

FOOD FORWARD

Simple Tips for Reducing Food Waste



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

**Resource Recovery &
Waste Management Division**

Innovative Environmental Solutions



www.LessIsMore.org





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Recovery and Waste Management
Division of The Santa Barbara County
Public Works Department



Visit www.LessIsMore.org for more information.

Printed in 2023

Food Waste 101

In America, an average of 40% of food is wasted. Food waste is created throughout the entire supply chain: the farm, the grocery store, and at home.

But there are many ways we can prevent wasted food.

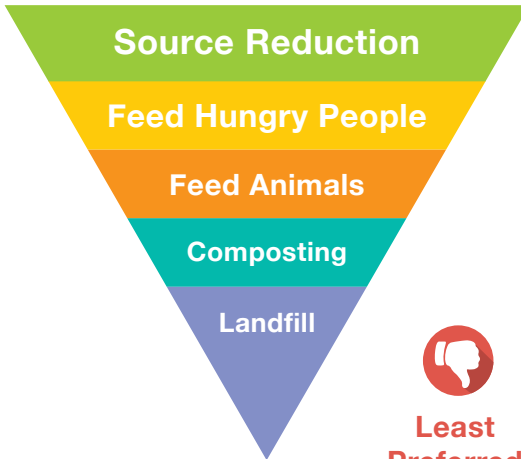
We can buy only what we need, use food before it spoils, get creative with leftovers, or even compost where we live!



Food Recovery Hierarchy



Most Preferred



Least Preferred



In Santa Barbara County, 20% of our waste is food. These extra pounds of waste can be put back into the soil through compost, or donated to the community.

You have the power to reduce food waste!



Why Is Food Waste Bad?

Food waste hurts more than just our wallets!



Every part of the food chain has an environmental impact. When we waste food, we lose more than just our left-overs. In reality, we are also wasting the **water, land space, and soil** used to grow our grub.

Throwing away food also means we are wasting the **time and labor** needed to farm and process our food, not to mention the **fuels and resources** needed to move, package, and store these items. Just think about all that human-power and time used to grow your favorite snacks!

Food for Thought!

Did you know that one-third of the nation's fresh water supply is used for the food system? We have to cherish every last drop (and crumb!).



Organic Waste and The Landfill

What is Organic Waste?



Food Scraps

+



Yard Waste

+



Wet/Soiled Paper

Organic waste, like food scraps and yard waste, releases methane when it slowly decomposes in a landfill. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas and pollutant. Organics also take up valuable landfill space, when they could be composted instead.

As of January 2022, Californians are required to divert their organic waste from the landfill, including food scraps, yard waste, food-soiled paper products, and other organic materials. This law is called Senate Bill 1383, or SB 1383. Businesses are also required to divert and recycle any organic waste they produce, and some are required to donate edible food.



You can learn more about SB 1383 by visiting
www.LessIsMore.org/SB1383



Luckily, Santa Barbara County and our local cities have been working hard for years to divert organics from the landfill through many different programs. **Please note that these services vary depending on where you live and if you are a residential or business customer.**

By participating in your local organics recycling program, you are helping keep these materials out of the landfill and creating nutrient-rich compost for use in our local community.



Composting at home is still the most sustainable choice and helps cut down on your overall waste. This also creates free, high quality fertilizer for your home.

The recycling programs mentioned above help capture and compost excess organic waste or items that cannot be composted in backyard systems, like meat and dairy. Check out page 12 for information on composting at home.

You can learn how Santa Barbara County is keeping food waste out of the landfill by visiting www.LessIsMore.org/organics, or calling (805) 882-3600.



Visit www.LessIsMore.org for more information.

Reduce Your Food-Print

The most preferred method of reducing your food waste is **preventing waste at its source**. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that a family of four can **save more than \$2,000 a year** by implementing simple methods to reduce waste.

TIP
1

Inventory and use what you have before you buy more.

TIP
2

Be creative by using the edible parts of foods that you normally throw away.

TIP
3

Donate healthy, safe, and untouched foods to food banks.

TIP
4

Freeze or preserve surplus fruits and vegetables.

TIP
5

Know how much food you're actually wasting by measuring your waste.

TIP
6

Start with a small serving—only what you can eat.



Have a green thumb?

Find ways to save seeds or roots to regrow your favorite snack!



See Page 8 for helpful hints on expiration dates and food safety.



Feed People, Not the Landfill

Even after planning and shopping for food that we know we will eat, there might be extras, or we might move and have to empty our cupboards. **Spare food items that are safe to eat and unopened can be donated to local agencies.**

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR DONATIONS

- In original packaging
- Unopened
- No candy or soda
- No home-made foods



Where Can You Donate Food?

