

MODULE 2: SHOPPING & STORAGE | TRANSCRIPT

LESSON 9

Zero Food Waste

As you're now aware, Americans toss almost half of the food they bring home every year, and knowing how to properly store and extend the life of produce can help us get the most out of our purchases. We've just gone over a ton of tips and tricks, but if you've stored, cooked, frozen, and batched the goods and you still have some questionable leftover produce, before you toss or compost, try these ideas to help you keep food waste to an absolute minimum.

Browned bananas

Nothing helps make banana muffins or bread more delicious than an overripe banana or two. So, don't throw overly spotted bananas away! Put them in the fridge and know that the fridge will make the peel black, but the inside of the banana will be firm enough and mostly bruise-free—ready to use in all sorts of recipes from banana muffins to warm cereals. You can also peel and slice banana(s) and then lay them on a cookie sheet. Pop them in the freezer to freeze completely, then transfer to a freezer-safe bag or container to use for smoothies and easy gelato. Always peel and slice bananas before freezing (have you ever tried to peel a frozen banana?). Check out the Good Food Recipe Index for ideas.

Bruised or withering fruit

Turn sad-but-mold-free fruit into a happy sweet treat. Simply cook it down with a little natural sweetener, a pinch of salt, and water to make compote and then blend to make fruit butter. Or make cobbler by chopping, tossing with cinnamon, honey or maple syrup, and a pinch of salt, then spoon into a casserole dish and top with a mixture of rolled oats, chopped nuts, cinnamon, natural sweetener, a touch of oil, and a pinch of salt, then bake. Use ramekins for mini cobblers. You can even freeze them for future desserts. Check out the Good Food Recipe Index for ideas.

Green tops

Save beet greens, turnip greens, radish tops, and carrot tops to sauté with garlic, onion, maybe a splash of vinegar, a pinch of natural sweetener, citrus juice, and salt and pepper to taste. It's delicious. Check out the Good Food Recipe Index for ideas—almost any recipe that calls for hearty, dark greens could use green tops in the mix.

Also, save washed strawberry tops to blend into smoothies or ice creams—they have a nice herby-strawberry flavor. They're also nice steeped as a tea. Just strain and chill for iced tea or serve warm with honey.

Herb stems

Make a pesto out of soft herbs stems (not thyme or rosemary though, they're too woody). Or you can blend herb stems into a creamy, herby sauce. Try chopping them up to use for vinaigrettes or creamy sauces and dips. Lots of options here. Check out the Good Food Recipe Index for more ideas.

Overripe avocados

If you didn't get to all of your avocados before they got too soft, make chocolate pudding! That's right. Purée the avocado flesh with cacao powder, maple syrup, a pinch of salt, and vanilla extract to taste. Add a little canned coconut milk for extra creamy, mousse-like decadence. Check out "Chocolate Avocado Pudding" in the Good Food Recipe Index for steps and measurements.

Revive

You already know that wilted or soft carrots, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, and hearty greens will crisp up and straighten out with a plunge into an ice-water bath for 5–15 minutes. If that still doesn't bring them back, you can still roast and enjoy them, or blend them into a sauce, or blend into a smoothie. You can also freeze for making veggie stock later, or make some right now! Check out "Easy Vegetable Stock" in the Good Food Recipe Index for steps and measurements.

Scraps

When you're not using scraps of uncooked produce for veggie stock, know that you can regrow certain foods at home. It's true! Save celery bottoms, scallion roots, and lettuce cores to soak in water for 24 hours. Then, replant the soaked roots in some organic soil—if the veggies were organic to begin with (not radiated, so alive), they should grow into new plants. You don't even need a garden or yard to do this. Small-apartment dwellers can try it in a small planter in a sunny windowsill.

Stalks

Roast kale stems and broccoli stalks to soften them, remove bitterness, and add deep, rich flavor and then blend into pesto, bean dips, and sauces or use to thicken and flavor soups. Save beet green stalks to make simple soups with basic ingredients you probably already have around the house, like onions and garlic.

Lesson Actions

Share with friends, family, or the course community one thing that resonated most from this lesson and why.

What's one thing you will put into practice to minimize food waste in your home?

Write it down in your cooking journal so it matters.