



4.17.19 / [Nutrition](#)

Don't Scrap Your Scraps!

By [Mary O'Hara, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist](#)

Reducing our environmental impact is a hot topic these days. With Earth Day approaching, April is a perfect time to begin protecting the environment. To make an impact, many people choose public transportation; take shorter showers; recycle; and shop with reusable bags. An additional earth-and wallet-friendly action we can take is to repurpose the food scraps that accumulate while cooking.

Why use Food Scraps?

Forty percent of our food gets wasted in the United States, much of it at the consumer level (1). We buy too much, and often throw out what might be salvaged. Imagine creating something totally new, out of broccoli stalks; beet greens; bell pepper cores; celery stalk bases, and green bean ends. We can get so much more value out of the fresh produce we purchase. Rather than throwing them out, food scraps can be transformed into vegetable broths and soups, veggie burgers, and juices. By doing this, we reduce the amount of waste we produce and there are cost-savings.

As for nutrition, the ends of vegetables and skins are also often a great source of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Potato skins contain almost twice the fiber as the flesh, and broccoli stems contain more Vitamin C, iron, and calcium compared to their florets. Also, the peels and skins of produce contain more antioxidants than the flesh (2). Antioxidants are believed to be beneficial in the prevention of several chronic diseases, as they reduce cellular damage (3).

How to use Food Scraps

So, when we are left with a mound of vegetable scraps after peeling, dicing and chopping, consider tossing some of them together to make a flavorful vegetable fried rice or stir-fried noodle dish. Or consider, cooking them down into a broth or soup.

You can transform your overripe, "ugly" fruit into something new, as well. Consider the following:

- Using overripe bananas for banana bread.
- Cooking berries into a jam.
- Making a pasta sauce out of wrinkled tomatoes.
- Blending overripe fruit into a smoothie.

If time does not allow the use of your leftover vegetable parts immediately, consider freezing them for another time. Saving scraps, wilted vegetables, or vegetables in the freezer when they would otherwise go bad, preserves their nutritional quality and prolongs their shelf life (4).

Food Scrap Recipe

Below is a recipe for potato skins that is simple to make. Potato skins can be made into a delicious appetizer or snack. They also serve well as makeshift croutons or as a garnish with extra crunch (5).

- Heat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Coat peels with oil and seasonings of choice (pepper, salt, paprika).
- Place peels into oven for 15-20 minutes, stirring once to prevent burning.
- Let cool for 5 minutes.

References

1. NRDC's 2nd edition of the report "Wasted: How America is losing up to 40% of its' Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill."
2. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0271531703001842>
3. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/301506.php>
4. <http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/datastore/234-779.pdf>
5. <https://www.thekitchn.com/heres-why-you-should-never-throw-out-potato-peelings-tips-from-the-kitchn-212565>

Related Blog Posts



4.17.19 / Nutrition

Don't Scrap Your Scraps!

Reducing our environmental impact is a hot topic these days. With Earth Day approaching, April is a perfect time to begin protecting the

environment. To make an impact, many people choose public transportation; take shorter s...



4.5.19 / Nutrition

Recipe: Black Eye Pea Soup

Mixed with love and sentiment into curries, pastes, sauces, desserts and rice, this pea packs in calcium, folate, protein, fiber and vitamin A.



3.10.19 / Nutrition

Behind the Scenes with our RDNs

Our team of RDNs works to improve the health and well-being of our clients with serious illnesses every day. Here's how they do it!