

A quick guide to joyful cooking & less food waste at home



Sopköket team dec 2019

- *Enter the kitchen when YOU want to. Not because you have to.*
- *Save time and money and minimize your food waste.*

Introduction

300 000 elephants. That's how much food is being wasted in Sweden, every year. Globally, food stands for 20-30% of humans total CO₂-emissions and 1/3 ends up in the bin.^{1 2} Reducing our food waste will have a huge positive impact on our climate now and in the future.

In developed countries food waste occurs a lot in households, compared to developing countries where it tends to occur due to bad equipment during growing, harvest and storage. People in Sweden throw on average 95 kg of food per year.³ In developing countries, this number is 6-11 kg / year.⁴

I myself used to throw a lot of food at home. For me leftovers were associated with a feeling of obligation. Something I had to go back into the kitchen to take care of after a meal and had to eat within days before it turned bad. This feeling of a must rather than a lust, made me stressed and uninspired. I ended up postponing it until it was too late. Leftovers piling up in the fridge, ending in occasional clean-mania.

With this PDF we can minimize our food waste at home, at the same time as we decide ourselves when to spend time in the kitchen. No need to go back after a cozy evening meal or when wanting to watch Netflix. You decide when to spend time in the kitchen, be it within days or weeks. You will always have meals ready in minutes and when you finally feel like cooking, you will do it with new zero waste methods. If you cook for kids with different food preferences you will even be able to fulfill all family members' different needs within minutes. No need to spend time in the kitchen every day.

You become the boss of your kitchen, not the other way around. The secret: your freezer combined with lessons learned from professional chefs' way of cooking. Zero food waste, more time and money and only kitchen time when happy time.

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Equipment

All you need to become the boss of your kitchen with zero food waste is:

- Plastic freezer bags (buy sustainable and recycle)
- Black marker pen
- Ice cube trays

¹ <https://foodsource.org.uk/31-what-food-system%E2%80%99s-contribution-global-ghg-emissions-total>

² <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/en/>

³ <https://www.naturvardsverket.se/Miljoarbete-i-samhallet/Miljoarbete-i-Sverige/Uppdelat-efter-omrade/Avfall/Matsvinn/>


⁴ <https://www.unenvironment.org/thinkeatsave/get-informed/worldwide-food-waste>

How to store & for how long?

To store our ingredients correctly, will have a huge impact on how long they last. Note that Swedish supermarkets put two different life-span dates to their foods:

- **“bäst före datum”** = best before date - B.B.D. (as Swedish retail giant “Arla” recently added on their products “ofta bra efter” = often good after).
- **“sista förbrukningsdag”** = last consumption date - L.C.D. (present on products like meat, fish and shrimps). After this date has passed, throw it. It can be dangerous to eat.

Here’s a quick list of some of our perhaps most common foods at home, their REAL life span and how to store them. Remember; always smell, look and taste before throwing away. **Don't** rely on best before date (B.B.D.)

	Type (in fridge)	Storage (4°C)	REAL life span after B.B.D
	Milk / Yoghurt	Furthest back, cold when opening fridge	1-2 weeks. Sour/bulbs = bad
	Eggs	In fridge	1-3 months. Floating on water/smell like fart = bad
	Leftovers / Short life	Separate shelf, eyesight → easy overview	
	Root veggies	Move from plastic bag to paper bag	Keeps for long, without getting soggy
	Salad	Root in cold water	
	Tomatoes	Fridge. Room temp. for maturing and eating	
	Cucumber	Remove from plastic	Avoids getting soggy

Filip's fridge 3/9 - 2020, brotholm



Filip's freezer 3/9 - 2020, brothholm

Good facts before you freeze:

Always **write the days date** before you put your food in the freezer.

Always freeze your raw animal products before the last consumption date "sista förbrukningsdag"(!) Or else they could be dangerous to eat.

