribute garlic evenly among jars, then pack tightly with beans.

Return brine to brief boil. Using a funnel and a ladle, pour hot brine over beans to cover, distributing peppercorns evenly and leaving ½ inch headspace. Slide wooden skewer along inside of jar, pressing slightly on beans to remove air bubbles, and add extra brine as needed.

For short term storage: Let jars cool to room temperature, cover with lids, and refrigerate for at least 1 week before serving. (Beans can be refrigerated for up to 3 months; flavor will continue to mature over time.)

For long-term storage: While jars are warm, wipe rims clean, add lids, and screw on rings until fingertip-tight; do not over tighten. Return pot of water with canning rack to boil. Lower jars into water, cover, bring water back to boil, then start timer. Cooking time will depend on your altitude. Boil 10 minutes for up to 1,000 feet. Turn off the heat and let the jars sit in the pot for 5 minutes. Remove the jars from the pot and let them cool for 24 hours. Remove rings, check seal, and clean rims. (Sealed jars can be stored for up to 1 year.)

Quick zucchini noodles

Judy Matthew says that a few months ago she bought a spiralizer, which is a device that cuts up fruits and vegetables into “noodles.” She used it on some of the zucchini from her garden and has cooked zucchini using these 3 different recipes. They are easy and quick and result in very tasty dishes.

Ingredients

Several zucchinis
1 clove garlic, minced
½ cup chopped onion
salt and black pepper to taste
2 tbsp. olive oil
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

Cut zucchini into thin, noodle-like strips.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add onion and cook it for several minutes, then add the garlic. Cook for another minute or two until the onion is tender.

Add the zucchini noodles and cook for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring the zucchini a few times. Take the pan off the stove while the zucchini is still a little crisp; do not overcook or it becomes mushy. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and enjoy.

Notes: Zucchini is mostly made up of water so cooking it can be tricky. Here are our tips for cooking it well and making sure it's not soggy.

- Don't peel the zucchini. Peeled zucchini noodles are mushy and have little crunch.
- Don't salt the zucchini ahead of time or while it cooks in the pan. Salt draws out water from the zucchini. This will make it less crunchy when it's cooked.
- Don't overcook. The noodles should be cooked to al dente (just like pasta). This means they will look wilted, but still have a crunch.

Garlic parmesan zucchini noodles pasta

Judy Matthew provides this recipe for spiralized zucchini noodles.

Ingredients

4 medium zucchini (about 2 pounds)
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. minced garlic (3 to 4 cloves)
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, depending on how spicy you like the pasta
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
½ cup shredded parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
1 cup basil leaves, chopped into pieces
1 tsp. cornstarch
2 tsps. cold water
salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Trim and spiralize the zucchini

Add olive oil, garlic, and the red pepper flakes to a large, deep skillet. Turn to medium heat. When the oil begins to bubble around the garlic, add the zucchini noodles. Toss the noodles with pasta tongs and cook until al dente — they should be wilted, but still have a crunch; 4 to 6 minutes. Do not let the noodles cook any longer or else they will become mushy. As they cook, keep tossing so that all the zucchini noodles have a chance to hit the bottom of the skillet.

Stir in the tomatoes, basil, and parmesan cheese. Cook for one minute. Use pasta tongs to transfer the noodles, tomatoes, and basil to a serving dish. Leave the liquid in the skillet.

To finish, bring the liquid left in the skillet to a simmer. Combine cornstarch and cold water in a small bowl then whisk into the simmering liquid. Cook, while whisking until the liquid thickens to a sauce; about 1 minute.

Taste the sauce and season with salt. Pour the sauce over the zucchini, tomatoes, and basil. Finish with more parmesan cheese on top and serve.

Five-ingredient spinach parmesan noodles

Judy Matthew provides this recipe for spiralized zucchini noodles.

Ingredients

3 medium zucchini
2 tablespoons butter
2 cloves garlic minced
2 cups packed spinach
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and black pepper to taste

Directions

Spiralize the zucchini and set aside.

Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Melt the butter and add the garlic, cook for 1-2 minutes. Add in the zucchini noodles and spinach. Gently toss and cook until spinach leaves are wilted, about 2-3 minutes. Stir in 1/4 cup of the Parmesan cheese and toss until zucchini noodles are coated in the parmesan cheese. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Remove from heat and serve.

Stuffed portobello mushrooms

Peggy Smith shares this suggestion for what to do with peppers from your garden that are sunburned. They are still fine to use; just cut off the sunburned part. Peggy doesn't have a recipe; she just "eyes it" as how much of each ingredient to put in. You can experiment.

Ingredients

Portobello mushrooms

Pepper, diced

Leftover onion, diced

Potato, diced

Cheese cut in small pieces

Tomato sauce

Herbs: culinary sage, thyme, and basil

Directions

Broil the mushrooms with olive oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic and some cayenne, salt and pepper. Set aside.

Cut off the sunburnt part of the pepper and discard, then chopped the pepper. Mix in the other ingredients. Stuff the peppers with the mixture.

Then pour tomato sauce over the top. Bake for 40 minutes at 350 degrees.

Fruits

When our lemons are ripe we often scramble to figure out what to do with *so many* lemons. Sue Farr has provided us with information about how to freeze them for use later and recipes for using them.

Freezing fresh lemons

Lemons can be frozen. You can freeze them whole, which is the easiest. Or before freezing peel them, zest them, and juice them and package them up for the freezer. If you freeze a lemon whole then you only work with what you need for a specific recipe when you defrost it. For best results freeze a lemon quickly but defrost it slowly.

Thick skinned lemons, such as Eureka or Lisbon, will also be reasonably easy to peel or zest after they are thawed. Thinner skinned lemons, such as Meyer lemons, can be harder to zest. Try zesting while they are still frozen.

Directions for freezing whole lemons

Discard any bruised or damaged fruit or use them immediately. Wash each lemon, gently scrubbing it and removing any attached stem. Dry well. Place the whole lemons on a large baking sheet. Do not overcrowd. Place the baking sheet in the freezer where the air can circulate freely. Allow the lemons to freeze until rock hard (several hours). Repackage the lemons in vacuumed or zippered plastic bags. Return them to the freezer.

Lemon curd

You can combine fresh lemons with butter and egg yolks for a delicious curd you can freeze for up to one year. Use it in tarts or your favorite recipe. The full recipe fills one 16 oz. freezer jar; a plastic jar was mentioned in the original recipe.

Ingredients

6 large egg yolks
3/4 cup sugar
Grated peel of one large lemon
1 cup fresh lemon juice (about 5 medium)
1/2 cup (1/4 lb.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

—Recipe is from the UCCE Master Food Preserver Program of Sacramento County.

Directions

Press the egg yolks through a sieve set over a heavy saucepan to remove all egg whites. Add sugar, lemon peel and lemon juice. Whisk just to combine.

Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Make sure to stir down the sides of the saucepan. Cook until mixture coats the back of the wooden spoon, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat.

Add butter, one piece at a time, stirring after each addition to assure the mixture is smooth.

Ladle the lemon curd into clean jars to fill line. Chill until set, about 1 hour. Twist on lids. Label. Freeze up to 1 year.

Lemon ginger marmalade

Sue Farr is passing on another way of using your lemon crop, using your canning skills. This recipe comes from the Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, 2015. Makes 7 half-pint jars.

Ingredients

6 small lemons
½ tsp. baking soda
2 ½ cups water
1 cup coarsely grated gingerroot
1 (1 ¾ oz.) package regular powdered fruit pectin
6 ½ cups sugar

Directions

Prepare canner, jars, and lids.

Measure sugar and set aside.

Using a vegetable peeler, remove yellow lemon peel in long strips. Cut the strips into slices. Reserve fruit.

In a large, deep stainless-steel saucepan, combine lemon peel, baking soda, and water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, cover, and boil gently for 5 minutes until peel is softened. Remove from heat and set aside.

