

Are My Expired Eggs Okay to Eat?

Food Dates
& What They
Mean

Expired by? Sell by? Use by? There's so much confusion out there regarding dates on food and what they mean. Every day, the average American throws away one pound of perfectly edible food. It's easy to blame overstuffed pantries and forgotten leftovers.

Here's how you can decipher what stays, what goes and what to do with the food you aren't ready to eat yet.



Breaking Down Date Labels

BEST USED BY

Packages with this mark guarantee when the product is of best flavor and quality. A loaf of bread may not taste as fresh, or the flavors in a jar of pasta sauce may not taste as robust if consumed after the date noted. This mark is not about the product's safety; it's about the taste as it ages.

SELL BY

Manufacturers utilize this date to alert retailers when it's time to remove their products from grocery shelves. Depending on the item, products can last several days, weeks or months before being purchased and then consumed. *Eggs can stay fresh for three weeks beyond the sell date with proper storage. Milk can last five to seven days after expiration before it sours or curdles.*

USE BY

This is the final date manufacturers guarantee quality. Infant formula is the only product in which it is a mark of date safety.

Avoiding Food Waste

SAVE YOUR FRUIT

Fruit is an item that's commonly tossed prematurely. Make an apple cobbler or bake banana bread instead of tossing bruised apples or freckled bananas. Oranges that seem a little dry make a great citrus addition to a smoothie.

EXTEND PRODUCE LIFE

Looking for tricks to help your veggies stay fresher longer? Wrap broccoli in a paper towel. Store celery in tin foil rather than plastic containers. Asparagus loves being stored in a half-inch of water in a glass container.

MEAL PLAN AND PREP

Buying food for specific recipes helps reduce food waste. When ingredients are bought for a reason rather than on a whim, they'll be used in plenty of time.

FREEZE IT

Frozen foods will not go bad. Freezing halts the aging process, and bacteria and pathogens also cannot grow in frosty temperatures. Milk, cheese, bread and lightly beaten raw eggs can all be frozen and saved for a later date.

COMPOST

Recycle your food without seeing it in a lifeless landfill. Composting allows food waste to live a new life by becoming a nutrient-rich additive to soil.

