

Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Less Waste, More Money

It's that time of year when lots of food is made and enjoyed at holiday gatherings. However, sometimes too much food is made and then thrown away before it can be used. About 90 billion pounds of edible food goes uneaten each year in the United States. Yet 1 in 7 Americans struggles to get enough to eat. On average, \$370 worth of food per person per year is thrown away. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) breaks this down by types of food:

Grains (bread, pasta): \$22 per year
Fruits (apples, bananas, oranges): \$45 per year
Proteins (beef, chicken, pork, fish): \$140 per year
Vegetables (onions, lettuce, peppers): \$66 per year
Dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese): \$60 per year
Added Fat and Sugar (chips, candy): \$37 per year
Total: \$370 per year

The main reason food is thrown away is because it spoils before it is eaten. The USDA has created a resource called Let's Talk Trash. In it they offer tips on how you can put a stop to food waste in your home.

- **Plan and Save:** Plan your weekly menu. Then look in your pantry, freezer, and fridge to make a list of what you need to buy before grocery shopping. This can help you buy only the food you need and keep money in your pocket.
- **Be Organized:** Keep your food pantry and refrigerator organized so you can see what needs to be eaten first. Write the dates on food containers so you know what needs to be used first.
- **Repurpose and Freeze Extra Food:** Reuse leftovers in another recipe. Use leftover taco meat to make a taco pizza. If you chopped up vegetables for a salad, use leftover vegetables to make a vegetable soup. Make a smoothie with overripe fruit. Freeze extra food to enjoy at a later time.

For more tips on reducing food waste, visit Spend Smart. Eat Smart at www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings.

Source: Let's Talk Trash, www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash



Pumpkin Apple Cake

Serving Size: 1 slice
Serves: 24

Ingredients:

- 1 package (18.25 ounces) white cake mix
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2/3 cup apple juice
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Nonstick cooking spray or flour

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Combine cake mix, pumpkin, cinnamon, apple juice, eggs, and vanilla in a large mixer bowl.
3. Beat at low speed for 30 seconds. Beat at medium speed for 2 minutes.
4. Pour into a 12 cup Bundt pan or a 9"x13" cake pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray and floured.
5. Bake for 35–40 minutes or until wooden toothpick inserted in cake center comes out clean.
6. Cool 10 minutes. Then invert onto wire rack to cool completely.

Nutrition information per serving:

100 calories, 1.5g total fat, 0.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 25mg cholesterol, 160mg sodium, 20g total carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 10g sugar, 2g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/.



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Sponge Safety

Sponges are great at absorbing all things...including germs! Practice these tips to use them safely:

- To sanitize, microwave damp sponge for one minute or put it in a dishwasher with a drying cycle. According to the USDA, these methods will kill more than 99% of bacteria, yeasts, and mold.
- Clean sponges after two or three uses.
- Avoid using sponges when wiping up meat juices and on countertops. Instead use a paper towel and a sanitizer or disinfectant wipes.
- Wring out a sponge after each use and store in a dry location.
- Once a sponge starts to smell, throw it out immediately.
- Finally, don't forget about the dish towels and dish cloths. Launder them frequently in hot water and consider using a separate dish towel for hand and dish drying.

Source: eatright, www.eatright.org/resource/homefoodsafety/four-steps/wash/dos-and-donts-of-kitchen-sponge-safety

Tracking Wildlife

Kids love discovery, and what better way to discover than by following animal tracks. Identifying and following a set of animal tracks can be like a giant treasure hunt. The thought that a white-tailed deer, wild turkey, or maybe an elusive bobcat walked nearby connects your child to the outdoors for years to come.



Any season is a good time to look for tracks, but winter and spring are prime times. Snow and soft ground create easy-to-find, distinctive imprints. A local park, family farm, river bottom, or backyard are places to look. Focus on well-used animal trails, sandy areas, or any muddy locations like a river or pond bank.

Print a few wildlife track guides off the Internet, and make a game out of who can find the most tracks. Make it a “teachable moment” by explaining how wildlife survives Iowa’s sometimes brutal winters and the importance of habitat. You can also take along a few plastic grocery sacks and gloves and make it a practice to pick up litter along the way.

For information on how to identify different animal tracks, visit www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/DNR-News-Releases/ArticleID/166.

Source: January/February 2008 issue of Iowa Outdoors magazine.

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