

# FOOD WASTE REDUCTION



## POST ON LAUNCH DAY

**U**nderstand your household food waste

**S**hop with intent

**E**xpect leftovers and embrace the options

**I**nventory your pantry and shop there first

**T**ry prepping for several meals at once

**A**dd-ins add flavour

**L**abel and date those leftovers

**L**ook for and collect pantry friendly recipes

**U**nless you need it, don't buy it

**P**erishables need TLC



# FOOD WASTE REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

## CFUW STRATFORD - April 25 to July 1st, 2021

### Week 1 - Understanding Food Waste

#### What is food waste?



Food waste is the edible and inedible parts of food left to rot in the soil and in landfills. Food rotting in the ground or in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>.

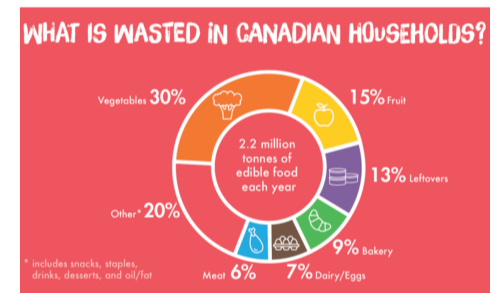
Food discarded in compost bins and green bins also constitutes food waste. Consciously reducing our food waste, finding new uses for what we consider inedible are options not to be ignored. Boiling vegetable peels before discarding them produces a nutritious and tasty vegetable broth, for example.

Cutting down on food waste confers a number of benefits. Consider for just a moment the labour, water, fossil fuels and other resources spent producing all the food never eaten. Food wasted could be distributed to starving populations worldwide and food would still be left over. If food waste were a country, it would be the largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the United States, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

#### What leads to food waste at home?

Food we buy but never eat is a prime culprit. It's not just the scraps left on your plate after a meal. It's the edible parts of fruit and vegetables discarded beforehand. Food forgotten and left to spoil at the back of the refrigerator. Pouring off the oil at the top of a peanut butter jar. Food tossed out simply because it is beyond the date stamped on a package by the manufacturer. Even bones and vegetable peels can be put to good use. It's been estimated that only 37% of household food waste is unavoidable.

<https://lovefoodhatewaste.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/What-Is-Wasted- EN-1024x619.png>



Visit [LoveFoodHateWaste.ca](http://LoveFoodHateWaste.ca)

#### Where does food waste occur in your home?

Some 20% of food bought is never consumed. You need to find out how much and what types of food you discard so as to waste less food, making it possible to lower your weekly grocery bills.



Stratford's green bin program offers you a great way to do just that. You can cut down on food waste by following these easy steps for the next few weeks:

1. Keep a tally of what ends up in your kitchen catcher;
2. When it is time to toss the bag in your green bin, note the date
3. Choose one or two items you will make every effort to consume, instead of discarding
4. When it is time to discard this second bag, repeat steps 1 and 2. Note the date
5. Repeat these steps for several weeks

If it takes longer and longer to fill a bag, celebrate your success. If you are not quite there yet, be kind to yourself; remember change never happens overnight.

This Scrapbook published by Ikea is full of interesting ideas on alternative uses for food waste.

## Week 2 - Shop with Intent

### Why plan ahead?



Time-saving tips can come in handy, given today's busy lifestyles. You may be surprised at just how much time you save simply by engaging in a little meal planning. Shopping with intent simplifies life. Make a list of what you need in the coming days or a week. Only buy what's on your list. That cuts down on impulsive purchases and lowers your food bills. Use everything you buy within the time allotted. You'll waste far less food.

Moreover, it's often the case that meal planning leads to healthier diets. Collect simple recipes that make use of all the healthy ingredients found in your pantry. Buy only what you need. Nothing spoils when you USE IT ALL UP!

Aside from all these benefits, time saved shopping for groceries can be spent on all the other activities you enjoy!

### How to plan for a busy family

Your family is on the go. Planning is not easy. Start by ensuring your family enjoys nutritious meals. Include foods they prefer. Avoid foods that can't be tolerated, or consumed owing to allergies. Your meal plans also ought to include: The number of servings for each meal; meals that use up leftovers; those eaten outside the home, or ordered in.

Don't plan alone. Involve others in your family. Make it fun. Share in shopping for, and preparing, meals. Everyone can offer suggestions. Expand the family's collection of healthy, simple recipes.

