



 spoonfuls

**Personal**

**Wasted Food**

**Audit**

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## About This Audit

Nearly half of the food that goes to waste in the U.S. each year – that’s 42.8 million tons! – is wasted at home. That means individuals can play a big role in reducing wasted food, keeping it out of landfills, and using it for its highest and best purpose: feeding people.

You can use our “Personal Wasted Food Audit” tool to help you figure out how much and what you waste and to make habit change in the areas you need to. Also, if you haven’t already, take our [Pledge to Waste Less](#) as another way to take action to curb your wasted food footprint.

## About Spoonfuls

Spoonfuls (formerly Lovin’ Spoonfuls) delivers food with purpose. Through food recovery and distribution, education, and advocacy, we work to address the health, environmental, and economic impact that wasted food has on people and the planet.

## Instructions

1. Download or print a copy of the Personal Wasted Food Audit (page 4). If you print it, keep it with a pen near your trash or compost bin as a reminder to take it. If you're completing your audit online, set a reminder (on your phone, for example) to spend a few minutes each day of this week auditing.
2. As much as you can over one week, record every time you put food in the trash or compost bin. You can fill out this form in real-time or set aside time daily to reflect back.
3. Add up your scores at the end of the week.
4. When the week is done, take some time to consider how you did using the prompt questions on page 5. Then review the suggestions on page 6 for reducing your wasted food footprint based on *your* personal audit score.
5. Spend time over the next couple of weeks making changes in your habits based on our suggestions and your own ideas.
6. Once you're confident in your new habits, take the audit again! Compare the ways things have changed since the last time. The goal is to see your wasted food footprint get smaller from one audit to the next.
7. Keep those habits going strong. Tell others what you're up to and encourage them to join you.

## Reminders

You want to track only food that could have been eaten. That means, for example:

- Bananas count, but banana peels don't.
- Eggs count but eggshells don't.
- A moldy apple counts. It's not edible *now*, but it was a couple of days ago.
- Stuff going down the drain like milk or juice counts as waste, too.

The WHY is as important as the WHAT. By tracking why your food went to waste, you can identify ways to change your habits and prevent that waste next time.

Keep us posted. We'd love to hear about your progress!

Questions?  
[communityrelations@spoonfuls.org](mailto:communityrelations@spoonfuls.org).

# Personal Wasted Food Audit Tool

		A	B	C	D
Today's date	Food Item Wasted (and Amount, optional)	Was any of this food "leftovers" that you didn't use up?  (1 if yes, 0 if no)	Was any of this food wasted because the date on its label had passed?  (1 if yes, 0 if no)	Think back to when you bought this food. Was it an impulse buy, or something that wasn't on your shopping list but you bought it anyway?  (1 if yes, 0 if no)	Is this food that has spoiled (for example: a moldy apple, sour milk, or green meat)?  (1 if yes, 0 if no)
April 1	1 Apple	0	0	0	1
April 1	3 Chocolate chip muffins	0	1	1	0
<b>Scores in each category:</b> (Add up totals in each Column, A-D)					
<b>Total Score</b> (Add up the total of Columns A - D):					

# What's Next?

## Step 1: Consider your Total Score. If your Total Score is:

- **8 or more, your wasted food footprint is large**, and there is a lot of room to reduce your wasted food footprint. There are also many strategies you can take to do it!
- **4-7, your wasted food footprint is about average**. Try finding a few ways to get your wasted food footprint closer to zero.
- **3 or less, your wasted food footprint is small**. Great work! Can you cut down your wasted food footprint completely? There's almost always room for improvement!

## Step 2: Take a closer look at your audit and find where there is room for improvement.

### Here are some questions to help you dig deeper:

- Is there a day during which more food was wasted than other days? Is there a reason why this day topped the rest?
- Is there an item or category of food (like veggies) that was wasted more than once this week? Why?
- Think about your food preparation this week. Did you cook more or less than usual? Could this have caused some of your waste?
- Did you throw away anything because the date on its label had passed? Think back to buying that food. Did you buy more than you could use because it was on sale, or because you hadn't checked in the pantry before going to the store?
- What meal resulted in the most waste? For example, is a lot of the food you tossed traditional "breakfast" food? What can you do about that?
- Was there a meal you cooked that was the source of a lot of wasted food? (Example: You made a big pot of soup and discarded most of it!) What can you do differently next time?
- If composting your food scraps is an option for you, are you taking advantage of composting? It's a good idea for some of the food parts you can't eat, like onion peels and apple cores.

**Tag us on social media @spoonfulsfoodrecovery**  
to show and tell how you're changing your habits to waste less food!

**Step 3:** Now that you've observed what you wasted and the reasons why, take a closer look at the categories where your food waste happened. Use these ideas and resources as ways to change your habits and reduce your wasted food footprint.

### **Column A: Leftovers**

- Eat leftovers as-is or make them into something new.
- Freeze leftovers you know you won't eat before they go bad.
- Have "leftovers" nights to help use up odds and ends from the week (for example: soup made with leftover chicken and rice, or enchiladas filled and topped with the leftovers from taco night).
- [Find recipes and ideas for using your leftovers here.](#)
- Get extra creative with food scraps that are typically considered waste, like banana peels, which can be roasted, pureed, and more, to further reduce your wasted food footprint. We like [these tips](#) for cooking with "scraps."

### **Column B: Date Labels**

- Don't toss food just because the date on the label has passed. Remember that most date labels are a manufacturer's suggestions for peak quality and don't relate to the safety of the food. (Baby formula is the exception!)
- Use senses, like sight and smell, to know if food is safe to eat. If it smells and looks ok (think free of mold), it's probably still good! Remember that bruising and wilting alone aren't reasons to toss fruits and veggies.
- Learn more about the issue of food date label confusion by reading [our blog about it](#).

### **Column C: Shopping Lists and Impulse Buys**

- Make an effort to use food in your pantry and kitchen before buying new food.
- Make a shopping list after checking what you have on hand first.
- Stick to your shopping list while at the store.
- Don't shop on an empty stomach, if you can help it.
- [Check out these tips](#) for changing your shopping habits to reduce wasted food.

### **Column D: Preventing Spoiled Food**

- Make a meal plan for the week using what you have before making something new – and use foods with shorter shelf lives first (think: produce, meat, and dairy), so that it is eaten before it goes bad.
- Consider buying smaller amounts of items with short shelf lives if they were wasted during your audit week. Perhaps one pound of fish for that meal would have been enough? Or one head of lettuce for the week instead of two?
- Learn some tips from the Spoonfuls team on meal planning to reduce waste [here](#).



**Delivering Food With Purpose**



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