

Ask the Expert: What is Sustainable Nutrition?

Written by Emma Araya, Nutrition and Dietetics Student at Purdue University '26

Sustainability can be a complicated concept to understand. There are many different roles sustainability plays in our lives, especially in the food system. According to the United Nations Brundtland Commission, sustainability means meeting needs of people right now while not hurting the ability of people in the future to meet their needs.

In terms of nutrition, sustainability means getting a healthful and balanced diet that also has a lower impact on the environment. The goal of sustainable nutrition is to make sure people now and in the future have accessible, affordable, and nutritious foods. One area that sustainability aims to improve is food waste. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that food waste makes up 30-40% of the food supply. The USDA's Economic Research Service reported 133 billion pounds of food waste in 2010 and more and more every year after that!

Eating sustainably and healthfully, and reducing food waste can be both simple and affordable. Here are some tips:

- **Expand the life of fruits and vegetables**

Eating fruits and vegetables is important to improve health. Fruits and vegetables have a limited shelf-life. But even when these items in their raw forms are not as fresh and may not taste as good, they can still taste good and be safe and healthy when cooked. Try adding "less fresh" fruits and vegetables to stews, stocks, and smoothies.

- **Make a grocery list**

Making a list before you head to the supermarket can help you buy only what you need and avoid buying food that you might not use and that might be wasted.

- **Safely consume foods after their "use-by" dates**

Companies label food with "use-by" dates that show the date for peak quality. It is important to remember that these are not expiration dates and that the foods within these packages may still be safe to consume after the "use-by" dates. Checking the foods for mold, odor, or other changes can give signs whether they are still safe to eat.



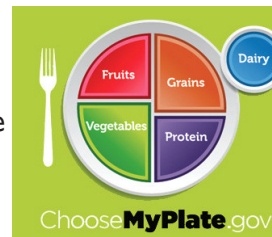
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Food Safety: Safe Handling of Dairy Products

Written by Emma Araya, Nutrition and Dietetics Student at Purdue University '26

Dairy is a big part of the American diet. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has included dairy as food group in MyPlate, an icon showing the food groups and portion sizes that are recommended for health in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Since dairy has a limited shelf-life, it's very important to look at the dates on the packages, and make sure to properly store dairy foods. When dairy is not kept cool or stored properly, the chances for foodborne illness can increase. Follow these tips to keep your dairy products safe:



- **Refrigerate at 45F or below**

The refrigeration of dairy is very important to keeping a long shelf-life. Storing dairy above 45F can lead to bacteria growth and spoiling.

- **Store dairy in the back of the refrigerator**

The back of the fridge is usually the coldest part. Dairy should be stored in the back so that it does not warm up when the refrigerator door is opened.

- **Store liquid dairy in original containers**

Try keeping milk, yogurt, and other liquid dairy products in their original containers. This will help keep these products tasting fresh and stop them from picking up other flavors.

- **Do not eat or drink unpasteurized dairy products**

Raw (unpasteurized) dairy products can increase the risk for foodborne illnesses. Raw dairy may contain dangerous bacteria like Salmonella, E.Coli, and listeria. Make sure to buy only pasteurized dairy products.



Source: <https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/safe-handling-of-milk-dairy-products/#:~:text=All%20fresh%20fluid%20milks%20should,off%2Dflavor%20and%20curdled%20consistency>, <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate>, https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/raw_milk_related/dangers_of_drinking_raw_milk.htm#:~:text=Raw%20milk%20can%20contain%20dangerous%20bacteria%20

Anytime Pizza

Directions

1. Place bread in oven to slightly brown, about 5 minutes.
2. On the bread, evenly spread the tomato sauce.
3. Spread the shredded cheese across the bread.
4. Add all chopped vegetables onto the bread,
5. Place bread with toppings back in oven for about 5-7 minutes.
6. Sprinkle Italian seasoning on top. Cut into slices and enjoy!

Ingredients (4 servings)

- *1/4 or mini Baguette or Italian Bread*
- *1/2 cup tomato sauce**
- *1/2 cup shredded cheese (any kind)**
- *1/4 cup green peppers, chopped*
- *1/4 cup sliced mushrooms, (fresh or canned)*
- *Sprinkle of Italian seasoning (optional)*



Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 180
Protein: 11g
Carbs: 18g
Fat: 7g

***foods included in the TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)**

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/anytime-pizza>

Eating Right: Repurposing Leftovers

Written by Abigail Rosborough, Biomedical Health Sciences Student at Purdue University '26

Food waste rates are a global problem and many factors add to the problem like the way that food is grown, distributed, and even how it is eaten. The United States adds 92 billion pounds of food waste to the problem. Of this, Indiana alone is responsible for 1.6 million tons. To help limit the amount of food waste your household has, you can repurpose leftovers! Doing this is not only helpful to limit food waste but also can help you save money.



Use the following tips to reduce waste and repurpose food:

- **Don't throw away scraps**

Any scraps can be repurposed to make a new meal. Try using vegetable scraps in an omelette or make a hash.

- **Save meat bones and inedible parts**

You can use leftover meat bones and parts to make stocks, stews, and broths. These items add a lot of flavor and can also add nutrients.

- **Freeze leftovers**

If you aren't able to eat all your leftovers, freeze them! When stored properly in airtight containers, leftovers can stay safe in the freezer for up to 4 months.

- **Use all parts of fruits and vegetables**

Stems and peels are almost always cut off of produce. However, they can have added nutritional benefits. For example, using broccoli stems in soups and casseroles can add new textures and provides additional fiber, calcium, iron, and zinc.

Repurposing leftovers will help you to use the food you purchase, decrease time spent cooking, and help you spend less money on food. It is also helpful for the planet and to start sustainable food habits.

Sources:

<https://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/2023/09/19/too-much-food-wasted-food-use-by-dates-sell-by-labeling-is-the-problem/70892910007/#:~:text=There%20are%201.6%20million%20tons,that%20are%20unsold%20or%20uneaten.> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/reduce-food-waste#:~:text=Food%20waste%20statistics%20in%20the,billion%20worth%20of%20food%20annually,https://tellus.ars.usda.gov/stories/articles/look-leftovers-reduce-food-waste#:~:text=Reuse%20or%20freeze%20leftovers,pita%20pizza%20or%20baked%20pasta.>



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This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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In The News: September Was National Whole Grains Month!

IN THE NEWS

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

September marked national whole grains month! The Whole Grains Council celebrates by focusing on the importance of whole grains, recipes, and how whole grains exist in different cultures. Whole grains include a variety of oats, wheat breads and pastas, brown rice, and more.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends everyone to make at least half of their grains whole. In a survey the council conducted, they found that more than 33% of Americans reported consuming more whole grains in the past five years. According to the National Institute of Health, consuming whole grains can reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Whole grains also provide important nutrients like fiber, magnesium, and various B vitamins that are not naturally found in white flour products.

The Whole Grains Council recommends looking for items that contain the whole grain seal, which means they have been certified and evaluated. This provides information to the consumer about trustworthy and certified whole grain products.



Sources: <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/blog/2023/08/survey-shows-more-75-percent-americans-think-they-should-increase-their-whole-grain#:~:text=Impressively%2C%20this%20survey%20found%20that,make%20half%20your%20grains%20whole,https://wholegrainscouncil.org/get-involved/celebrate-whole-grains-month-september#:~:text=Every%20September%2C%20we%20celebrate%20the%20goodness%20of%20whole%20grains,https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC53109571,https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/what-should-you-eat/whole-grains/>