

Leftovers

Food Donation Best Practices Guide



Why Care About Leftovers?

Restaurants can produce between 750 to 1360 pounds of food waste per day. At least 75 to 130 pounds is edible. The table below shows three main options for donating food leftovers.

	Homeless Shelters	Farmers	Food Banks
Contact Potential Leftover Donation Sites	Homeless shelters may accept some kinds of food leftovers. Contact a local homeless shelter to see if they are interested in taking your food leftovers.	Some farmers will accept some kinds of food leftovers for composting or to use as pig feed. Contact a local farmer to see if they are interested in taking your food leftovers.	Food banks may accept some kinds of food leftovers. Contact a local food bank to see if they are interested in taking your food leftovers.
Leftovers Usually Accepted	Buffet leftovers, baked goods, fresh produce, prepared dishes, recently expired foods	Spoiled food (no meat), bread and grains, coffee grounds, spoiled produce	Non-perishable foods, damaged or off-season packaged foods, fresh produce, canned foods
Collecting Food Leftovers	Collect and store excess food and food leftovers. Donated food must still be edible/safe to consume	Designate a bin to collect food leftovers. Teach staff about what types of food leftovers can be placed in the bin.	Package and store edible food leftovers. Donated food usually must be packaged or canned and must still be edible/safe to consume. Dented and damaged packaging is acceptable as long as food is unharmed.
Pick-up and Delivery	Arrange a pick-up or delivery schedule that works for your business and the homeless shelter. It is usually easier for shelters to receive consistent donations.	Arrange a pick-up or delivery schedule that works for your business and the farmer.	Arrange a pick-up or delivery schedule that works for your business and the food bank.

Reduce Food Waste

The best way to manage food leftover waste is to stop waste before it starts.

- ▶ Use refillable condiment bottles
- ▶ Provide a take-home box for leftovers
- ▶ Use vegetable and meat trimmings for soup stock
- ▶ Buy frozen produce as well as fresh to reduce likelihood of spoilage
- ▶ Teach proper cutting techniques to maximize amount of food
- ▶ Be flexible about portion sizes if they are consistently returned

The Good Samaritan Food Donation Act makes it easier for businesses to donate to food banks and food rescue programs. It protects donors from liability when donating to nonprofit organizations and protects donors from civil and criminal liability should the product donated in good faith later cause harm to the needy recipient.

For more information on donating food leftovers, visit CalRecycle.ca.gov and type "Food Donation" in the search bar.