Using a sharp knife, cut white pith from the lemons. Working over a large bowl to catch the juice, use a sharp knife to separate the lemon segments from the membrane. Place the segments in the bowl and squeeze the membrane to remove as much juice as possible, collecting it in the bowl. Discard the membrane and seeds.

Measure 1 cup lemon segments and juice. Add to softened lemon peel with gingerroot. Whisk in pectin until it is dissolved.

Bring it to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Add sugar all at once and return to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Boil hard, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Remove from heat and skim off the foam.

Ladle hot marmalade into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust the headspace, if necessary, by adding hot marmalade. Wipe rim. Center lid on the jar. Screw the band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.

Place jars in canner, ensuring they are completely covered by water. Bring to a boil and process for 10 minutes. Remove canner lid. Wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store.

Pastas and rice

Clean out the refrigerator shrimp pasta

When Beth Clark has not planned for dinner she often makes this dish, using whatever vegetables are left in the refrigerator. It comes out a bit different each time. It's quick and easy. Her adult son always says "Yum!" when he sees this dish for dinner.

One of her standard combinations of leftover veggies is zucchini, onion, and green pepper. Sometimes she puts in mushrooms or celery if she has those.

Ingredients

Cooked pasta, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a package.

Cooked shrimp

1 can of chopped clams, including the liquid.

Dillweed, about $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

Cooked vegetables, cut up into bite size pieces, probably about 1 cup worth but you can experiment.

Cornstarch

Parmesan cheese

Hints: Any type of pasta would work but Beth typically uses spaghetti or angel hair pasta. If you have leftover pasta in the freezer you could use that for this recipe. Just be sure that you just heat the pasta long enough to warm it. You don't want to cook frozen pasta or it will become mushy.

Directions

Cook the pasta according to package directions and set aside.

Cook the shrimp and set aside (or set aside already-cooked shrimp).

Sauté the vegetables in a small amount of olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the clams and liquid, pasta, and shrimp to the frying pan and stir the ingredients together. Heat until just hot.

If it seems like there isn't enough liquid to cover the pasta, just add another can of clams with the liquid, or add some clam juice if you have that.

Thicken the liquid with cornstarch so it will stick to the pasta (that is, isn't soupy).

Sprinkle parmesan on the pasta when you serve it.

Bow-tie pasta with arugula pesto

Did you cook too much pasta? No need to throw it out. You can freeze the pasta and use it later in this recipe by Siri Daly on the Today website (today.com). You can toss frozen pasta directly into simmering sauce or into a skillet. No need to thaw it. The warm sauce or hot pan will quickly defrost and heat it.

Tips: Pasta that you freeze should be cooked al dente or can become mushy when reheated. You can make the pesto the day before and keep it refrigerated. You might want to double the batch and freeze half of it!

Ingredients

1 pound bow-tie (farfalle) pasta
1/2 cup pine nuts, divided
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese,
additional shaved for topping
1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
2 cups baby arugula, washed
Extra virgin olive oil
Sea salt
1 cup sun-dried tomatoes, drained

Tips: Pine nuts can be expensive. To save some money, try almonds instead. Although the recipe calls for bow-tie pasta, probably any leftover pasta would work.

(Arugula is peppery so the ingredients don't include pepper.)

Directions

If you do not have leftover pasta, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add a generous amount of salt, and then your pasta and cook for 10 minutes or until al dente. Drain.

Make the pesto. Start by toasting the pine nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat until they begin to brown, stirring frequently to prevent burning. Remove from heat and let cool.

Add 1/4 cup of the cooled pine nuts (reserving the other half), garlic and Parmesan to a food processor or blender. Pulse until everything is finely processed. Add arugula and process, slowly drizzling in the olive oil until your desired consistency is reached. Taste, then season with salt.

Place the drained pasta back in the pot. Add the pesto and sun-dried tomatoes and stir. Serve in bowls and top with remaining pine nuts and Parmesan cheese.

Fried rice

Tina Higashi provides this recipe for using up small amounts of leftover meats and vegetables that you might have in the refrigerator.

