WASTE LESS, TASTE MORE 002

Put the Extras Away Before Dessert



A LITTLE ORGANIZATION KEEPS THE EVENING RELAXED.

After the dinner plates are cleared, take a brief kitchen pause to put away the food you plan to keep. Having containers ready before guests arrive makes this part of the evening easier.

1 Prepare a place for the extras

Set out clean containers and make room in the refrigerator before the party. Choose shallow containers for cooked food.

Why: You can put food away promptly without searching through cupboards or rearranging shelves.

2 Make storage part of clearing dinner

Transfer the food you are keeping into containers as you clear the kitchen. Do not leave it sitting out through dessert and conversation.

Why: Perishable food needs prompt refrigeration, even when the evening is still going.

3 Label it with a next step

Write the contents and date on each container. Add a simple reminder such as “chicken for salad” or “vegetables for soup.”

Why: A useful label helps turn good intentions into another meal.

KITCHEN NOTES

Watch the clock

Refrigerate perishable food within two hours, or within one hour when temperatures exceed 90°F. If that limit has already passed, discard it.

Use shallow containers

Divide larger amounts so they cool more quickly. Small amounts of hot food can go directly into the refrigerator.

Plan the next occasion realistically

Use refrigerated cooked leftovers within three to four days, or freeze them for longer storage. Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

THE PLATING MINDSET

A thoughtful dinner party includes a plan for the food after the plates leave the table.

Food safety: USDA FSIS (linked in PDF)