

# The Gainesville Zero Waste News

## Food Waste and Wasted Food – Two Sides of the Same Coin

*Did you know the U.S. discards more food than any other country in the world: nearly 80 billion pounds every year?* Wasting food has serious environmental and economic repercussions, as well as far-reaching impacts on our society. Learning the difference between Food Waste and Wasted Food is a first step to understanding this important issue.



**Food Waste** or “food scraps” primarily consists of organic material discarded during the preparation or cooking of food. For example, food trimmings such as the fat off meats and the nonedible parts of foods like watermelon rinds, banana peels, and peanut shells. Food Waste also includes leftover or partially consumed foods such as pizza crusts or apple cores. Items that are no longer safe for humans to eat, such as moldy bread or spoiled milk, are classified as food waste as well. Most food waste maintains the potential to be composted when separated from the garbage stream.

On the other hand, **Wasted Food** generally refers to food fit for human consumption but goes to waste before it can be eaten. Estimates are that 14% of all food produced globally never makes it to consumers. This loss can occur during the processing, transporting, preparing, and storing of food from field to market. However, by far the greatest amount of Wasted Food comes from our own kitchens in the form of food spoilage resulting from buying more food than needed. Other Wasted Food includes lower-grade produce such as bruised peaches or unusually shaped (“ugly”) vegetables that go uneaten. Also, packaged food past their sell dates and excess prepared foods are identified as Wasted Food. Much of this Wasted Food could be diverted to help feed needy families or put to better uses rather than sent to landfills.

For information on how you can donate food locally, visit [Bread of the Mighty Food Bank](#).

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