Visit www.LessIsMore.org/food-donation to see a full list of local food recovery organizations. **ALWAYS** call ahead to see if your packaged food items can be accepted, and where and when they can be dropped off.

Donate Your Backyard Harvest!



If you have fruit trees on your property, you can donate your harvest to the **Foodbank of Santa Barbara County** or **Veggie Rescue!**

Contact the Foodbank of SBC at www.foodbanksbc.org/backyardbounty or Veggie Rescue at www.veggierescue.org to learn more.



Making Sure Your Food Is Safe

It's easy to think that food is bad based on the printed date. In reality, **food items typically last longer than we think.** With the exception of infant formula, most foods have a life beyond their printed date. Don't rush to throw something away!

Here are some quick tips on food safety:

- Depending on the product, most shelf-stable foods like pasta and canned goods will last for a year or more past their printed date. But if the package is open, rusted, smelly, torn, swollen or dented, throw it away.
- Frozen foods can also be safe for months. However, we can't guarantee that they'll taste the same. Frozen foods will get dry, so try slow cooking meats, or making soup from veggies.

Be Creative!

We've said it before, and we'll say it again. Foods that might not look appealing may still be safe to eat and can be turned into a great meal. www.SavetheFood.com/recipes has many recipes to try for whatever you find in your cupboard.

RRWM's Recipe Corner

- Use stale bread to make croutons, or slice and blend less crisp apples for apple sauce.
- Throw tomatoes that have lost their plump shape into baked pasta dishes, or roast them with olive oil and spices for a delicious toast topping.
- Blend wrinkly (and mold-free) strawberries and add chia seeds for a quick jam substitution!



Business Food Recovery

If your business has surplus edible food, **donate it!** There's no need to waste perfectly edible food.

We want to help! If you're a business owner and want to reduce your food waste, we can help you get started. **Call (805) 882-3600.**



Before donating, try these quick tips:

- **Get creative with your inventory.** Plan how every food item will be used.
- **Craft unique menu items that use unserved foods or edible food scraps.**
- **Work with local farmers so your produce has the best chance for a long shelf-life.**
- **Make sure your whole staff is aware of proper food storage. Freeze as much as you can!**



Remember that the tips outlined on Page 6 can also be applied to your business!

Applicable Regulations

California's SB 1383 establishes a statewide mandate to achieve a 50% reduction in the disposal of organic waste by 2020 and a 75% reduction by 2025. It establishes an additional requirement that 20% of currently disposed edible food be recovered for human consumption. SB 1383 also requires composting of organics that can't be consumed.

Help us keep organic materials out of the trash!



Visit www.LessIsMore.org for more information.

Donating Prepared Foods

Unlike households, food service businesses have the opportunity to donate prepared foods. Prepared foods typically include leftovers from events and surplus foods from restaurants, hotels and grocery stores.

Here are some quick donation tips for businesses:

- **Large batch foods are some of the best to donate.** These include soups, baked goods, salsas, rice, beans, pastas, or unused produce.
- **Food safety is our number one concern.** Food donations must be from a permitted food facility and be maintained hot or cold for same day service.



Guidelines to follow when handling leftover food



Cold foods must be maintained at **41 degrees Fahrenheit or below**. This is the safe temperature zone.

Example: Milk



Hot foods must be kept at **135 degrees Fahrenheit or higher**. This is the safe temperature zone.

Example: Lasagna

Frozen food must be kept below 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

Food items must stay within their correct temperature zone. If foods leave this temperature zone, they must be composted or thrown away. Additionally, prepared foods should only be donated and eaten within the same day they are made.

The Fine Print

Food safety is extremely important, especially when donating it. But don't worry. If you accidentally give something that is bad, the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act will protect your contributions from liability as long as they were donated in good faith.



Helping Animals and the Planet

Once our two-legged neighbors have food, we can help out our four-legged friends. **Extra produce**, from the store or our gardens, **can be donated**. Remember to **call ahead** before dropping off your donation.

These organizations accept surplus produce donations:

Bunnies Urgently Needing Shelter (BUNS)

5743 Overpass Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
(805) 681-5285
(County Animal Shelter Office)

www.bunssb.org

Accepts fresh greens and vegetables (e.g. beets, broccoli, carrots, celery, lettuce)

Lil' Orphan Hammies

Solvang, CA 93464
(805) 598-2991

www.lilorphanhammies.org/home

Accepts fresh produce and bread products



Courtesy of BUNS



Courtesy of Lil' Orphan Hammies



Visit www.LessIsMore.org for more information.

Compost

Even after feeding our human and animal neighbors, we might have some food items that just aren't consumable. Some food waste is unavoidable. Luckily, **composting is a great way to turn food waste into a resource** that can really help our soil and plants!

What is Compost?