Make a list of what you will need for these planned meals. Shop your pantry, your fridge and your freezer first. That way, you'll avoid buying what you already have on hand.



Assess recipes carefully. You may be able to substitute ingredients on hand for those listed in a recipe. The Dieticians of Canada suggest three steps for quick and easy menu planning. Remember, you are on a mission to **USE IT ALL UP!**

### Tips on implementing the plan



Find a meal planning template that works for you. Some digital planners can be shared with family members. A sheet on the fridge works as well.

Meal planning pays off because: You've already decided what to serve; simple recipes are at your fingertips; you've already bought all the ingredients needed; and, you've involved other members of your family who may well join you in preparing your meals. Not sure meal planning is worth the time or trouble? Try it for a few weeks to see.

Google "Meal Planning" for a site that suits your needs. Take a look at this one, for example. It's loaded with simple advice, whether you are planning meals for a large family, or are living on your own.

Plan ahead. Eat well. And save countless dollars on your food bills. All by: **"USING IT ALL UP!"**

## Week 3 - Expect Leftovers

### Learn to Love your Leftovers



Leftovers are part of everyone's food life and deserve a place on your plate. Instead of scraping the remains of a meal, which you have spent time, effort and money preparing, into the trash, consider your options.

Leftovers are begging to be reheated, repurposed or completely reinvented. And they are having a moment! You can watch TV shows about chefs getting creative with leftovers. There are cookbooks, blogs and magazines offering transformational tips you can use to up cycle those leftovers. Social media sites are another resource for sourcing inspiring leftovers recipes.

Delicious food on your plate instead of in the landfill helps you, helps the planet.

**USE IT ALL UP !**

### Learn to Love your Leftovers

Consider actually planning to have one or two meals a week based on leftovers.

If you find that your fridge has several little portions of food from a few different meals : consider offering your version of small plates. Perhaps start with something from the pantry as the first plate: olives, dried fruit and nuts or pickles, and then follow with two or three plated small servings of those leftovers ( and they can be embellished with garnishes, sauces or condiments).

Add some great music, use up those candles and you've created a meal that can feel like a holiday. A mini cheese course using up what you find in the fridge can be a great finishing touch.

End of the week soup and sandwich night can be something to look forward to enjoying, especially if you also combine it with game night. Soups can be made quickly ( think pressure cooker) and are a delicious way to reinvent left- overs. A can of tomatoes, some beans from the pantry, leftover fennel and spinach make fabulous soup. You can add dried herbs, wilted herbs from the fridge or heat it up with a splash of sriracha. Or purée leftover veggies with broth or tomatoes, add flavourings, heat, add a splash of cream ( or sour cream, or cheese) and then top each serving with a handful of plain or spicy peanuts.

There are many amazing ways to enjoy leftovers. Go to [unlockfood.ca](http://unlockfood.ca) and search for the Easy Meals for Great Leftovers e-book.

Have fun, eat great food and remember to **USE IT ALL UP !**



### Photo Challenge!



This week, why not encourage your friends and contacts to make meals from leftovers and start a discussion to share tips and recipes? Take a look in your fridge, check out some of those resources on how to repurpose leftovers, create and then share a photo of your meal.

Remember that if you **USE IT ALL UP !** We all win.

## Week 4 - Inventory your Pantry & Shop There First

### Do you know what's in your pantry?



If you are not too sure, you are not alone. After all, finding out what's in your pantry may seem a lot less important than just about anything else that cries out for attention any day of the week. Even so, imagine how surprised you might be to learn you have three bags of rice stored on different shelves, for example. (Rice keeps for a long time. But other staples, not so much. They go stale. Get tossed out.)

Removing all the clutter from your pantry might seem like something you would gladly put off for another day — even when we tell ourselves that procrastination is the thief of time. But you'll save both time and money on the shorter list of items you'll need from week to week at the grocery store.

If you haven't taken stock for quite a while, it could take a few hours, but it is time well spent. Even better, don't do it alone; recruit a family member or a good friend.

