



Food Waste: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is food loss and food waste?

Food that is grown, raised, caught, or harvested, but never eaten, is considered to be food loss and waste. Here are some examples:

- fruits or vegetables that are damaged on the way to the grocery store
- food items in grocery stores that spoil before they can be sold
- leftovers from a meal that are not eaten
- meals prepared in a restaurant that are never served and end up discarded.

The term **food loss** applies to mature crops and to food that is caught or harvested, but hasn't yet been sold. **Food waste** is used to describe food that is discarded, without being eaten, once it reaches the store, home or restaurant.

2. Why is food wasted?

Some food waste is unavoidable – this is the food that can't generally be eaten, such as bones, vegetable peelings, egg shells, tea bags, and coffee grounds.

Avoidable food waste is the edible food that ends up in the compost or in the bin. Unfortunately, we often waste good food because we buy too much, cook too much, or don't store it correctly. When food is wasted, all the resources used to produce it, like energy, water, manual labour, and land, are also wasted.

Find out more: <https://lovefoodhatewaste.ca/about/food-waste/>

3. Where does wasted food go?

At home, the best place for fruit, vegetable and grains is in the compost (meat and dairy foods should not go into the compost). If there is a Green Bin that's good too! Food should not be thrown into the garbage because it produces methane gas that contributes to climate change.

4. How does food waste affect climate change?

If food waste is not handled properly and ends up buried in a landfill, methane gas is produced from the food rotting in an environment that does not have oxygen (anaerobic).

Methane is a greenhouse gas 25 times more powerful than carbon dioxide, and it contributes to rising temperatures, which are a major factor in climate change. By reducing food loss and waste, greenhouse gas emissions can also be reduced.

Find out more: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/food-loss-waste/taking-stock.html#toc1>

5. What is a greenhouse gas?

Much like the glass of a greenhouse, gases in Earth's atmosphere sustain life by trapping the sun's heat. These "greenhouse gases" allow the sun's rays to pass through and warm the planet but prevent this warmth from escaping the atmosphere into space. Without them, Earth would be too cold to sustain life as we know it. When we talk about greenhouse gases, we're referring to carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride.

Find out more: <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/greenhouse-gases/>

6. What is compost?

Organic matter like leaves, banana peels and apple cores that decompose (break down) into natural fertilizer for soil and plants. Bacteria, fungi, algae and protozoa (like worms) work through organic matter to break it down.

Decomposing is an aerobic method (meaning it requires the presence of air) of recycling organic waste. It is also a natural process that re-uses the nutrients in food waste to create compost that helps soil and plants thrive.

7. What is vermicompost?

It is the product of the decomposition process using various species of [worms](#), usually [red wigglers](#), [white worms](#), and other [earthworms](#), to create a mixture of decomposing vegetable or [food waste](#), bedding materials, and vermicast. This process is called vermicomposting, while the rearing of worms for this purpose is called vermiculture.

Vermicast (also called [worm castings](#), worm humus, worm manure, or worm faeces) is the end-product of the breakdown of [organic matter](#) by earthworms. These castings have been shown to contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients than the organic materials before vermicomposting.

Find out more: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermicompost>

8. What is a landfill?

A **landfill** is a place where waste is kept. Waste is usually buried in **landfills**, but it may first be sorted to remove any recyclable materials. Once the waste is crushed into very small pieces, it is buried, but without oxygen, a dangerous gas called methane is created.

Find out more: <https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landfill>

9. What is soil made of?

Soil is made up of solids, liquids, and gases. The solid portion of soil contains pieces of different minerals and organic or living matter, which are called particles. The particles can vary in size, texture, and composition. The liquid part of soil is water, while the gas portion is air found in spaces or pores in between the particles.

Find out more: <http://www.scholastic.ca/education/nlscience/grade3/pdfs/unit1-eng/20-what-is-soil-madeof.pdf>