



The Rotting Truth: How Veganism Can Combat Food Waste, Sustainability | Environment | Food Insecurity

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OCT 11



Did you know that according to the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#), globally, approximately *one-third of all food produced, translating to 1.3 billion tons annually, is wasted?* That's right, mountains of perfectly edible food end up rotting in landfills each year, while millions go hungry. This isn't just an ethical issue, it's an environmental one too.

“Throwing away food is like stealing from the table of those who are poor and hungry.” — Pope Francis

Food waste contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and squanders precious resources like water and land. A new study published in the journal PLOS ONE [The effects of gases from food waste on human health: A systematic review](#) found that food waste is responsible for about 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Let's dive right in..

The Environmental Toll of Food We Trash

Food decomposing in landfills generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas with 25 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. The resources used to produce wasted food, including water, land, and energy, are essentially thrown away. Consider the environmental damage caused by deforestation to create grazing land for livestock, only to have a portion of that meat end up discarded. A 2018 report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?6802466/Deforestation-in-the-Amazon-is-accelerating-the-point-of-no-return) estimates that livestock grazing is responsible for up to 90% of Amazon deforestation.

“Cutting food waste is a delicious way of saving money, helping to feed the world and protect the planet.” — Tristram Stuart

Veganism: A Powerful Tool for Change

Vegan diets hold immense potential to reduce food waste. Plant-based foods are simply more efficient. They require fewer resources to produce and generate less waste overall. A study published in the journal Science (<https://gamechangersmovie.com/the-bigger-picture/>) found that animal-based agriculture uses significantly more land and water compared to plant-based food production. Plants generally have a higher edible-to-inert ratio

compared to animals, meaning less gets thrown away. Additionally, plant-based foods often boast a longer shelf life, reducing the risk of spoilage. Fruits, vegetables, and grains tend to last longer than meat and dairy products, which require specific storage conditions and have a higher chance of spoilage.



Taking Action: How Your Vegan Plate Can Help the Planet

Embracing a vegan lifestyle doesn't have to be overwhelming. Here are some practical steps you can take to minimize food waste:

- **Plan Your Meals and Portions:** Planning meals and sticking to a grocery list prevents impulse purchases that often lead to food spoilage. Apps like Mealime <https://www.mealime.com/> can help you create delicious and balanced vegan meal plans.
- **Store it Right:** Knowing how to store different fruits, vegetables, and vegan staples can significantly extend their shelf life. Websites like the Foodkeeper from the USDA <https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/foodkeeper-app> offer science-based guidance on proper food storage techniques.

- **Leftover Magic:** Leftovers don't have to be boring! Explore creative recipes to transform them into delicious new meals. Websites like Vegan Richa <https://www.veganricha.com/> provide a treasure trove of vegan recipes that can help you repurpose leftovers.
- **Embrace the Community:** Get involved in community gardens, food-sharing programs like FoodCycle <https://thefoodproject.org/> or Freecycle <https://www.freecycle.org/>, or composting initiatives. Together we can make a bigger difference.

Beyond the Plate: The Ripple Effect of Veganism

The benefits of veganism extend far beyond reducing food waste. Vegan diets are often linked to improved health outcomes and reduced risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes, as reported by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) <https://www.pcrm.org/>. Choosing veganism also aligns with ethical concerns about animal welfare. The vast majority of factory-farmed animals live in cramped and unsanitary conditions. Veganism allows you to take a stand against these practices. On a broader scale, reducing food waste through veganism can lead to economic savings for individuals, families, and communities. Less food waste translates to less money spent on groceries that ultimately get thrown away.

“To me, it’s sort of funny that wasting food is not taboo. It’s one of the last environmental ills that you can just get away with.” — Jonathan Bloom

Conclusion: Every Bite Counts

Food waste is a serious issue, but there are solutions. By adopting a vegan lifestyle and incorporating these practical tips, you can become a powerful force for positive change. Remember, every bite you take is an opportunity to reduce your environmental footprint and contribute to a more sustainable future.



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General Resources

Books:

- [Dominion: The Power of Animals in Nature and in Our Imagination](#) by Matthew Scully
- [Animal Liberation](#) by Peter Singer
- [Eating Animals](#) by Jonathan Safran Foer
- [A Billion Hungry Mouths: Feeding the World Without Consuming the Planet](#) by Colin Tudge

Websites and organizations:

- [Veganuary](#)
- [The Vegan Society](#)
- [PETA](#)
- [Mercy for Animals](#)

- *Compassion in World Farming*
- *The Humane Society of the United States*

Documentaries:

- *Earthlings*
- *Cowspiracy*
- *What the Health*
- *Forks Over Knives*
- *Dominion*

Articles:

- *"The Case for Animal Rights"* by Tom Regan
 - *"Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows: An Introduction to Carnism"* by Melanie Joy
 - *"Animal Rights: The Abolitionist Approach"* by Gary L. Francione
 - *"Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals"* by Christine Korsgaard
 - *Seeds of Compassion: Finding Jesus Christ in a Vegan World* by Michael Corthell
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