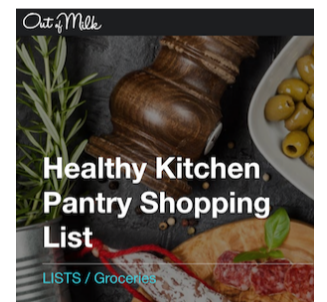
Pour yourselves a glass of wine, watch this clip <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/33284484733794024/>; and then get to work:

1. Start by emptying your pantry or cupboards;
2. Sort what you have by types of food, ie soups, legumes, baking goods...;
3. Place sorted goods in baskets or containers to keep them together;
4. Label your baskets and containers;
5. Be mindful of which goods will need to be consumed first;
6. Shop your pantry and cupboards first when planning your next meals;
7. Minimize your purchases;
8. Use it all up.

### Keeping an up-to-date inventory of your pantry and cupboards

The next step in your quest to reduce food waste is to keep an up to date inventory of your pantry and cupboards. This reducing food waste site provides ingredients and food lists to ensure your pantry, fridge and freezer are well stocked. There are also lists adapted to the needs of families, couples, people living alone, people with dietary needs. You can print the lists that appeal to you and edit them to your own taste and needs. Why reinvent the wheel?

Our next post will help you figure out how to **USE UP** all these ingredients, sorted and listed in your inventory.



### Find recipes to USE IT ALL UP!



FOODNETWORK.COM  
Easy Pantry Recipes  
Worried you don't have enough ingredients on hand

What would you say to a gastronomical world tour? Simply Google "Recipes for (2-3 ingredients you must use up); or if you prefer type "a country using...", "vegetarian using..", "gluten free using...". You will be amazed at the results. You will find new ways to prepare simple meals your family will enjoy, and gradually Use it all up.

Alternatively, you could simply navigate pantry recipe or the panoply of sites that cater to specific needs. Preparing tasty and nutritious meals need not be complicated. Involve other members of your family. Cooking is a useful skill for everyone to master.

## Week 5 - Try Prepping Several Meals at Once

### Find creative ways to Use It All Up!



Most of us share the goal of wanting to eat delicious and healthy meals without wasting the food which we have chosen and for which we've paid ( or had delivered to the door by friends with gardens! ) Saving time, saving money and making individual efforts towards saving the planet are possible with some advance prepping and planning.

When you have an abundance of an item it's fun to look for creative new ways to use it all up. Stalks of rhubarb are not just for dessert. After you've had a tasty pie, try rhubarb in a BBQ sauce, ketchup or chutney. Now you've got some condiments all ready to accompany the next backyard cookout.

Asparagus is also versatile. Steamed asparagus in a salad with an orange vinaigrette, grilled asparagus to add to a creamy mushroom pasta dish one day and then used for a ciabatta sandwich- grilled asparagus, old cheddar, chipotle mayo and some greens. Prep your meals while planning to use produce (and other items too) in multiple ways.

### Prepping for snacks and meals

“What is there to eat?” is much easier to answer if you've tried prepping and planning some meals in advance. With grilling season in high gear, plan to cook enough of what you're barbecuing to ensure extra amounts for later in the week.

Grilled chicken and vegetables for one meal can be transformed into a chicken, mandarin and almond salad bowl for another, perhaps a chicken, tomato and bean soup for a second and a quick grilled veggie and herbed cream cheese sandwich for a quick but tasty lunch. Try prepping produce ahead for a few meals -check your plan for the week and look for ways to double up prep. Chopped onions may be needed for 2 or 3 meals, peppers, carrots and broccoli may be going into fajitas ,frittatas or used for snacking and fennel might be roasted as a side or sliced thinly later to toss with apples, toasted walnuts and a vinaigrette.



Keep trying to look for ways to prep ahead – it will become a habit with some persistence.

There are many resources available to help you. Check out [webmd.com](http://webmd.com) (search for Tips and Tricks for Advance Meal Prep) or the selection of healthy recipes at [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org) or [Canada's Food Guide](http://Canada's Food Guide).

Your food prep efforts will make a difference! **Use It All Up!**

### Try prepping for multiple meals



For your challenge this week try a cook once, eat twice (or thrice). Idea! BBQ extra portions of your favourite protein along with various vegetables, perhaps including mini potatoes.

Try post BBQ meals such as shredded chicken mixed with honey mustard coleslaw on garlic bread, a quick cracker, carrot sticks and hummus topped with chopped, grilled veggies. Finish with a pantry friendly tuna and dill pickle potato salad. Delicious!