Composting is the natural breakdown of organic materials, like fruits, vegetables, and yard trimmings. After the material breaks down, you can use the resulting compost as fertilizer. The nutrients in our food will go back into the soil and help more plants grow, completing the cycle.

How Do I Compost at Home?

STEP

1

Download our free digital composting booklet

STEP

2

DIY or purchase a compost bin or worm bin

STEP

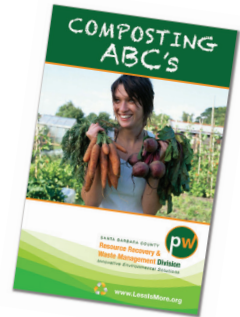
3

Attend a free and fun composting workshop

STEP

4

Keep your compost happy and watch your garden grow!



Find downloadable booklets, workshop schedules and more composting tips and tricks at www.LessIsMore.org/compost.





Discounted composting bins are available year-round from the County and sold at half price!

Find them at these locations:

South Coast Recycling and Transfer Station

4430 Calle Real, Santa Barbara

(805) 681-4345

Santa Ynez Valley Recycling and Transfer Station

4004 Foxen Canyon Rd., Los Olivos

(805) 686-5080

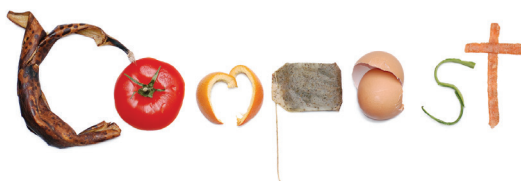
North County Public Works Building

620 West Foster Rd., Orcutt

(805) 739-8750

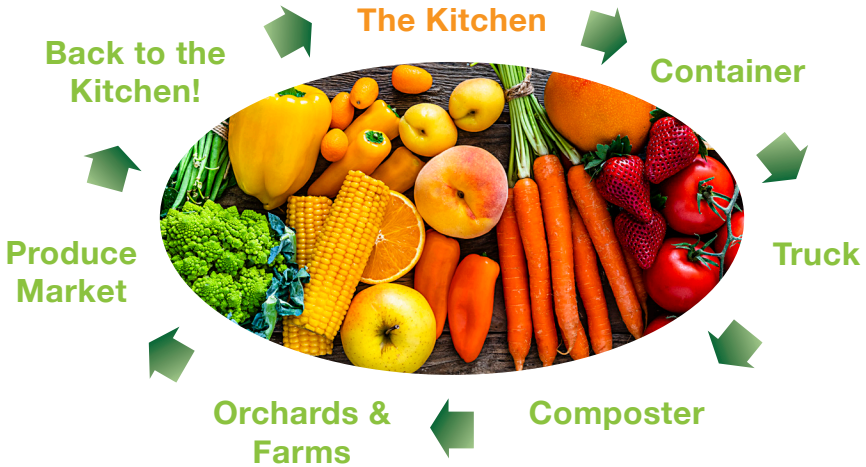


To learn more, visit www.LessIsMore.org/discountcompostbins or call our composting specialist at **(805) 822-3600**.



Visit www.LessIsMore.org for more information.

Business Organic Waste Collection



Can't donate it? Compost it!

Businesses generate organic waste too! After any edible food is safely donated, businesses can divert their additional organic waste, including food scraps, expired foods, wet or food-soiled paper, yard waste, and more, with organic waste collection programs from your local hauler.

Everything collected in these programs goes to commercial composting facilities that are able to process all organic waste, including those items that cannot be composted in a home environment (like cheeses, meats, and even bones!).

Organic waste collection service is pound for pound cheaper than trash service, so you can save your business money by diverting your organic waste properly.

Call your waste hauler or the Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division office at (805) 882-3600 to learn more.

Please note! Recycling and composting regulations can change, so always ask if you're unsure about a certain material.



You Can Make A Difference

There are so many ways to **keep organic material out of the landfill**. From replanting veggie cuttings to donating leftover boxes of macaroni and cheese, it all makes a difference. Some of these solutions are easier than others, but we hope you can try some out, and learn something new!

REMEMBER...

Food waste impacts every part of our community, from our farms to our waste facilities. We can create a resilient food system.



By reducing the amount of food that you waste, you can:

1. Save money.
2. Provide food to local people and animals.
3. Create a nutrient-rich soil amendment.
4. Reduce the use of local resources such as water, energy, and land.

More Contacts & Resources

Call Santa Barbara County Resource Recovery
& Waste Management Division:

(805) 882-3600

Visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

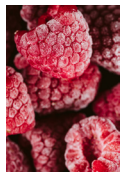
<https://www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste>

Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/consumers/food-loss-and-waste>

Visit the links or call the numbers provided in this booklet.





For more information please visit:
LessIsMore.org



Courtesy of Lil' Orphan Hammies



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**Resource Recovery &
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