

Food For Thought Toolkit

Monitoring Your Food Waste Challenge

In 2013 Americans threw 35 million tons of food into landfills and incinerators. This challenge will help you to monitor how much food is going to waste in your home and how you can limit your food waste footprint.

What You Will Need:

- A pen/pencil
- Print out of the weight chart below
- Brown paper bags
- Green compostable bags
- A small scale

Key Terms

Non-Edible Food Waste: Everything you wouldn't normally eat, such as banana peels, egg shells, apple cores, and chicken bones.

Preventable Food Waste: Both food you brought to eat but has since spoiled and food that was prepared but not eaten and was then thrown away.

Step 1: At the start of each week, line two paper bags with a green compostable bags. Label one bag *Preventable Food Waste* and the other *Non-Edible Food Waste*. For the purposes of this challenge, you will only track the weights of your *Preventable Food Waste*.

Step 2: At the end of the first week, measure the weight of food waste in the bag.¹ Record your result on the attached worksheet. After Week 1, apply any notes or strategies to the following weeks and see what effect it has on your overall food waste weight. Once you get started, it should take no more than 15 minutes per week to measure and record your food waste weight.

Step 3: Once recorded, your food waste (preventable and non-edible) should be composted at home in your backyard or taken to Alpha Ridge Landfill Residents' Convenience Center to be composted on site.

¹ If the bag fills before the seven days, record the weight of the full bag and record how many days you collected food in that bag. Then begin collection in a new bag. At the end of the week, total your weight for the entire week.

WEEK 1

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

WEEK 2

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

Total Weight for Week 1 and 2 _____ Averages for Week 1 and 2 Total Weight ÷ 2 = _____

WEEK 3

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

WEEK 4

Start Date: _____ Day of Week: _____

_____ Weight

_____ # of days collected

Notes (what goes to waste and why)

Total Weight for Week 3 and 4 _____ Averages for Week 3 and 4 Total Weight ÷ 2 = _____

Tips:

- If you're concerned about possible odors, you can clip the top of the bag shut or use a new bag mid-week. Make sure that you continue to track your total food waste weight throughout the week.
- Do NOT collect liquid waste such as soup or food-soiled paper products.

Modeled after Food: Too Good to Waste (EPA)