Animal products frozen to **-18°C or lower**, generally never turns dangerous to eat, even after many years. This because it is too cold for dangerous bacteria to grow. However food with high fat content can go rancid in the freezer, which often ruins the flavour and smell of the food, however still safe to eat. This because enzymes, designed to break down fat, still function in low temperatures. A general rule is that fat food (for example salmon, sausage and entrecot) keeps for 3 - 6 months before it starts going rancid. Food with low fat content keeps for 1 year or more (chicken, cod, vegetables, fruit, broth and other non fatty products).⁵

Another thing that can damage your food is freezer burn. This is not dangerous, but dries your product and can often ruin the taste. It happens over time, when frozen food is in contact with air, enabling water to escape and some oxygen to enter. It can occur to almost any food. For example; beef (dark spots - removable), ice cream (ice crystals), chicken (white spots); rescued/rehydrated, see recipe below, bread (dry and loses color), berries (dry and loses consistence), veggies. Avoid freezer burn by **sealing your product airtight before freezing**.

If chilled correctly your food will last longer in the freezer. Larger batches of food is good if you put in water bath with ice packs or circulating cold water, or out doors with lid during winter.

Even if frozen food generally keeps safe some foods could become dangerous if 1) frozen at warmer temperature than -18, 2) frozen old or 3) unsealed. Smell, look, feel and taste to determine if your food is still good to eat. This is how some animal products smell, look and feel **when turned dangerous to eat**:

- Meat: **slimy/sticky surface, softer to touch, bad smell**
- Pork: **sweet smell + slimy surface = bad**
- Sausage: **sour/sweet smell, grey color parts, slimy**
- Fish: **Significant fishy smell**

Remember to follow your senses and that food frozen correctly almost never turns dangerous but can lose in quality and taste.

⁵ <https://fragor.livsmedelsverket.se/org/livsmedelsverket/d/hallbarhet-for-varor-i-fryslen/>

The secret of this PDF - zero food waste, no effort

By combining the restaurant way of cooking with the use of a freezer. We control both our time and zero food waste. Professional chefs always prepare their food so when the time comes for the actual cooking of a dish, it goes quick as a TV program. This process is called “mise en place” (french for preparing) and is often done the day before the cooking of a meal.

We will incorporate this method into our home cooking recipes. Only now, instead of prepping for the next day, we will put it into the heart of our kitchen. The freezer. Deciding ourselves when to do our next TV-style cook of.

There are two ways we will use our freezer:

1. For meals
2. For leftovers (our “mise en place”) → for other meals

Freezers “Mise en Place” - put in freezer while cooking of recipes in this PDF

Vegetable peels - organic (for broth)

- Roasted veggies leftovers:
 - Potato (becomes soggy → mix in stews as thickening, instead of maizena)
 - Root veggies except potato (stews, pies, soups or mix for salsa)
 - Onion (any recipe in need for onion)
 - Veggies above earth: red pepper, tomato etc (mix for gazpacho)
- Raw Vegetable stems and leftovers (soups, stews, woks)
 - Broccoli stems, cauliflower, mushroom etc. → Parboil in water with a little bit salt for 3-10 minutes before freezing
- Shrimp shells (for broth)
- Chicken and meat bones (for broth)
- broth in 1 liter freezer bags
- Ice Cubes:
 - coffee (for iced coffee latte)
 - red and white wine (for stews/sauces)
 - lemon juice
 - mixed green leaves leftovers + little water (for smoothie)
- Bread slices (for roasting)
- Cheese edges (for pie, pizza or pasta carbonara)
 - Remove paraffin and shred it before freezing.
- Spicy sausage and salami leftovers (for pasta carbonara or for flavouring stews)
- Ham leftovers (for pizza or pie)
- Banana slices (smoothies, nice cream, banana pancakes)
 - Marinate in lemon or lime juice for 10 minutes before freezing. Keeps yellow.
- Rice leftovers (for new rice fast)
 - Put in 100°C water quickly. Then rinse.
- Pasta leftovers (for new pasta fast)
 - Boil for 3 minutes less than the package says before freezing. Then do as with rice above.

