



# From the Food Bank Kitchen

## Top 10 Tips to Waste Less Food

The average American family throws out \$1,600 worth of food a year. As seen on the Food Network's special, *The Big Waste*, food past its prime can be turned into a delicious meal. You can save money and help reduce food waste in America with just a few smart shopping and cooking tips from the experts at Share Our Strength's *Cooking Matters*. Check out a 5 minute video and more ideas on shopping healthy on a budget at Share Our Strength's [www.cookingmatters.org](http://www.cookingmatters.org).

**Shopping matters:** Reducing food waste begins at the grocery store. Live by the motto "Buy what you need, and eat what you buy." Always have a meal plan and a list before going grocery shopping. Check your pantry and fridge before you head to the store to make sure you are buying what you really need. Try not to go food shopping when you are hungry.

**Cook with canned and frozen fruits and veggies:** Canned and frozen fruits and veggies can be a good solution if you aren't sure you'll be able to use up fresh foods before they go bad. Frozen fruits can be cheaper than fresh & are frozen at peak freshness. Choose items without added sugar, fat or sodium. High sodium veggies and fruits in heavy syrup can be rinsed.

*See next page for 8 more tips and a healthy and delicious Broccoli Soup recipe*

## Vegetable Lasagna

8 servings

Recipe from Chef Mallory Buford, *Cooking Matters*

- 1 (8 oz) package whole wheat lasagna noodles
- 3 c fresh chopped spinach (or thawed, 10 oz package frozen; squeeze all excess water out before using)
- 8 oz button mushrooms, thinly sliced (optional)
- 1 large zucchini, diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 c shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- ½ tsp salt, divided
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 28 oz can No Added Salt tomato sauce or crushed tomatoes
- 1 large egg
- 1 c low-fat cottage cheese or part-skim ricotta cheese

**Nutrition Facts:** Calories 250, Fat 6 gm, Saturated Fat 3 gm, Sodium 460 mg, Carbs 33 gm, Fiber 7 gm, Protein 17 gm

**\*Alternate preparation option:** Replace mozzarella cheese with a package of drained and crumbled extra-firm TOFU. Mix tofu with the egg, cottage or ricotta cheese, and ¼ c shredded parmesan cheese and ½ c shredded cheddar.

**Boost your fiber:** Add any leftover cooked veggies you have around, such as broccoli, carrots, peas, kale, corn, green beans, summer squash, or roasted vegetables.

**TIP:** Cut leftovers into single-size portions and freeze for up to 3 months in an airtight container.

**Directions:** Preheat oven to 350°F. Cook lasagna noodles following package directions. In a colander, drain and run under cold water until cool to the touch. While the noodles are cooking, rinse and cut up the spinach, mushrooms, garlic and zucchini. Grate cheese and set aside 1/4 cup for topping lasagna.

In a medium bowl, add spinach, mushrooms, and zucchini. Stir in 1/4 tsp of the salt. Set over a colander to drain. When completely drained, pat veggies dry with paper towels.

Stir garlic, basil, oregano, remaining 1/4 tsp salt, and black pepper into canned tomatoes to make a sauce. You can do this directly in the can. In a medium bowl, crack egg and beat with a fork. Add cottage cheese and grated mozzarella. Mix. Lightly coat a 9-by-13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Spread 1/2 cup tomato sauce on bottom of dish. Layer 3 noodles over sauce. Then, layer 1 cup cheese and egg mixture, 1½ cups veggies, and 2/3 cup tomato sauce. Repeat layers 2 more times, ending with 3 noodles. Cover with remaining tomato sauce. Sprinkle reserved 1/4 cup grated mozzarella over top of lasagna. Bake until cheese is melted and lightly browned on top and lasagna is bubbly, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven. Let cool 10 minutes before cutting.

**Buy fresh produce a week at a time:** Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in bulk only if you will use them before they get mushy or brown. If you are able to get to the grocery store weekly, buy only enough fresh produce to last that week.

