

Meaty issues



Meat is wasted from our homes in large amounts, having an impact on our purses and the environment.

Meat production can have a high environmental cost so by reducing meat waste we not only help our finances, but reduce the impact that we have on the environment. If we didn't waste food, it would have the same environmental impact of taking one in four cars off the road.

Meat production involves land, water and energy use – all of which become wasted if the meat ends up in the bin. It takes 12 litres of water to produce just one tomato, but 650 litres of water – or 54 buckets- are needed to produce one chicken breast. Meat is often wasted because too much is cooked and served, or it is not eaten in time.



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The Roast

It's easy to over cater – and joints of meat to tend to come in quite large sizes and cooking and serving too much is one of the top reasons given for wasting meat. However, meat is so versatile that an expensive joint or chicken can be used in so many other meals that the cost can be spread out over so many dishes. The other advantage is that you can save so much time by incorporating meat you have already spent time preparing and cooking into a quick Monday meal.

It doesn't just have to be cold meats for leftovers it could be lamb Rogan Josh, a traditional meat pie or pasty makes good use of leftover meats, veg and even gravy.

Freezing Meat

It is perfectly OK to freeze cooked meat and small portions freeze best. Then it can be added from frozen to your dish. The most important thing is to ensure that when you are reheating the meat that it is piping hot all the way through before serving.

It's easy for packs of sliced ham, sausages and other meat to get pushed to the back of the fridge and forgotten about so keep note what's in the fridge



Planning

A meal plan is a great way to ensure that the meat you have bought is eaten whilst it is at its best.

Check the fridge before shopping and plan to use any meat coming up to its use by date.

Why not plan to use up some of that meat you have in the freezer? You may have some that you got in for Christmas and still haven't used. Meat will stay safe in a freezer for a long time, but its quality may eventually reduce so don't leave those 'just in case' joints in the freezer for months on end. If you are stuck for recipe ideas, try our online recipe finder.



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Date labels

It's understandable that we can be cautious when it comes to ensuring that meat is safe to eat and this is where date labels can really help.

Some rules can really help ensure that meat is safe to eat

1. The use by date – this is the one that most often appears on meat packs – is there for your safety and meat should be eaten by then – or frozen for another time.
2. Once the pack is open, transfer it into an airtight container to stop the meat drying out.
3. If you know that you won't get through a pack of meat slices, or that you will want a change to your sandwich fillings don't forget to freeze the meat slices.
4. If you buy a big pack of bacon, rashers can be frozen easily by putting greaseproof paper between them. Then you can cook from frozen whenever you are treating yourself to a weekend fry up, or want to add in strips of meat to a stir fry or risotto.



Make your meat go further



One way to save serious cash is to make your meat go further. Why not think about swapping half the meat in the recipe for cheaper foods? Rummage in the fridge and cupboard for those cheap and cheerful forgotten foods or storecupboard staples that can be quickly added in instead.

How to make meat go further using store cupboard ingredients

1. Using less mince in a chilli, but adding in a load a leftover veggies and a can of baked or chilli beans from the cupboard. It will make your meat go so much further!
2. A can of chickpeas added to a meaty curry dish will bulk it out nicely, but add interest and a different texture.
3. Red lentils are cheap and quick to cook. They add a lovely flavour, colour and texture to the leftover mince needed for a shepherd's pie, or how about adding them to a spag bol?

You can search for a huge range of vegetarian recipes on the online recipe finder if you feel in need of inspiration. For hints, tips and recipes on how to make the best of the food that we buy and save up to £60 a month, visit lovefoodhatewaste.com.