LEFTOVERS RECIPES - *when YOU want to*

Banana Smoothie - it doesn't turn brown (2 secrets revealed)

Ingredients

1/3 Banana Slices (lemon marinated for 10 minutes) - from the freezer

1/3 Oatmilk, coconut cream, yoghurt or water

1/3 Frozen berries, leftover greens or fruits

Ice cubes of lemon juice

2 flavour tips:

- A. turmeric, blackpepper and a pinch of salt (works well with coconut cream)
- B. tabasco, ginger, agave and a pinch of salt (works well with greens)
- C. Lingonberry, cardamom, agave (works well with yoghurt or coconut cream)

2 secrets to prevent your banana smoothie from oxidizing and turning brown:

1. marinate banana slices in lemon or lime juice for 10 minutes
2. mix the smoothie on slow speed to avoid a swirl in the middle

If too thick; add water, ice cubes or milk of your choice. If too loose; add more of any other ingredient above. Feel free to experiment.

Broth (vegetable, chicken, shrimp)

Broth is both easy to make and very versatile as it may be used in many dishes. An added bonus is that broth is ideal to make from such things as vegetable trimmings, prawn shells, chicken bones, meat trimming and bones. Typical things many people see as left scraps left over after preparing a meal and throw away. Note that all the leftovers mentioned as ingredients in the 3 broth recipes, may be frozen, to make the broth later, when you feel like.

Vegetable broth

For a vegetable broth you can use almost any vegetable you can think of, onions of any kind, carrots, turnips, fennel, celery, herbs etc. The only thing to consider is if you want to keep a clear broth, as some vegetables such as beet root will give a very distinct color. Also be careful with over cooking some vegetables such as potato, as they may break apart and make your broth unclear.

Ingredients

Any vegetables that you may have available

Herbs or herb stems such as parsley, basil, thyme, oregano, rose mary

Per 3 liters of water:

2 bay leafs

7 black peppercorns

Optionally 1 crushed garlic clove with skin

Preparation

Put all vegetables and herbs in a large saucepan and cover with water, keeping track of roughly how many litres of water is needed.

Add spices according to the amount of water used, and bring to a boil. Then let simmer on slow heat for about 30 minutes under lid.

Place a sieve over a large enough container to fit all the broth and pour your broth into the sieve. The vegetables may now be discarded or used for compostation.

You may keep the broth in the fridge for 4-6 days, or frozen for a year.

Chicken broth

Just follow the same procedure as for vegetable broth above, adding any parts of chicken bones that you have. The more chicken compared to vegetables, the more pronounced chicken broth flavour.

Preparation

The chicken broth needs to simmer longer than vegetable broth, up to 3-4 hours is good to get all the flavours out. Simmer without lid, and during this time you may see foam forming at the top and you may simply skim this away.

After using the sieve to get all the bones and vegetables out, let cool down and place in the fridge overnight. The chicken fat will float up to the top and harden when it cools down, making it easy to remove from the broth. You can use the fat to fry in, as it has a good chicken flavour. If you find good pieces of chicken meat in the sieve, save those for a nice chicken soup.

You may keep the broth in the fridge for 3-4 days, or frozen for a year.

Prawn broth

The leftover heads and skin from prawns or lobster make a fantastic broth. Just follow the same procedure as for chicken broth above, switching the chicken for prawns. The more prawns compared to vegetables, the more pronounced prawn broth flavour.

If you would like the broth to have a slightly toasted flavour, you may put the prawns into the saucepan first and fry them on high heat for about a minute. Then adding the rest of the ingredients.

The best vegetables for prawn broth is onion, celery, carrots and parsley stems.

Simmer without lid for about 30 minutes.

You may keep the broth in the fridge for 1-2 days, or frozen for a year.