## Week 6 - Adds-In Adds Flavour

### Adds-In



Add in bursts of flavour as you create meals using tasty foods from your fridge or from your freezer or from your pantry! “Leftovers” can be transformed when you consider a umami boost, a condiment infusion or a generous dose of herbs or spices.

Rehydrate some dried mushrooms from your pantry and they become a quick way to punch up a pasta dish, stir fry or risotto. Ground up dried mushrooms can be sprinkled over almost anything—even better combine them with some other herbs. (celery seed, garlic, basil and onion work well). A bit of chilli oil, sambal or sriracha is also transformative - honey and sriracha drizzled on leftover veggies is amazing.

If condiments such as fig jams, hot pepper jelly or flavoured mustards are languishing in the fridge, make a grilled cheese sandwich and spread condiments on the insides of the bread before adding cheese (use up odds and ends). A bit of mayo spread on the outside makes for a crispy result.

Tomato paste, Worcestershire, parmesan cheese, soy sauce and kimchi all have what it takes to add in some extra flavour to your leftover game.

Asparagus is also versatile. Steamed asparagus in a salad with an orange vinaigrette, grilled asparagus to add to a creamy mushroom pasta dish one day and then used for a ciabatta sandwich- grilled asparagus, old cheddar, chipotle mayo and some greens.

Prep your meals while planning to use produce (and other items too) in multiple ways.

### Flavour Helps Use It All Up

The abundance of seasonal fruits and vegetables can lead to increased food waste – in fact, Canadians lose 30% of purchased produce. This represents not only money lost but also farm labour and land misuse and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Our efforts as individuals can make a positive difference – have a few flavour add-in tricks up your sleeve. You’ll have delicious meals, you’ll save money and you’ll have a positive impact on climate change.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Bits and pieces of fruits and vegetables can be turned into quick pickles (search online for recipes) for an amazing addition to sandwiches, salads and almost anything else. Pickled strawberries and asparagus are delicious.

Herbs and/or citrus zest can be used for flavoured butters that pair with anything grilled or as a sandwich spread.

Salsa can be embellished with fridge finds. Toss in apples or raspberries, green onions, leftover broccoli or grilled vegetables.

Wilted greens can become a base for a pasta dish. While pasta is boiling (save some of the starchy pasta water when draining), sauté wilted greens in garlicky oil and add in red pepper flakes, lemon zest and black pepper. Toss in some ricotta cheese, add some pasta water. Stir in the pasta and top with toasted almonds or walnuts. Pasta is pretty forgiving so change it up to suit what’s left in your fridge and pantry.



### USE IT ALL UP!



This awareness campaign was launched on Earth Day to offer 10 weeks of information about household food waste. You can take action! Skim through all the posts for tips, suggestions, and links.

## Week 7 - Labels and Dates

### Label and date your foods!



It's easy to forget about an unlabeled food item and this can lead to unnecessary food waste. You took the time to purchase, prepare and store this food – don't waste it! Label it! Check out [these facts](#) about food waste in Canada.

### Best Before and Expiration Dates

Date labelling on pre-packaged foods is a valuable source of information. A basic understanding of what terms are used can help you to better understand these labels:

There are different kinds of date markings, depending on the product. The most common terms are “best-before” dates, “packaged on” dates, and “expiration” dates. Knowing what these terms mean will help you understand the labels, which in turn will help you make informed choices about the food you buy and lessen food waste at home.

Check out this [Canadian Food Inspection Agency link](#) for more details.



### Label your Leftovers



Whatever is left from your meal, store and label for another meal! Here are some easy ways to label your leftovers:

- With a sharpie. Yes, even on reusable containers — a scrubby dish sponge will wash the ink right off!
- With a dry-erase marker. Rubs right off!
- With masking tape or blue painter's tape, write on the tape, then peel off when done!

More tips:

- Glass storage containers are reusable, sustainable and they allow you to see what's inside.
- Always use a clean container to hold the leftovers.
- Keep different types of leftovers separate.
- Eat refrigerated leftovers within 2 to 3 days, or freeze them for later use.
- Learn how to [safely freeze liquids in mason jars](#).

Whatever you choose, make sure your labeling method is always within arm's reach when you're putting things away in the fridge. And share your tricks and tips with others!