Ingredients

1-3 cups left over rice

2 eggs, beaten

Protein, if desired (bacon, ham, chicken, shrimp, tofu)

1 to 2 tbsp. vegetable oil

½ cup each of various vegetables (carrots, peas, celery, peppers, bok choy, squash)

Seasonings: Choose from soy, sesame oil, oyster sauce, fish sauce, spicy sauce

2 green onions, chopped

1 to 2 minced garlic cloves

1 to 3 slices fresh ginger-slivered

Directions

Sauté the vegetables in the oil. Add garlic and ginger. Add protein if you are using it. Add the rice to the pan and stir to heat and mix.

Add seasonings, lightly.

Move ingredients to the side of pan. Add a bit more oil and then pour in the beaten eggs. Cook the eggs briefly then mix into rice mixture.

Meat

Beef stroganoff

Karen Abbruscato provided this recipe, adapted from Bon Appetit, for using up leftover beef.

Ingredients

1 lb. leftover beef (steak or tri tip),
already cooked
2 tbsp. butter
3 cups whole cremini or button
mushrooms, sliced
2 cups onion, thinly sliced
1 tbsp. tomato paste
1 tsp. garlic, minced
3 tbsp. all-purpose flour
½ cup sherry
1 can (15 oz.) beef broth

Directions

Cut the beef in cubes and put it aside.

Melt 2 tbsp. of butter in a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Add mushrooms and sauté for 3 minutes or until they begin to brown.

Add onion and cook 3 minutes, then stir in tomato paste and garlic. Cook 1 minute, or until the paste begins to brown.

Sprinkle flour over the mushroom mixture. Then deglaze with sherry. Scrape up brown bits from the bottom of the pan with a spoon.

Add broth and bring the mixture to a boil, stirring frequently. Stir in cubed beef and return to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes or until the broth is slightly thickened.

Red wine ragout

Here's another recipe from Karen Abbruscato to help you use up leftover beef.

Ingredients

1 lb. meat (beef, pork or veal)
1 slice of bacon, cut into pieces
½ onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic
2 carrots, chopped
Herbs (Oregano, rosemary, bay leaf,
mint and/or zest of orange)
½ cup red wine
1 cup water and 1 bouillon cube

Directions

Place everything in a skillet and cover tightly. Simmer until the veggies are soft.

Any season strata

This strata recipe came from *Cooking with Scraps* by Lindsay-Jean Hard. The veggies can be anything: cauliflower, broccoli, spinach or other greens, squash, mushrooms, tomatoes, corn, etc. The meat can be anything: chicken, pork, beef, sausage, bacon, etc. Or leave out the meat for a vegetarian meal.

Ingredients

6 eggs
1 1/4 cups milk
Salt and pepper to taste
6 cups uncooked veggies and meat (or
3 cups of cooked veggies and meat)
Olive oil for sautéing
6 to 8 cups 1 inch cubed bread
1 cup, more or less grated or crumbled
cheese, time to use up those cheese
nubs!

Directions

Grease a 3-quart baking dish.

Whisk the eggs and milk and add salt and pepper.

Veggies and meat need to be cooked. If they're not, chop them up and sauté them. Maybe add an onion and garlic in the sauté. If the veggies and meat are already cooked, no need to cook them again.

Spread half the bread cubes in the bottom of the greased dish, then half the cheese, half the veggie/meat. Then repeat.

Pour the egg and cheese mixture over everything. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 1 day.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Remove the dish from fridge and bake covered with foil for 30 to 40 minutes. Uncover at the end for some browning, if you wish.

Poultry

Chicken Chimichurri

Ingredients

Left over chicken
2 tbsp. cooking oil
¾ cup Italian parsley
1 tbsp. cider vinegar
2 cloves garlic, halved
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
1 lemon, peel and juice
¼ tsp. salt

Directions

In a small food processor bowl, combine parsley, oil, vinegar, garlic, salt and red pepper.

Process until nearly smooth.