Rescued Freezer Burnt Chicken - for your taco night

Freezer burnt chicken breasts have white, dry and tasteless parts. This quick recipe will rehydrate your freezer burnt chicken + adding flavour so you can enjoy it instead of throwing it. Your time needed is around 10 minutes. Cooking time: 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Ingredients

Freezer burnt chicken breasts

Basic soup base - from freezer (see recipe below)

Dad's tomato sauce - from freezer (see recipe below)

cumin powder

chili powder

dried lemon or lime zest

fresh coriander

Lemon or lime juice - from freezer

salt and pepper to taste

Cooking

1. Cover chicken breasts in your basic soup base, bring to a boil and simmer with lid in the oven on 150°C for 1h or on the stove.
2. Remove chicken breasts to cool down and then shred them by hand, removing any dry and hard parts.
3. Put shredded chicken breasts in some of dad's tomato sauce.
4. Add some of the liquid from step 1, add the dry spices to taste and simmer on low heat for another 15-20 minutes until most of the fluid has evaporated.
5. Sprinkle freshly chopped coriander and lemon or lime juice to taste.

Serving

Goes well as an item on your taco table, as the mexican flavours are great at hiding any remaining dry or odd flavour. Store in the fridge for 3 days. Not suitable to refreeze.

Iced Coffee Latte

Coffee ice cubes - from the freezer

Milk of your choice

Ninja step - *when making a normal cup of coffee:*

Make ice cubes of your leftover coffee before enjoying your coffee. This way the coffee is fresh, not sour, when frozen, and you may enjoy your cup of coffee without having to go back into the kitchen.

Step 1 - *when you want to:*

Fill a glass with coffee ice cubes. Cover with milk. Enjoy!

Note: if you like a less strong coffee taste - add water to your leftover coffee before freezing. If you want a growing sensation of something extra, feel free to play around with different spices in your leftover coffee before freezing (cinnamon, cardamom, cayenne etc).

MEALS RECIPES - *when YOU want to*

Note 1: The ratio here is 10 portions per recipe. So you can easily multiply the ingredients if you want to make 20 or 30 portions instead, depending on the size of your freezer, popularity of the dish and how often you want to spend time in the kitchen.

Note 2: Some steps are marked “ninja step”. These steps are key, for your new way of free home cooking when YOU want to and with a lot less food leftovers. Follow them and you don’t have to return to the kitchen after a meal or within days, but when you really want to.

Dads Tomato Sauce

This tomato sauce is a real favourite! It is well suited for saving in the fridge at least 2-3 days, and in the freezer for about a year. You can easily modify the character of the sauce with simple variations, and of course you should experiment with other combinations than only those suggested.

If you have left overs of this sauce you can add it to a stew or a minced meat sauce, or just simply put it cold or warm on a toast drizzled with some drops of olive oil to make a quick lunch.

Base ingredients (10 portions)

5 red bell peppers

2 red chillies - or dry chillies/chilli powder to taste

3-4 garlic cloves

5 tablespoons tomato puree

500-700gr cherry tomato - or 7 fresh tomatoes or 2 cans of crushed tomato

Fresh or dry rosemary to taste

Salt and black pepper to taste

Olive oil to fry in

Variation 1

1 leek (purkolök)

Variation 2

20-30 black Kalamata olives

Salt water from the olive can

Variation 3

1 leek (purkolök)

Finely chopped parsley to taste (about 2dl should be good)

Lemon zest from 2 organic lemons

Lemon juice from 1 lemon

Preparation

- Cut the bell peppers in smaller pieces, about 1-2 cm square in size
- Finely chop the chillies with the seeds included
- Finely chop the garlic cloves
- Finely chop the rosemary if using fresh rosemary
- Rinse the leek well, and cut in fine strands, using also the dark green part (variation 1, 3)
- Pit the olives <https://www.wikihow.com/Pit-Olives> (variation 2)

Cooking

If possible use a cast iron frying pan, or in any case a pan without non-stick coating. This dish is at it's best if you prepare on high heat, and that is not a good idea with non-stick utensils.

