

FOOD DONATION & CONSUMPTION

timetable



FOODRESCUE.CA

Very few foods have an expiry date. Most foods display a best before date. This confusion continues to be a major source of avoidable food waste in Canada. Food is still edible after the best before date has passed. This guide helps you clarify when food can be donated and consumed past the best before date. Always use your senses to evaluate food quality if food is past the best before date.

While food may be edible past the best before date, non-profits cannot always use this type of food. Please try to donate food as fresh as possible.

BB = Best Before Date

FOOD CATEGORY	ITEMS	DONATE BY	CONSUME BY
PRODUCE 	Perishable fresh fruits and vegetables	Still fit for human consumption	No visible rot, mold, or bio-degrading smell
	Shelf stable canned fruits and vegetables, pickles, sauces, or pastes	6 months past BB	1 year past BB
DAIRY 	Perishable milk (including dairy alternatives), butter, yogurt, cheese, eggs, ice cream, sour cream	On or before BB	2 weeks past BB IF FROZEN 2-3 months past BB
	Shelf stable evaporated, powdered, or milk alternatives	On or before BB	1 year past BB
	Shelf stable baby formula, supplemental beverages (i.e.: Ensure)	1 month prior to expiry date	Expiry date
MEAT & FISH / EGGS & SOY / LEGUMES / NUT PRODUCTS & NUTS 	Raw meat and fish	Before BB or FREEZE on or before BB date to extend shelf life Sushi cannot be rescued	BB or IF FROZEN : Beef, lamb, pork, whole poultry: 1 year past BB Poultry pieces: 6 months past BB Ground meat: 2-3 months past BB Fish: 2-6 months past BB
	Cooked luncheon meats, tofu, eggs	On or before BB	1 week past BB
	Shelf stable canned meat, fish, beans, chickpeas, nuts, nut butter, peanut butter, seeds, spam	6 months past BB	1 year past BB
BREAD / CRACKERS & CEREAL / GRAIN 	Perishable bread, buns, bagels, pitas, tortillas, flat bread, na'an, matzah	Still fit for human consumption	No visible rot, mold, or bio-degrading smell
	Dry, shelf stable cereal, crackers, flour, oats, pasta, rice, quinoa, meals or sides, energy bars	6 months past BB	1 year past BB
	Meal replacement or supplement bars	3 weeks prior to expiry date	Expiry date
BAKED GOODS / SNACKS / DESSERTS 	Perishable cakes, cookies, pies, danishes, chocolate, pudding	Before BB or FREEZE on or before BB date to extend shelf life	72 hours past BB IF FROZEN 1 month past BB
	Shelf stable cookies, chips, popcorn, bagged snacks, snack cakes, granola bars	6 months past BB	1 year past BB
PREPARED 	Pre-cooked or ready-to-eat meals; deli salads, pizza, sandwiches	Immediately or FREEZE to extend shelf life. Must not have been 'plated', exposed to public touch, or temperature-abused	72 hours past BB IF FROZEN 1 month past BB
	Frozen dinners, microwavable meals	3 months past BB	1 year past BB
	Shelf stable canned soups, stews, meals	6 months past BB	1 year past BB
	Shelf stable baby food	1 month prior to BB	1 year past BB
CONDIMENTS 	Frozen sauces, gravies	3 months past BB	3 months past BB
	Shelf stable mustard, relish, ketchup, jam, margarine, mayonnaise, oil, salad dressing, vinegars, spices, sauces, toppings	6 months past BB	1 year past BB
BEVERAGES 	Juice, water, coconut water	30 days past BB	3-6 months past BB
	Other drinks; coffee, tea, sport or energy drinks, crystals	30 days past BB	3-6 months past BB