

# SENIOR NUTRITION NEWS

*Eat Smart Idaho*

December 2024

## Tips to Avoid Holiday Food Waste

**Food waste increases between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Food waste is not only bad for the environment but also for your food budget. As the holidays approach, here are some tips to reduce holiday food waste:**



- **Plan ahead.** When planning your holiday meal determine the amount of food that is needed so you make the appropriate amount of food for the meal and the number of people eating the meal.
- **Buy only what is needed.** If you do buy more than what is needed be sure to make a plan for the leftovers.
- **Store food properly if purchased or prepared ahead.** Put meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and produce in the refrigerator as soon as you get home. Potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes, squash, and pumpkin should be stored in a cool dark place. Freeze bakery items to keep them fresh.
- **Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of cooking or removing food from a warming appliance to prevent foodborne illness.** Cool foods quickly using small shallow containers. Avoid crowding foods in the refrigerator; leave space so air can circulate.
- **Share leftovers with guests in take-home containers.** Label with name, date, and refrigerate until they depart.
- **Be creative with leftovers.** Use leftovers to create a new dish—turkey pot pie, casseroles, soup, and stock or broth. Incorporate leftover veggies into omelets. Turn potatoes into pancakes. Cornbread into salad. Charcuterie into pizza. Squash into mac and cheese. Freeze individual meals for later use or quick meals.
- **Use refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days.**
- **Freeze leftovers.** Allow food to cool completely before putting in the freezer. Even pumpkin pie can be frozen. Frozen leftovers are best used within 2-6 months for the best quality. Package carefully to prevent freezer burn or dehydration and be sure to label and date the food.



## Chocolate Avocado Mousse



2 large avocados pitted and halved      1/3 cup honey  
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder      1/4 cup fat-free milk (or almond milk)

Blend all ingredients in a food processor or blender. Process until completely smooth. Transfer to a sealable container and refrigerate one hour or until ready to serve. Serve with grated dark chocolate and/or whipped cream. Mousse will keep for up to four days in a sealed container in the refrigerator. You also can freeze the mousse and eat it like ice cream.

## Hearty Mashed Potatoes

4 potatoes (about 2 pounds)      1/4 cup Parmesan cheese  
1 can garbanzo beans (15 ounce, drained)      1/2 teaspoon garlic powder  
3/4 cup milk, non-fat (or fortified soy milk)      Black pepper (to taste)

1. Wash potatoes. Peel, cube, and place them in a large sauce pan and cover with water. Bring to a boil on high heat then reduce to a simmer.
2. Add garbanzo beans 10 minutes after potatoes start cooking. Continue cooking until potatoes are fork tender, about 20 minutes.
3. Drain water and place the sauce pan back on the stove. Mash the beans and potatoes with a potato masher.
4. Add the milk, cheese and seasonings. Reheat if necessary. Serve hot.

### For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary,  
Kootenai & Shoshone Counties      208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah,  
Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties      208-883-2267



Contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator:  
Kali Gardiner, RD, LD  
Phone: 208-292-2525 E-mail – [kalig@uidaho.edu](mailto:kalig@uidaho.edu) Web: [www.eatsmartidaho.org](http://www.eatsmartidaho.org)

**Sources:** <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/2024/11/05/reducing-holiday-food-waste/>; <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/extension/recipes/chocolate-avocado-mousse>; retrieved 11/26/24

This work and material is supported and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA and University of Idaho are equal opportunity providers.