Heat the pan without any oil and fry the cut bell peppers on high heat. Don't fill the pan, instead fry in several batches making sure that all pieces touch the iron. We want the bell peppers to get partly darkened, close to burnt, we don't want them to cook. Stir occasionally and put aside if frying in batches.

When all bell peppers are fried put them back in the pan on high heat and add about 1 dl of olive oil. Stir well, add garlic and chilli, and let fry for about one minute until you feel the fragrance of the garlic turn slightly roasted.

If possible make some space in the center of the pan and add the tomato paste. Let the paste fry a bit until darkening, maybe adding some olive oil so it does not get dry. Then add the rosemary and stir.

If using fresh cherry tomatoes these are best added just before serving, while if using crushed tomatoes these are best if they are allowed to cook for a while. Therefore add the crushed tomatoes now and let cook a little, if you think you will not be able to add cherry tomatoes at serving time. In any case there is no disaster either way. The sauce will be fine even if started with crushed tomatoes and then have added fresh cherry tomatoes later, just a little more liquid.

If you want to keep a very simple base sauce for later, this is the right time to set aside what will not be used at the moment. You may also go on to the next steps and save a more prepared sauce, but the cherry tomatoes and lemon juice used in variation 3 will taste better if added just before serving.

For variation 1, now is the time to add the leek and let fry until soft. Add olive oil if you see the pan going dry.

For variation 2: add the olives and olive juice from the can. Add the juice a little at a time, so the sauce does not get too salty.

For variation 3: add the leek and fry as in variation 1. Then add the lemon zest, fry just a short time. Just before serving you add the parsley and lemon juice and stir.

Serving

All sauce variations work fabulously with pasta, and with a few minor adjustments rice, couscous, or quinoa too.

You can combine this sauce and its variations with several sources of protein. Some of our favourites are:

Variation 1

Spicy sausage, pasta or couscous. Add some liquid to the sauce if needed, so that the couscous can soak it up. **Ninja step:** always boil pasta for 3 minutes less than on the package. Freeze leftover pasta. Let the pasta for today's serving finish cooking with the sauce.

Variation 2

Fried chicken breast with tagliatelle pasta.

Variation 3

Cut pieces of lobster or fried shrimps or fish served on the side, with linguine pasta. **Ninja step:** save shrimp or lobster shells in the freezer for broth.

Spinach soup & basic soup base

Ingredients (12-15 portions)

2kg chopped frozen spinach - or green kale

3-4 onions - or leftover leek, shallot etc

2-3 litres chicken broth - or veg broth

4 teaspoons paprika powder

2-4 teaspoons chilli powder

3 bay leaves

1 teaspoon nutmeg

Salt and black pepper to taste

Butter or olive oil to fry in

Optionally a hard boiled egg per person

Preparation

- Chop the onion in fine pieces
- **Ninja-step:** put skins from onion in freezer for broth

Cooking

Fry the onions in a large saucepan on low heat until translucent. Use butter or olive oil and make sure the onion never goes dry, adding butter or oil as needed.

Add all spices and let fry on low heat for a minute.

Add chicken broth and let boil slowly for a few minutes.

Ninja step: If you want to keep a very simple base soup for later, this is the right time to set aside what will not be used at the moment. You may also go on to the next step and freeze a ready spinach soup, but as the frozen spinach can be added just before serving and you might want to use the spinach for other dishes than the soup, it might as well wait. You decide. The soup base or ready spinach soup will both keep in the fridge for at least 3-4 days, and in the freezer for about a year.

The final step is adding the frozen spinach to the soup base and bringing to a boil.

Serving

A normal portion is about 2,5-3 dl and will make a nice light lunch if served with the two halves of a hard boiled egg. You can sprinkle a little paprika powder on the egg yolks to add color.

Q & A

Is there any concerns around microplastics when using freezer bags?