Place chicken on a plate (warm it ahead of time if desired) and top with the chimichurri sauce, lemon peel, and juice.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Zesty chicken wrap

Ingredients

Leftover chicken, chopped
Lime vinaigrette (see below)
4 plum tomatoes
1 cup corn, preferably fresh but frozen is okay
1 cup jicama, chopped
1 mango, peeled and chopped
½ cup red onion, chopped
2 tbsp. fresh mint, leaves sliced in half
8 ten-inch flour tortillas
1/3 cup mayonnaise

Lime Vinaigrette

1 tbsp. shredded lime peel
1 cup lime juice
3 tbsp. oil
2 tsp. ground cumin
¼ tsp. salt

Directions

Mix the ingredients for the lime vinaigrette together.

In a resealable container, combine ¼ cup of the vinaigrette, tomatoes, corn, jicama, mango, onion and sliced mint. Cover and chill for 2 to 4 hours.

Lightly spread the mayonnaise on the tortillas. Divide the chicken evenly among tortillas.

Remove the salsa mixture with a slotted spoon and place the salsa on top of the chicken. Top with mint leaves, then roll up the tortillas and serve.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Chicken with chili-cheese rice

Ingredients

Leftover chicken
Oil for sautéing
1 medium onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup long-grain white rice
2 cups chicken broth
1 can (7oz.) whole green chilies, drained and chopped
1 cup Monterey Jack cheese
1 cup cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped

Directions

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and green chiles to the pan. Cook, stirring frequently until onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add rice and cook, stirring 1 minute more, then pour in broth and bring to a boil. Boil rice 5 minutes, then reduce heat to a simmer, cover pan, and cook for 15 minutes.

Add chicken to the pan and cook until rice is tender, liquid is absorbed, and chicken is warmed, about 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the green chilies, cheese and cilantro. Serve immediately.

—Recipe is from Karen Abbruscato.

Breads

Double onion rolls made with scrap vegetable broth

The vegetable broth that you made with scrap veggies can be used to add flavor to onion rolls. This recipe is from Ariella at <https://www.perspectiveportions.com/reason-save-scrap/>

Ingredients

½ cup vegetable stock
2 tbsp. butter
2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup white whole wheat flour
1 envelope rapid-rise instant yeast
2 tbsp. sugar
½ tsp. sea salt plus more to taste
1 egg
1 cup minced onion
2 tsp. poppy seeds
½ tsp. maple syrup

Directions

Put the vegetable stock and butter into a small saucepan. Heat 2-4 minutes to melt the butter.

In a large mixing bowl, stir together the flours, yeast, sugar and ½ teaspoon salt. Make sure the stock is warm to the touch before adding to the dry ingredients along with the egg. Use a spoon to combine the ingredients as much as possible before switching to using your hands to knead the dough for 6 to 7 minutes until it forms a tacky dough. Cover and place in a warm area to rise for 10 minutes.

Add onion to the saucepan. Season with salt. Cook over medium heat 5 to 7 minutes until translucent. Stir in the poppy seeds and maple syrup. Adjust seasoning to taste.

Transfer the dough to a piece of parchment paper. Roll out to a 10 x 15 inch rectangle. Spread the onion mixture on top, leaving 1" border on the two longest sides. Cut the sheet of dough in half, creating two 15 x 5 inch pieces. Starting from the middle, roll each piece into a log. Cut both logs into 15 pieces. Place the cut pieces onto a parchment paper lined baking tray. Cover and let rise for 20 to 30 minutes in a warm location.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Bake the onion rolls for 15 minutes. Lower the oven to 350°F and bake another 15 minutes. Makes 30.

Old bread croutons

This recipe from Sue Farr is a great way to use up almost any old bread before the mold starts growing. It is best when the bread is a few days stale. You can use any kind of bread from sourdough, old English muffins or old frozen hotdog buns. Do not use anything like cinnamon-raisin bread, but whole grain, seedy, and healthy bread works fine. Use the croutons to top salads, garnish soups, crumble for topping on baked casseroles or eat like a snack!

