

Week 1

Tracking Wasted Food Guide

Goal:

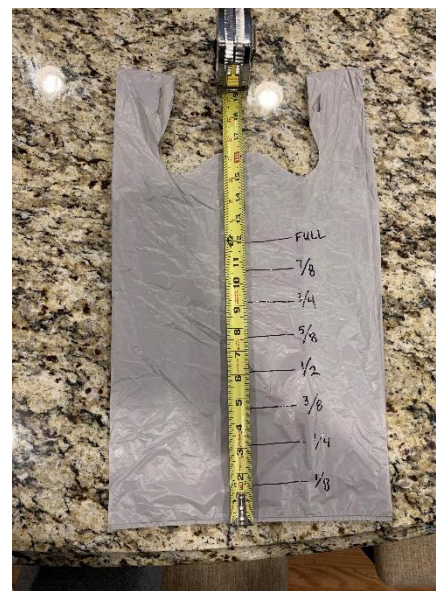
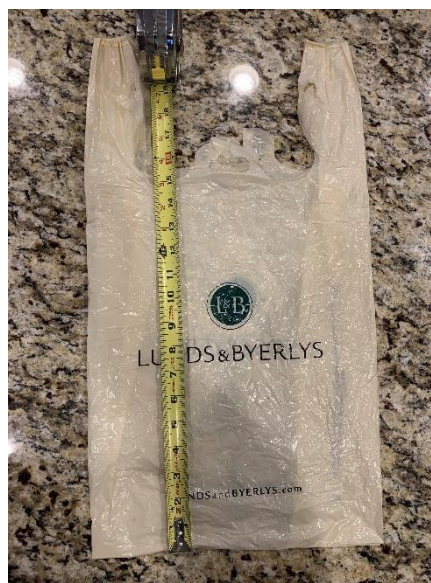
Become aware of the total amount of wasted food in the home and the main reasons for it. Reduce overall wasted food through tracking and prevention tools.

Supplies:

- Standard plastic bags (11.5" wide, at least 12" tall)
- Ruler and marker
- Scale (optional)

Set-up:

Collect several plastic bags with the correct measurements. These will be used to collect and measure your wasted food. Line a ruler up to the middle of the bag and mark the following measurements with a permanent marker on the bag: $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{5}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, full. The corresponding inches for each measurement are: 1.5", 3", 4.5", 6", 7.5", 9", 10.5", 12".



Tracking

The bag can be kept hanging near the trash or it can be kept in the freezer to keep it from smelling. Throughout the week you will fill your bag with uneaten food items and report the volume of wasted food to the closest marking on your collection bag.

Only collect food that could have been eaten. Food scraps (peels, vegetable ends, and bones) will not be collected and can just be tossed as normal. If the food is contained in plastic or paper packaging, empty the food into your collection bag and discard the packaging appropriately. If you need to throw the bag out partway through the week and begin another one, make sure to record the volume marking on the bag beforehand and add it to your end of week total. An optional step is weighing the bag at the end of the week.

What should go in the bag?

- bread, cheese, meat
- Entire spoiled fruits and vegetables
- Food that went bad before it was eaten
- Food emptied from packaging: salad without bag, yogurt without carton
- Food items that are completely or mostly solid

What should NOT go in the bag?

- Bones from meat
- vegetable ends, fruit peels (banana peel, apple core)
- Any food scraps that you would not normally eat
- Packaging: plastic bags, cartons, cans, boxes
- Liquids, sauces, and dressings: coffee, milk, ketchup, fish sauce

Filling out tracking sheet

Record why the item was tossed. Some possible reasons are:

- Unsure about expiration date
- Impulse and bulk purchases (purchased too much and couldn't eat it all)
- Too large of packaging sizes (had to buy more than wanted due to packaging size)
- Poor weekly preparation
- Cooking too much at once
- Forgetting about prepared leftovers
- Improper storage of food
- Didn't like it or picky eaters

Record how full the bag is after each item is tossed by writing the closest measurement mark. You can also estimate the amount of each item tossed by using metrics on packaging such as grams, ounces, or simply a count. A handful can be used to estimate and recorded as 4 oz at the very least.

Liquid collection

You can pour any liquids down the drain or in the regular trash, but record the item on your tracking sheet and the amount IN CUPS that was tossed.

Weighing wasted food (optional)

If you have access to a scale you can record the weight of each food item tossed, or just the weight of your bag with the total waste at the end of the week.

Example tracking sheet

Date	What food item was disposed of?	Why was it tossed?	Category?								How full is the bag?
			Produce	Dairy	Grain	Meat	Leftovers w/meat	Leftovers w/o meat	Shelf stable	Condiments	
											(Record when a marking on the bag is reached) *optional- record weight in grams
2/15	Hoagie rolls	Forgot about it and stored improperly			x						2 rolls < 1/8 of bag
2/17	Green beans	Cooked too much at once	x								1 handful ~ 4 oz 1/8 of bag
2/18	Yogurt	Unsure about expiration date		x							1/3 carton ~ 10oz > 1/8 of bag