



NourishNet

A FOOD RECOVERY TOOLBOX



Re-Purposing Leftovers



Most leftovers are perfectly safe to eat, and using them is a great way to save money and reduce waste. So why don't we always eat them? Here are some reasons:

- Leftovers can be forgotten in the fridge. Try hanging a list of your leftovers on the fridge.
- Some people don't enjoy eating the same foods for multiple meals. Try freezing individual portions for later when they don't feel repetitive.

Storing Cooked Food Safely

Keeping cooked food safe is vital when using leftovers.

- Food should be cooled before storing.
- Thaw frozen foods overnight in the fridge, in a microwave, or under cold, running water. Avoid leaving food on the counter to thaw.
- Store leftovers in airtight containers, baggies, or tight wrapping (like plastic wrap or foil) to prevent cross-contamination and keep food fresh.
- Most leftovers will be fresh in the fridge for 3 - 4, days or in the freezer for several months.

Preserve the Life of Leftovers

Freezing is the simplest preservation method and works for a wide variety of foods.

- Use heavy-weight, moisture-resistant wrapping (like freezer paper) and food storage bags to prevent freezer burn.
- Most raw vegetables benefit from blanching (briefly cooking in boiling water) before being placed in the freezer. Blanching helps kill bacteria and preserves the flavor and color of the food.

Cook Once, Eat Twice

Here are some practical ideas to reinvent leftovers into a new meal:

LEFTOVER	REPURPOSE
Baked potatoes	Hash
Rice	Fried rice
Meat	Filling for sandwiches/wraps
Vegetables	Blend into soup
Stale bread	Croutons or breadcrumbs
Overripe fruit	Mash and add to baked goods
Mixed leftovers	Add to stir fry, frittata, omelet or pasta, or layer over rice, quinoa, or greens

Surprising Ways to Re-purpose Food

The only limit is your imagination! Here are some ideas:

- Save a bag of vegetable scraps in your freezer and make stock when full.
- Finely chop greens from root vegetables and use in place of basil for pesto.
- Blend banana peels with a little water and add to banana bread.
- Re-grow leafy foods – try placing the base of lettuce, cabbage, or celery in water and setting it in a sunny window to sprout some new leaves.



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National Science Foundation

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