

## Families throw away around one third of all the food they buy (including 4.4million apples every day)

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The astonishing scale of wasted food has been revealed with figures suggesting that the nation bins 4.4million apples every day of the year. Even worse, families throw away around one third of all the food they buy, according to a study. In total, 6.7million tons of food that was once perfectly good to eat is dumped, 40 per cent of it fruit and vegetables. The amount of money spent on this uneaten food adds up to £3billion a year. Now Government waste experts are advising shoppers to keep fresh produce in the fridge, rather than the fruit bowl or larder, to extend its life. They surveyed some 2,100 householders, going through their bins to discover exactly what families are throwing out. They then compiled alarming figures about the total amount of food wasted across the nation. Sales of fruit and vegetables have risen in recent years, not least because of the Government's advice to eat five portions a day. The mountain of tempting produce carted away from the big stores has been boosted by promotions such as "two-for-one" deals. Unfortunately, however, millions of Britons fail to eat much of the produce they buy before it goes off. The Government's waste reduction experts on the WRAP body said the waste in terms of carbon generated to grow, transport and cover them in plastic packaging is also huge. According to WRAP: "The main reason we throw so much out is we simply do not eat it before it goes off. We could be making the problem worse by not storing fruit and vegetables in the best place once we bring it home from the shops. "For example, more than half of us choose to leave fruit out at room temperature, rather than keeping it cool." WRAP has carried out research - with Sainsbury's which found that putting fresh produce in the fridge extends its life by up to a fortnight. The organisation has set up a campaign - Love Food Hate Waste - to encourage families to think more carefully about how much food they buy and how best to store it. WRAP's chief executive Dr Liz Goodwin said: "These dramatic figures show that although we are all keen to do the right thing buying plenty of fruit and vegetables, the benefit is clearly being lost when food gets thrown out untouched. "By following some simple tips and advice, we can all be saving money as well as helping the environment." Conservative food spokesman Peter Ainsworth described the waste as "offensive". He said: "The amount of food we throw away each year is phenomenal and carries with it serious environmental as well as financial costs. "It is environmentally and morally offensive that as a society we have become so casual about the raw materials of life." He complained that WRAP's work had been undermined by a Government decision to cut its financial support by 30 per cent.

GOOD FOOD GOING TO WASTE	
	Tons wasted (per year)
Apples	179,000
Potatoes	177,000
Bananas	78,000
Tomatoes	46,000
Oranges	45,000
	Fruit & veg dumped (per day)
Apples	4,400,000
Potatoes	5,100,000
Bananas	1,600,000
Tomatoes	2,800,000
Oranges	1,200,000

(Source: WRAP)