



FOOD WASTE

Did you know that food waste creates methane?

When organic material is broken down by microbes in an environment without oxygen, methane is released into the atmosphere. Methane is a greenhouse gas many times more powerful than carbon dioxide.



REDUCE



Buy only the food you need, and store it properly.

Meal Planning

- ✓ Choose the meals you will make before you go to the grocery store.
- ✓ Make a list with the ingredients you will need & stick to the list.
- ✓ Include a quantity for each item on the list to avoid buying too much.
- ✓ Check if you have an ingredient before buying a new one.
- ✓ Calculate how many meals you need to plan for. If you will eat out, plan for fewer meals at home.

Proper Food Storage

Research how to store fresh foods to last as long as possible.

Some common examples:



Apples should be put in the fridge right away, while bananas can be left on the countertop to ripen and placed in the fridge once ripe.



Most fruits and vegetables can be frozen and used later. Exceptions include lettuce, eggplant and potatoes.



Preserving, canning and pickling are great strategies for preventing food waste – especially for large quantities of fruits or vegetables.



REUSE



Donate excess food and utilize food scraps.

Donate

Donate excess food that is still safe to eat to your local food pantry or community fridge. For large quantities of food, contact a food bank.

Food Scraps

Find a second use for food scraps. For example, veggie scraps can be boiled in water to make vegetable broth. And citrus peels can be candied!



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RECYCLE



If food waste cannot be reduced or reused, consider trying the food version of recycling – compost!

Residential Food Scrap Pick-Up Services

There are many companies in Cook County that provide residential pick up of food scraps for processing into compost.

Visit illinoiscomposts.org for a complete list of companies offering residential food scrap pick up in Cook County.

Many pick up services can accept most organic waste including spoiled produce, produce scraps, eggshells, coffee grounds, tea leaves, paper napkins, grains and sometimes even dairy, meat & bones.

*****Contact your local pick up service to confirm what items are accepted.*****

Your community may also offer a special compost pick up program for its residents.

Visit illinoiscomposts.org or contact your local municipal government to find out.

1. Block Bins LLC | blockbins.com
2. Collective Resource Compost | collectiveresource.us
3. Flood Brothers | floodbrothersdisposal.com
4. Healthy Soil Compost LLC | healthysoilcompost.com
5. Lakeshore Recycling Systems | lrsrecycles.com
6. Our Sustainable Journey | oursustainablejourney.com
7. Prairieland Disposal | prairielanddisposal.com
8. Resource Center | theresourcecenterchicago.org
9. Roy Strom | roystrom.com
10. The Ground Rules/Social Ecologies | socialecologies.net
11. Urban Canopy | theurbancanopy.org/compost-club
12. Waste Management | wm.com
13. WasteNot Compost | wastenotcompost.com

*Note: The above list of companies in Cook County that provide residential pick-up services for processing into compost is provided by the Cook County Department of Environment & Sustainability (the "County") for informational purposes. The County does not make any warranty or specific promises regarding the reliability of the services.

Backyard Composting

Another option is backyard composting. This way, you get to keep the finished compost to use!

Visit: epa.gov/recycle/composting-home for more info

All composting requires three ingredients:

1. **Browns** = sticks, hay, leaves, etc.
2. **Greens** = produce scraps, egg shells, tea leaves, grass clippings, etc.
3. **Water**

Alternate layers of browns and greens. Browns provide carbon, greens provide nitrogen and water provides moisture.

DO Compost

Fruits, vegetables, eggshells, coffee grounds & filters, tea bags, nut shells, shredded newspaper, cardboard, paper, yard trimmings, grass clippings, leaves, houseplants, hay, straw, sawdust, wood chips, cotton & wool rags, hair & fur and fireplace ashes

DO NOT Compost

Coal or charcoal ash, dairy products*, eggs*, diseased or insect-ridden plants, fats*, grease*, lard*, oils*, meat or fish bones and scraps*, pet wastes, yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides

*a local composting pick-up service may accept these items