I am not an expert on this. On a personal note I try using metal and glas jars when I can and especially for stews and other liquids with more contact to the surface of the container. Glas jars often have plastic lids but that feels fine for me as the lid is not in contact with the food.

I also use plastic bags sometimes as they are easy to have at hand and takes less space in the freezer. I buy sustainable plastic bags on renewable materials and recycle them even if they sometimes are stated to be biodegradable, as this is not the case in Stockholm, due to another regional compast system. I also doggy bags from restaurants as a freezing container.

Remember to always let your food cool down before freezing. Although I am not sure about warm food contributing to more release of any micro plastics it both feels better when freezing chilled food. It also is a necessity to keep your food lasting in the freezer, as the humidity from warm food going directly into the freezer will damage the food.

Are is any other good source of multiple vegetarian recipes that work well with this technique? (i.e. can be frozen for long and remains good) that you could recommend?

Think of the neutral tomate sauce featured in this PDF. It works well to make in big batches and freeze, for several different recipes, with just tiny easy tweeks. Take this sauce philosophy and apply it on your favourite cuisine. Maybe a thai coconut curry sauce base? Or why not an indian cream fraise sauce base? If interesting I could provide these two later options in an update of this PDF in the near future.

How long can we keep food in freezer? I assume cooked food has expiry period depending on the kind of food we cook

See the descriptions “good facts before freezing”. Summary: frozen food almost never turns dangerous to eat if frozen correctly. Seal tight before freezing. Fatty food keeps for 3-6 months before it could start to go rancid; fat breaking down, leading to a bad smell and taste (not dangerous). Less fatty food keeps for 1 year or much longer. Some animal products could however turn dangerous to eat. Trust your senses and see descriptions on how to detect dangerous animal products in “good facts before freezing” above.

You could start googleing different food products specific life span. I find this just leading to info overload and confusement. The general rule provided by Swedish Livsmedelsverket 3-6 months for fatty food and 1 year or more for food with low fat content, combined with trusting our senses and freezing our food correctly works best for me.

Should rice be cooked less than what it says on the package before freezing it?

It is not necessary in the same way as with pasta. Pasta benefits greatly by boiling it 3 minutes less than its package recommendation. Rice is less fragile to reheating from frozen state.

How do you manage people wanting more food if you've already put it in the freezer?

The days you really feel like cooking, some leftover parts are suited to freeze directly during the cooking process, like for example organic vegetable peels for broth. Before freezing an actual meal it is important to let the meal cool down. As with any new technique I think it is good to remember one self not to be fanatic. Freeze some portions, save a little for extra and for the next day and use the techniques to enable you to be more free in the kitchen with joy and less food leftovers. Try not to twist it to a new stressful idea of having to take care of everything all at once at all time, to not be able to enter the kitchen again sometimes. Aim for a balance.

One of the cons of freezing home cooked meals is nutrient loss. What are your thoughts about that?

I am not an expert on this area. My personal perception is that the nutrients may be lost some while freezing a food at the same time as freezing food is a great way of preserving meals for longer. By freezing them while they are at their highest nutrient state, I feel that I preserve this state in an effective way for longer (for example brown bananas frozen marinated in lemon).

What can absolutely not be frozen? Is there any food that you recommend not to freeze? And for how long can you freeze food in general? Give us a few examples.

Almost everything can be frozen.

- They sometimes need special treatment before
 - Many root veggies and greens - parboil in saltwater 3-10 min 100 degrees. Example - broccoli stems, cauliflower, mushroom
- They might only be good to use for specific purposes
 - Potato - starch for stews instead of maizena, but to eat on its own they become soggy and boring when cooked and then frozen
 - Salad/cucumber (high water content will make them break) - suitable for ice cubes for smoothie
 - Yoghurt, sour cream and creme frais - will break into grains and liquid. Only possible to use in frozen form as ingredients in ice cream. Milk you can freeze for cooking and drinking. Cream for cooking.