

## MRS. T'S CLASSROOM BLOG

Waste Not, Want Not

June 28, 2012

### STOP THE WASTE

by Suzy Student

Did you know that the average American family wastes about \$600 worth of food every year? In fact, as much as 10% of the food you buy will be thrown away before you even prepare it. This kind of waste is not only expensive, but it is also foolish. By simply planning menus ahead of time, correctly storing food, and cooking only what you need, you can dramatically reduce the amount of food waste in your home.

You can start your waste reduction program by planning a weekly menu that your family will actually eat. For example, if only one person in your family likes broccoli, it shouldn't go on your menu plan because it will probably just be wasted. As you create your menus, preplan the nights your family will want to eat out. Once you have developed a realistic menu, create a shopping list. Don't give in to temptation at the store—buy only what is on your list. Once you get home from shopping, correctly store the food immediately. Most fruits and vegetables will keep better if you remove them from the plastic bags and put them in the refrigerator promptly. Freeze foods like meat, bread, and nuts to prevent spoiling. You may also want to take the time to divide food into portions that match the menu plan. That way when you go to cook your meals, you'll have just the right amount. Finally, cook only what you need.

With a little planning and discipline, reducing food waste in your home is achievable. It's as simple as planning, storing, and preparing properly. Just think of all the things you could do with an extra \$600!

*June 29, 2012, 8 p.m.*

I really love your idea about preplanning both the menu and the portion sizes. At our house we used to waste a lot of food because when my brother left for college my mom just kept cooking like he was still at home. We couldn't eat all that food. Now we have a chalkboard in the kitchen that says what we are having for dinner every night. It helps us know what we can snack on, and it helps us know what we need to fix. We are wasting a lot less food, and Mom isn't as stressed out about what we are going to eat when she comes home from work.

*J. Finch*

*June 29, 2012, 8:15 p.m.*

J. What do you mean you know what to snack on? How does that help not waste food?

*G. Fredericks*

*June 30, 2012, 7:30 a.m.*

Suzy, I think these are really good ideas for reducing food waste. I think my family could use most of these awesome ideas. But I think the one about eating out isn't realistic. My dad doesn't get home at the same time every night and sometimes it's too late to start cooking, so we just go get something. How can you plan when you are going to go out and eat a whole week ahead of time?

*Karmen*

*June 30, 2012, 8:29 a.m.*

Karmen, that's a really good question. Maybe your family can plan meals that the kids know how to cook so that when Dad comes home you already have dinner ready. Another idea is to make a bunch of meals on the weekend and then freeze them. All you'd have to do then is warm the meal up.

*Suzy Student*

*June 30, 2012, 10:15 a.m.*

Even though I know that menu planning is hard, I think this is a really good way to eat healthier, save money, and reduce waste. When we go to the store my little sister always begs for junk food like chips and cookies. Mom usually gives in to her just to shut her up. If you have a shopping list, you won't buy that stuff and you'll probably eat healthier. Also you'll save money because you won't be buying stuff you won't actually use. One of my jobs is to clean out the refrigerator once a month. I'm always throwing away things my sister begged to try, like gummy yogurt or some weird fruit she saw on TV. I also end up throwing away veggies that nobody remembered we had bought. I think if we took some time to plan our meals, we would be able to get rid of these bad habits.

*Kevin*

*June 30, 2012, 10:20 a.m.*

I agree. 😊