



# Thanksgiving Ideas

## Tips To Reduce Food Waste At Thanksgiving

by Dr. Jean Buzby

(NAPS)—Each year, the average American family of four loses \$1,500 to uneaten food—that's about 1,160 pounds of food. At holiday or any time, it's a good idea to think about how you can keep household food waste in check.

Thanksgiving may be different this year, but we can still have a special celebration with a few adjustments, while, at the same time, reducing food waste. As the USDA Food Loss and Waste Liaison, I would like to share with you a few tips that can help reduce food waste at our holiday meals and save you money.

### Plan Your Holiday Meal

Before you go to the grocery store or order online, make a list to ensure that you only buy what you need. Making a written list helps you avoid impulse purchases, which may include foods they don't need. For turkey, one rule of thumb is to plan for one pound per person, or a pound and a half if you want leftovers. For smaller gatherings, consider preparing only the favorite family side dishes. If you want to prepare all of your family's traditional dishes, consider cutting recipes in half. And coordinate in advance if you have guests who want to bring a dish.

You might also want serve one type of your favorite rolls or dessert instead of several.

### Save Scraps

Freeze such scraps as vegetable peelings and meat trimmings for future culinary creations. Use them in savory broths and hearty soups. Season potato peelings and bake them into chips. Sauté extra chopped onions for recipe-ready caramelized onions.

### Save and Share Leftovers

Place food in clear containers marked with the contents and date to increase the chances the leftovers will be remembered and eaten. If you have guests who want leftovers, let them choose their favorite dishes so that their take-away food containers match what they will really enjoy.

### Be Creative

You can make great breakfast fritters with leftover mashed potatoes. Extra rolls and bread going stale can become bread pudding. Try making homemade turkey stock with the bones, or turkey chili with leftover meat. Whip extra buttermilk or cream into French toast bat-



**Your family's Thanksgiving celebration can be even better when you know you've not let food or money go to waste.**

ter. You could even start a new family tradition of serving a pot of turkey soup on the weekend after Thanksgiving.

A great tool that you can use in your home to reduce food waste is the FoodKeeper App, which provides guidance on storage (e.g., in a refrigerator or freezer) for more than 650 food and beverage items and helps you track storage times for different foods. For example, for freshness and quality, rotisserie chicken should be consumed within three to four days when stored in refrigerator or within four months if stored frozen. This app also provides guidance on safe handling and preparation with helpful cooking tips, such as how to thaw and roast a turkey by weight. FoodKeeper is available free as a mobile application for Android and Apple devices, or via desktop at [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov).

### Donate

If you have extra cans of pumpkin pie filling, green beans, or cranberry sauce, consider donating them to a food bank to help those in need. To find a food bank nearby, visit the Feeding America website or EPA's Excess Food Opportunities Map.

### Compost

Composting your food scraps can help your garden grow. Learn how to get started with composting resources from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Or, look into community compost or compost opportunities. Make sure you toss only organics in the collection container and keep out produce stickers and noncompostable plastic bags, service ware, or utensils.

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