



**SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS**  
Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A.  
Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension  
Service  
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

## **Leader Training Guide**

### **Reducing Food Waste**

#### **Objective:**

Upon the completion of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- To increase awareness of household food waste
- Equip participants with knowledge and practical skills to reduce waste through mindful planning, intelligent storage techniques, and creative food use strategies.
- Participants will learn how food waste affects the environment, the economy, and community food systems.
- Participants will leave with actionable steps to implement change at home.

#### **Lesson Overview/Introduction:**

The United States wastes approximately 30–40% of its food supply yearly. This wasted food ends up in landfills, where it decomposes and produces a greenhouse gas called methane, which is contributing to climate change. In addition, wasted food represents a waste of resources like water, labor, and transportation.

**Lesson:** Reducing food waste can be achieved by following three significant steps:

**Facilitator Prompt:** Ask, “Have you ever gone to the store without a list and bought things you didn’t need?”

Suggested Time: 10 minutes

#### **1. Plan:**

- Create a Weekly Meal Plan: Consider your family’s schedule and plan meals to avoid over-purchasing.
- Inventory What You Have: Before grocery shopping, check your fridge, freezer, and pantry. Plan meals around items already on hand.
- Make a Precise Shopping List: Include only what is needed based on your plan. Try not to shop when you’re hungry to avoid impulse buys.
- Learn Date Labeling:
  - Sell by – for store use
  - Best by – for peak quality
  - Use by – manufacturer’s recommendation for freshness.

\*Note: Many foods are still safe to eat after these dates. \*

**Facilitator Prompt:** Ask, “What’s one thing in your fridge or pantry you often forget to use in time?”

Suggested Time: 10 minutes

## **2. Store:**

- **Store Smartly:** Keep similar items together and practice ‘First In, First Out’—place newer items behind older ones to use the older first.
- **Use Proper Containers:** Clear, airtight, and appropriately sized containers help preserve freshness.
- **Know Your Fridge Zones:**
  - Dairy: upper shelves
  - Raw meats: bottom shelf
  - Condiments: fridge door
- **Use the Freezer:** Freeze bread, leftovers, fruit, and vegetables before they spoil—label with dates and contents.

**Facilitator Prompt:** Share a quick tip about how to reuse a leftover ingredient in a new way.

Suggested Time: 10 minutes

## **3. Use:**

- **Eat Leftovers Creatively:** Reinvent yesterday’s meal into today’s lunch—e.g., leftover grilled veggies can become wraps or salads.
- **Use the Whole Ingredient:** Use broccoli stems in stir-fries or soup; turn citrus peels into zest or cleaning solutions.
- **Use Scraps for Broth:** Save veggie peels and bones in a freezer bag for homemade stock.
- **Start a Home Compost:** For inedible scraps, composting turns waste into rich soil—perfect for gardens and reduces landfill trash.

**Discussion Question:** “What’s one new strategy you’d like to try this week to reduce food waste?”

## **Lesson Summary:**

Food waste is a significant issue in homes and communities, but each family can substantially reduce it with thoughtful changes. Planning meals, storing food correctly, and creatively reusing leftovers are simple actions that add up. These habits benefit the environment and lead to cost savings and more organized, mindful eating. Education, awareness, and practice are key to reducing food waste for good.

**Suggested Supplies:**

- Printed fake food or labels
- Meal Planning Sheets
- Blank grocery list templates
- Markers or stickers for simulation activities

**Suggested Activities:**

- Food Waste Diary: Complete a 7-day log of all discarded food and reasons why. Discuss patterns.
- Group Discussion: Share one habit that causes food waste, and one change participants are willing to make.
- Fridge Clean-out Simulation: Using printed or fake food items, practice organizing a mock fridge.
- Role-Play: Pair up and simulate a grocery shopping trip using a meal plan and budget.

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**Lesson Reviewed by:** Dr. Tarana Khan, Associate Extension specialist/PTD

**Sources/References:**

[www.SaveTheFood.com](http://www.SaveTheFood.com)

USDA Food Waste Challenge

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Reducing Wasted Food at Home

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home>



# WEEKLY MEAL PLAN



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	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS
SUNDAY				
SUNDAY				
SUNDAY				
SUNDAY				
SUNDAY				
SUNDAY				
SUNDAY				



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