## Week 8 - Look for and Collect Pantry Friendly Recipes

### Interesting Last Minute Meals



Last minute meal planning can lead to an increase in food waste – and no one actually wants to waste food. Looking for and collecting pantry friendly recipes can really help you to: **Use It All Up!**

Everyone is going to need last minute pantry supplied meals. Look for some interesting meal options that rely on what you have included in your pantry and that suit your family's preferences.

To get you started as you look for ideas:

– Pasta, tossed with some tuna, beans, sun dried tomatoes and garlic or chili oil.

– Quick salmon chowder- cook potatoes in broth, roughly smash and add salmon, dill. Top with something crunchy (a few tortilla chips), something cheesy (look in the fridge) and something savoury (maybe bacon). No rules- try out different combos.

– Garlicky chickpeas with sautéed spinach (frozen works well) and lots of caramelized onions (prepare ahead and freeze or use sautéed onions) Toss in some toasted almonds and sprinkle on some za'atar or your own spice blend. Look in the fridge for herbs and veggies that need to be added. If you've got some sour cream to use up – blend the spices into it and dollop on top.

More food on your plate and less food in the landfill or your Green Bin means you are taking positive climate action!

### Pantry Staples for Fast Meals

Super tasty suppers don't need to be elaborate. Look to your pantry (and fridge or freezer) to provide the basis for some quick dinners that are particularly perfect for mid week. Find a few that work for your family and make them favourites for fast meals.

Supplement those pantry staples with previously prepared veggie, pre-cooked grains and rice and fridge items waiting to be used (remember those herbs, bits of cheese, grilled veggies and meats).

The following are a couple of ideas for fast pantry based meals, make adjustments, and make them your own as you look to **Use It All Up!**

– Start with some canned crushed tomatoes (or partly drained chopped tomatoes with some tomato paste). Add in some chopped green onions, herbs from the fridge, spices from the pantry and veggies (frozen or fresh). Once everything has simmered together for a while, crack in some eggs (don't stir- leave as intact as possible), cover and simmer until eggs are cooked to your taste

Leftover sausage, ham etc could also be added to the simmering sauce.

– Leftover bread is great for French toast. Follow your favourite recipe but give it a savoury twist. After making the French toast, place it on a baking sheet, spread with a bit of hot pepper jelly, or mustard and top with grated cheese. Broil until cheese is bubbly and then serve with some drained, canned peaches.

Check out the [Canadian Food Focus website](#) for more ideas, information and inspiration!

### Friendly Pantry Challenge



For a challenge this week, take a look at what you store in your pantry and/or freezer and look for five recipes that suit your family and highlight those ingredients. Commit to giving at least one of them a try over the next week.

Canned tomatoes might inspire a tomato broccoli soup with peanuts for a garnish and a dash of sumac or ground chipotle for extra flavour. Lentils could transform into a coconut curried lentil soup. Frozen corn and shrimp with a bit of bacon and dairy become a quick and tasty chowder. Macaroni and cheese is enhanced with the addition of an assortment of vegetables – frozen peas and carrots, squash and spinach or sun dried tomatoes and mushrooms. Bake some sweet potatoes, scoop out and mash with tuna, roasted red peppers and a flavoured mayo- put back into potato skins and re-bake for a half hour.

No need to worry about coming up with ideas on your own – do a bit of searching online and you'll soon have an abundance of recipes to choose from. Looking for and using these pantry friendly recipes will help you to **Use It All Up!**

## Week 9 - Unless You Need It, Don't Buy It

### Unless You Need It, Don't Buy It



Our USE IT ALL UP food waste awareness campaign continues with this week's focus: Unless you need it, don't buy it! We often waste food when we buy more than we need or buy food on impulse that won't last long and either doesn't go with other ingredients we have at home or isn't something the family likes much.

Here are a few quick tips and reminders to consider:

- Some studies show that buying in bulk tends to lead to more food waste. Beware of “buy more, save more” marketing for food products, especially fresh foods. Yes, the cost per item is less at the checkout, but if you buy more than you can eat soon or can freeze, or if it's going to sit in your pantry or freezer indefinitely as a special ingredient waiting for its moment that never comes, the food will likely be wasted and there's no real savings.
- And a sale isn't a savings if no one likes it in the first place. Sometimes it's hard to pass up a bargain, but why buy something your family doesn't really like to eat just because it's cheap? You may have some buyer's remorse later as it goes bad in the fridge! Reduced or sale items are a good purchase if you know how you're going to prepare them and who will eat them.
- If you can plan at least some of your meals ahead, you're more likely to use the fresh items that you buy in a timely way and avoid waste. It pays to have a better idea of what you need! Check out our posts with meal planning tips in [Week 2](#). Buy only what you need and you'll find it easy to **USE IT ALL UP!**