Ingredients

1/2 cup fat (melted butter or olive oil)

4 cloves garlic, finely minced

About (10 ounce) bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or use a silicone baking mat for easier clean-up.

Stir olive oil and garlic together in a bowl, then warm the mixture slightly in the microwave, just enough to let the garlic oil infuse into the other fats.

Put the bread cubes in a large bowl. Slowly drizzle garlic oil onto the bread. Toss to coat the bread with oil. Spread the bread cubes out in a single layer onto the baking sheet.

Bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes. Turn the croutons and bake 10 minutes more, until the croutons are golden brown. (You can taste while baking for desired crunchiness.)

Store in air tight container for up to 1 week.

Beverages

Watermelon puree

Can't use all of a watermelon before it goes bad? This recipe from Kim Billingsley tells you how to freeze watermelon to use it later. Kim likes to use the watermelon puree for lemonade and for drinks like daiquiris and margaritas.

For daiquiris or margaritas, use a strawberry daiquiri or margarita recipe and replace the strawberries with the watermelon puree. The watermelon lemonade recipe is below.

Directions for the puree

Cut the watermelon in chunks. Then put it in the blender and puree until it is as smooth possible (2-3 minutes). If you want to get rid of some of the pulp, put the puree through a strainer. Then put the puree into jars and freeze.

Agua fresca

This recipe from <http://www.stopfoodwaste.org> is similar to Kim's watermelon puree recipe. You can use melons other than watermelon with this recipe.

Directions for agua fresca

Put roughly-cubed melon, including seeds, into a blender. For watermelon, add ½ cup of water. For cantaloupe or honeydew, add ½ to 1 cup of water, depending on the dryness of the fruit. Add a sweetener or lime juice as desired. Blend. If you want to get rid of some of the pulp, put the mixture through a strainer.

Watermelon lemonade

This recipe from Kim Billingsley uses watermelon puree to jazz up lemonade.

Kim leaves a bottle of coconut rum and a bottle of clear rum beside the pitcher for the adults to add to their lemonade if they want to. She loves to use this recipe for a mixed group of adults and children because everyone's drink looks the same.

Ingredients

1 cup freshly-squeezed lemon juice
1 to 2 cups watermelon puree
¼ to ½ cup simple syrup (below) to taste

Simple syrup:

1 cup water
1 cup sugar

Directions

In a sauce pan, heat the water-sugar mixture over low heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Cool.

Mix all ingredients together. Add Additional cold water and ice to taste.

Watermelon storage

If you don't want to puree your watermelon for these delicious beverages, you might appreciate some tips for storing it. Watermelon stays fresh for 3 to 4 weeks after it is picked. Store an uncut watermelon on the kitchen counter at room temperature. Or, if you're worried about it going bad, you can store an uncut watermelon in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. After you cut it, use it within 3 to 5 days. For cut watermelon that is still on the rind, wrap it in plastic wrap. If you freeze watermelon, be sure to eat it frozen. If it thaws it will be mushy.

What to do with produce that's going bad

Our Challenge participants reported that a significant amount of the food waste they had was due to fruits and veggies going bad before they could use them. Here are some tips from the Food Network for what you can do with your produce that you've let go a little too long.

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/in-season-now/packages/summer-produce-guide/what-to-do-with-produce-thats-about-to-go-bad>

Wrinkly tomatoes—giving them a new life

Ever had so many tomatoes that you can't eat them before they get wrinkly? At that point they do not look appealing enough to add to salads. However, you do not have to toss them at that point. You can transform them into something yummy!

When tomatoes start to get wrinkly, halve them and arrange them cut-side up on a sheet pan. Sprinkle them with salt and bake them in a low oven for several hours. You can then do either of the following:

- Remove them when they still have some moisture and flexibility and use them like classic sun-dried tomatoes.
- Keep baking them for several hours more until they are bone-dry. If you can resist just popping them like chips, pulverize them into a savory powder that you can scatter over salads, eggs, seafood and more.