**Stock your pantry:** A well-stocked pantry can be the secret to whipping up a tasty meal from food that would otherwise go to waste. Keep these ingredients on hand to create quick and nutritious meals: canned beans, tuna and salmon; fruits and veggies like pineapple, applesauce, corn, carrots and green beans, tomato products; canned or powdered milk; cereals, dried fruit and nuts, dried herbs, canola and olive oils, cooking spray, pasta and rice, and vinegars for dressings & marinades.

**Adapt recipes to your needs:** Learn to adjust recipes to meet your needs and use up what's in your fridge. Make changes to a recipe based on the foods you have at hand, including leftovers. Freeze single portions of entrees for microwaving later.

**Make the freezer your friend:** Freeze bread when it won't be used right away, or if you have some leftover from a meal; it will keep for 6 months frozen. Freeze leftover vegetables for use in soups or casseroles. Chop and store fresh fruits in the freezer to use for smoothies.

**Use up fresh fruit before it goes bad:** Combine fruits into a fruit salad or top cereal with sliced fruit. Cook berries, apples or pears into a tasty crisp or cobbler. Use overripe fruit in muffins, breads, or pancakes. Blend with yogurt or juice into a smoothie. See Nutrition Tips at [www.foodbankwma.org](http://www.foodbankwma.org) for storage suggestions for various fruits and vegetables.

**Use up fresh vegetables before they go bad:** Add vegetables to soups, stews, casseroles, pastas, rice, sauces, or omelets. Combine vegetables and a little salad dressing for a side dish or snack. Toss with cold pasta and light dressing for pasta salad. Some veggies that keep longer in the fridge are broccoli, cabbage, carrots, celery, brussels sprouts, and parsnips.

**Transform leftovers into a new meal:** Transform leftover mashed potatoes into a hearty soup by combining them with stock, a splash of vinegar, onions, carrots, and any other veggies you have on hand. Slice leftover chicken to make chicken salad for sandwiches, add to soup, casserole or stir-fry, or shred and use to top a mixed greens salad. Beans can be reheated, mashed and spread on tortillas with other toppings, used in chili, soups and stews, or put on top of a salad for protein. Top a baked potato with chili. Leftover rice can be added to rice pudding or added to soups and casseroles. Leftover meat can be sliced for sandwiches, used in meat sauces, chili, stuffed peppers, or added to a stir-fry along with vegetables.

**Stretch ingredients over multiple meals:** Use ingredients more than once to save money and avoid food waste. Try to plan recipes for the week that will use up all of each perishable item you've purchased that week.

**Suggested websites:** [www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings) and [www.cheapcooking.com](http://www.cheapcooking.com)

## Broccoli Soup 8 -1 ½ cup servings Chef Alicia McCabe, Share our Strength's Cooking Matters

1 large onion, diced

1 large potato

1 medium carrot

2 large broccoli crowns

1 medium stalk celery, diced

1 clove garlic, peeled and minced

1½ tsp canola oil

1 whole bay leaf

1 c low-fat (1%) milk

2 (14 ½-ounce) cans or 1 quart low-sodium chicken broth

1 ounce low-fat cheddar cheese, grated

¾ tsp salt

¼ tsp ground black pepper

(optional: ground cayenne pepper or paprika for seasoning)

**Directions:** Rinse and peel onion, potato, carrot, broccoli and celery. Slice potato and carrots into thin slices. Cut broccoli florets away from the stem. Slice stems thinly. In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add celery and onion. Cook until soft and lightly golden brown, about 6-8 minutes. Add garlic and stir. Cook about 30 seconds more.

Add potato, carrot, broccoli stems, bay leaf, milk and broth to pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until veggies are soft, about 15 minutes. Add broccoli florets in the last 10 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf.

In a blender, puree about half the soup. (Use care: fill blender only half full and blend in small batches. You could also use a potato masher or immersion blender). Return blended soup to pot. Add cheese, salt, and pepper. Simmer to melt the cheese, 2-3 minutes. To make this soup into a filling meal, throw in some leftover cooked chicken, pork, or beef.

**Nutrition Facts:** Calories 90, Fat 3 gm, Saturated Fat 1 gm, Sodium 310 mg, Carbs 12 gm, Fiber 2 gm, Protein 6 gm