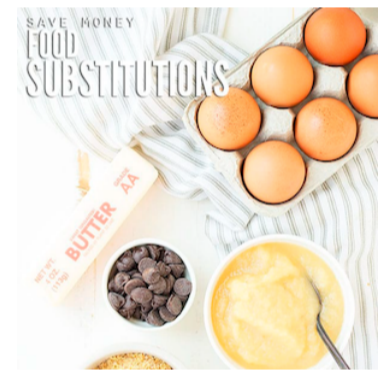
### Get to Know Substitutions

Here's another way to avoid buying food you won't use up:

When a recipe calls for a small amount of something that is sold only in larger quantities — and you're not likely to use or freeze the extra or give it away — find a substitute ingredient so you don't have to buy what you won't use!

You can get to know easy substitutions for “oddball ingredients” in recipes or for fresh ingredients that you don't use often or keep on hand.

Need 1 cup of buttermilk for pancakes or muffins, not the 1 litre sold in the grocery store? There are many substitutions! And did you know if you're short of butter, you can try substituting applesauce for half the butter in a baking recipe? You can also substitute dried herbs for fresh herbs when cooking, just use 1/3 the amount specified.



Here's a blog with [25 substitution suggestions](#) to avoid waste and save money.

Remember, don't buy food you don't need when you are on a mission to **USE IT ALL UP!**

### Shopping Challenge



This week's challenge is: Don't buy what you don't need. It sounds simple! But it takes some effort and awareness. As large portions and big packages have become the norm, most of us now associate large quantities with better value. Plus, grocery stores and food suppliers entice us to buy more than we need by offering discounts if you buy more of the same item. But we don't save money on the discount if the extra goes to waste!

So this week, before you go shopping, take note of the foods you finish every time you buy them (good value!) and the foods that most often go to waste and make a point not to over-buy. Write up a shopping list. And when you're in the store and see something not on your list that looks like a good value or a yummy treat, ask yourself: Will I **Use It All Up?**

We might need to cultivate new habits and pay more attention to be more responsible food consumers, but remember, over the long run we save money and save the environment by stocking up on large quantities of food items only if we eat them regularly.

Plan ahead. Eat well. And **USE IT ALL UP!**

And check out [UN Sustainable Development Goal #12](#) which includes a focus on food waste: “Sustainable consumption and production is about doing more and better with less.”

## Week 10 - Perishables Need TLC

### Perishables Need Tender Loving Care!



We all buy, store, prepare and/or enjoy food. Thus we all can make everyday choices that mitigate climate change. Half of the food in Canada is wasted and most of that is the perishables, the fruit and vegetables.

A **new nation-wide survey** shows that Canadians are wasting less food during COVID-19 public health measures. In the survey, Love Food Hate Waste Canada and the National Zero Waste Council found that more people are discovering ways to use or extend the life of perishables.

Check out **these food storage tips** from the American Heart Association. And see **this fridge guide** because where you store your food in your fridge matters.

(Image from [LoveFoodHateWaste.ca](http://LoveFoodHateWaste.ca))

### Who Knew?

Perishables can last a lot longer given some extra TLC. Check out **this link** for lots of tips. For example, iceberg lettuce should be stored in a lettuce crisper. If you don't have one, wrap the iceberg in paper towels and store in an airtight bag. Other lettuces and salad leaves should be removed from packaging and stored in an airtight container. Lettuce gone a bit limp? Soak individual leaves in a bowl of cold water in the fridge and they'll soon perk up.



### Hot Tip! Use your Freezer!



You can freeze chilli peppers whole and then while still frozen, cut and add them to your cooking pot. Roasted peppers can be stored in olive oil in an airtight container in the fridge.

Share your tips and tricks for keeping perishables fresh longer in the comments. How your expensive but nutritious veggies and fruit are lasting longer!

Check out **this handy tool from SaveTheFood.com** with details for how to store food from beans, nuts and proteins, to meat, poultry and seafood, and much more.

Together, our efforts will shrink the Canadian food waste problem! **Use It All Up!**