Transforming wilting greens into pesto

If you need to use up the arugula, spinach or kale quickly because it has started to wilt, you can make it into pesto. Toss the wilted greens into the food processor with some good olive oil, oily nuts (like pine nuts or walnuts), and some grated hard cheese like parmesan, pecorino, or aged gouda. Blend the mixture. The result will be a pesto that tastes great over pasta or on bread as a sandwich spread.

Rescuing bendy carrots and root veggies

Are your carrots as bendy as a gymnast and no longer pleasant to nibble raw? Cut them into bite-sized pieces and toss them — along with sweet potatoes, parsnips, turnips or radishes — in olive oil, salt, pepper, and any herbs or spices you like. Roast in a medium-high oven until they get browned, crispy edges. One warning: Keep your beet chunks separate during roasting, unless you want everything to go pink.

Transforming a sad eggplant

When you start seeing soft spots on your eggplant, you can use it in dishes that call for cooking eggplant until it is mushy. Cook the eggplant with lots of garlic until it's complete mush—a long, slow sauté. Then mash it with a potato masher. Add a handful of fresh herbs to brighten it up. Pour it over pasta or add some feta to it for a delightful dip.

Making a toast spread with berries

If your berries are just going soft in spots and not moldy you can make a “jammy” concentrate. Cook them with sugar until they're falling apart. Then cool and refrigerate them to use as a toast spread, ice-cream drizzle, or pancake topper.

Freezing citrus juice to use later

Even if the skins on your citrus fruits indicate they're past their prime, you can still save the juice. Pour the juice into ice cube trays and freeze for future uses. You can later put a few lime cubes into a Mexican stew or chili for tart zip, stir orange cubes into mixed drinks, or drop some lemon cubes down the garbage disposal to freshen the drain and clean the blades.

Saving those over-ripe bananas

You are no doubt familiar with using an over-ripe banana is for banana bread. But there are other uses. Bananas, especially super-ripe ones, lend a creamy sweetness to smoothies without needing added sugar. So, there is no reason to waste even those dark brown bananas. If you're not ready to make banana bread or a smoothie right away, peel the banana, place it in a resealable plastic bag, and toss it in the freezer. When you're ready for a smoothie, just put a whole frozen banana in a food processor with the other ingredients. You won't need to add ice because your banana is frozen. You can add cocoa powder and milk to the banana mixture for a decadent smoothie; blend in fresh ginger and vanilla yogurt; or do a combo with milk and berries for a sippable and wholesome dessert.

Saving garlic and onions that are past their prime

When your garlic is shooting up green stalks or your onions are getting a little soft beneath their skins, it's time to capitalize on the sweetness you'll get by cooking them to a jam-like consistency.

- For garlic, trim the tops off of a whole garlic bulb with kitchen scissors (so that the cloves are slightly exposed), drizzle with olive oil and salt, wrap in foil, then toss in the oven at 350 degrees F while you roast your dinner. About 45 minutes later, you can squeeze the sweet, soft flesh right out of the skins to enhance mashed potatoes or even spread on bread.
- For onions and shallots, slice thinly, then cook in butter or olive oil over super-low heat, stirring occasionally until caramelized to complete mush, about 1 hour. Use as the base for that famous onion soup (use up day-old crusty bread for the croutons) or for an irresistible (if aromatic) pasta sauce, crostini spread or tart filling.

Using the cores of veggies

Although the outsides of many vegetables might be looking tired or soft, the hearts are usually still full of flavor. Those hearts are perfect for making soup. Trim away any less-than-fresh bits from veggies like broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, celery, kohlrabi, zucchini, and root vegetables. Cut them into small chunks. Add chopped onion or garlic to a pot, cover, then cook them over very low heat in a small amount of oil or butter until everything is soft. Add broth, cover then simmer. Then puree the mixture in a blender to make a veggie-rich soup that you can eat as a first course. To make a heartier meal, add rice or pasta.

Tips from our Challenge participants

What do we waste the most?

Our Challenge participants reported that the foods that they most often waste are fruits and vegetables. The most often cited reason was that they purchased more perishables than they could use before the fruits and veggies spoiled. This finding is consistent with what is reported on the stopwaste.org site as the most often wasted food categories.



