

Conduct a Food Waste Audit

Over a period of 1 to 2 weeks, as a family, couple, or individual, measure how much food your household throws away. Then, learn about steps to save money and reduce and compost your food waste.

Food waste is the edible amount of food that is available for human consumption but is not consumed.

STEPS:

1. Collect your food waste each day. Try to keep it in separate categories: meat, dairy, plant-based, and beverages.
2. Weigh or measure your food waste. You can weigh your food waste (if you have a kitchen scale that measures grams or ounces) or you can measure it by volume (with a large measuring cup). After measuring your waste, you can compost it or place it in your organics cart for curbside collection.

(NOTE: In Sonoma, only plant-based food waste can be placed in the organics cart. Meat, fish, and dairy wastes must be placed into the trash cart.)

3. Record the results in the food waste log below.
4. Why did the food become waste? For the cause, select the cause from the list below that best explains why the food became a waste. Use and insert the code (A-E) into the table after each food category for each day.
5. After the end of each week, add up the totals. Then, examine the primary causes to see if there are any patterns or common causes.
6. Finally, think about reducing your household's food waste by visiting this [US EPA website](#). Also, if you do not compost at home, think about starting home composting by visiting this [CalRecycle website](#).

Primary Causes

- A. **Food preparation** = edible or undesirable parts of food such as bread crust, skin, peelings, etc.
- B. **Excessive quantities** = too much was served or made and no longer wanted
- C. **Spoiled** = food/beverage was moldy or spoiled
- D. **Concerned** = not spoiled or moldy, but item was past its date including: best if used by, sell by, use by, freeze by, packaged on, etc.
- E. **Preference** = did not like the taste, color, or texture

