



Leftovers Challenge

The best way to save money and time in the kitchen is to make abundant meals and use your leftovers wisely. You just need the right approach and a little creativity. Challenge yourself to spend a few days learning the art of making the most of your leftovers.

Day 1: Shop Smart

- **Go Big:** Plan on big-pan dishes such as vegetarian lasagna, casserole, or large-scale recipes like a whole roasted chicken with vegetables, a big stew, pasta dish, or soup. Make sure you buy enough ingredients to make double servings.
- **Add Versatility:** Stock up on ingredients that can be easily prepared in multiple ways. Potatoes can be turned into potato cakes, fresh-cut fries, hash, or mashed. Other versatile ingredients include beets, carrots, eggs, pasta, beans, and rice.
- **See It a New Way:** Reimagine your original meal as a completely new dish. Have wraps, pie shells, phyllo dough, tortillas, broth, and leafy greens on hand to give your leftovers a fresh presentation.

Day 2: Store It Well

- **Freeze in portion sizes:** Freeze leftovers in individual portions to make them easy to grab and reheat for single servings or smaller meals. This helps prevent food waste and saves time.
- **Save It All:** Keep the ends of onions, carrots, celery, garlic, mushrooms, and other veggies. Toss them in a freezer bag to add flavor to your next broth or stew.



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- **Make It Last:** Store leftovers in airtight containers, using food-grade plastic or glass. Cooked meats and vegetables are best used or frozen within 3-4 days. Roast vegetables early on to extend their shelf life and prevent spoilage.
- **Label and date everything:** Clearly label and date all leftovers in your fridge and freezer. This helps you keep track of what you have and ensures you use the oldest items first.

Day 3, 4, 5: Get More Days Out of Every Meal

- **Holidays:** After a big holiday meal, find creative ways to use all that food. For example, create a post-Thanksgiving casserole with layers of sweet potatoes, roasted veggies, green beans, leftover turkey, milk, and stuffing.
- **Keep It Moist:** When reheating leftovers, add moisture to prevent them from drying out. Use milk, water, olive oil, broth, or cream, depending on the dish.
- **Get Creative:** Turn pasta leftovers into pasta salad, noodle soup, or pasta frittata. Cut up protein dishes and reimagine them as a stir fry served over rice. Create delicious omelets or have a Taco Tuesday with leftover ingredients.

Remember: The key to enjoying leftovers is planning, proper storage, and a little creativity. With these tips, you can save time, money, and reduce food waste while adding variety to your weekly menu.