What our Challenge participants think you can do to reduce food waste

- Plan your meals.
 - Plan your meals and shop your cupboards and freezer before going to the store.
 - Stick to a meal plan. Don't over buy and don't impulse buy.
 - In addition to planning for family consumption, plan a realistic consumption when entertaining. The most food waste occurs during the holidays when we do a lot of entertaining.
 - Plan to cook smaller quantities.
 - When you make your shopping list, remember to consider what is growing in your garden.
- Buy only what you can eat.
 - Buy smaller quantities of perishables at each shopping trip (dairy-veggies-fruit). This might mean that you have to shop more often for perishables.
- Store food optimally.
 - Store perishables properly.
 - If you grow your own vegetables, harvest them promptly and store them properly.

- To preserve herbs, put a loose plastic bag over them.
- To preserve a cut avocado, put an olive oil coating on the cut side. You can also freeze the avocado.
- Store pantry items with expiration dates in mind.
- For foods that get moldy easily, for example, soft cheeses like cheddar and Monterey jack, use a food saver vacuum packer. Our participant says that since they started doing this several years ago they have never thrown away any moldy cheese.
- Use what you bought promptly.
 - Keep a good eye on the fruits and veggies so you can use them sooner.
 - Leave fruit out where it can be easily seen to encourage eating before it gets rotten.
 - At least every few days, survey the refrigerator to see what should be eaten now. Then prepare meals based on what is closest to going rotten.
- Share food with other families.
 - If you know you won't eat something, find someone to share it with instead of waiting for it to go bad or tossing it.
 - Share Costco size containers of fruits and vegetables with a friend.
 - Send leftovers home with your dinner guests.
- Use a freezer.
 - Freeze leftovers before they can go bad.
 - Freeze leftover veggie and meat scraps for soup. Use your freezer to keep small amounts of leftovers until you are ready to combine into a soup or casserole or stuffing.
 - Make pesto and freeze in ice cube trays.
 - If you have a lemon tree, freeze lemon juice in ice cube trays.
 - Put bread in the freezer and take out a portion at a time.
 - Portion meat after purchase; freeze in medium sized portions-labeled with date and quantity.
 - Don't let foods languish in your freezer so long that they get freezer burn.
- Better manage your leftovers.
 - Rotate the food in the refrigerator. Newer things should go behind older things.
 - Eat up leftovers before shopping again.
 - Decide which leftovers and uncooked veggies you have are suitable for making a vegetable/meat soup. Make soup right away with them or put the leftovers in the freezer for soup later. This is a pretty easy way to eat a variety of veggies on a daily basis.

- Put leftovers in the freezer after you have eaten them for the second time so that you don't get tired off eating them.
- Eat leftovers from dinner for your lunches.
- Create new meals with your leftovers. Combining things in different ways can result in some interesting new dishes.
- Be vigilant with family members about finishing up some foods before starting new ones.
- Use the scraps instead of throwing them out.
 - Instead of throwing out the parmesan rind, use it in tomato sauce and meat stews.
 - Eat the skins, for example, apples, kiwi, and so on.
 - Give leftover veggies to your dog as a treat instead of buying treats for the dog.
- Use imperfect produce.
 - Just cut around bruises on fruit and use the non-bruised part of the fruit.
- Go fewer times to Costco



Tips for disposing of food waste

For most of our Challenge participants, composting is the primary method of disposing of food waste, either as a home composter or via compost service. (One participant does not have compost service available.) Some lucky worms and chickens are beneficiaries of our food waste too!

- Take the time to sort your food waste into garbage, recycling, and food scraps.
- To make it easy to compost (instead of using the garbage disposal or trash), we always keep a paper plate, cup, or empty milk carton or any paper container that can be composted right next to the sink. All food waste can go right off the plates into the container. We take the container out to the green waste bin a few times each day. We almost never run our garbage disposal. Your paper towels can go right into the green waste too.