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Greener Day 12

I live in a 5 person family, but my sister recently went to college, so there are currently only four people in my house. I was very surprised to read that an average 4-person family loses \$1500 a year on wasted food. In my family, we try as best we can to buy only food products that we will be able to eat before they go bad, to use all of the food that we cook with and buy, and to compost all of our food waste. Even doing these things, I am sure that we lose money on food that we do not eat, whether it is from eating out (where we do not have control over what happens to the food waste from in the assembly process), or buying too much food that we forget to eat, or not finishing all of the food in our fridge before we travel.

I grew up moving back and forward from America to Germany, as my father is from Germany and my mother is from America. This experience gave me the opportunity to see how two different cultures deal with different issues, and in this case, food waste. Germany is a very sustainable country. According to the Environmental Performance Index, Germany is the 13th most sustainable country in the world. Before Germany are very small countries that are not as economically powerful. The fact that Germany is an economic superpower and is still able to be immensely environmentally sustainable says a lot for how environmental issues are prioritized. According to the Deutsche Welle, Germany is able to “demonstrate to the world that sustainability does not necessarily need to come at the expense of economic growth” (dw.de). Furthermore, UN Environment Program head Achim Steiner said that "experts would have laughed 10 years ago if someone told them that the world's second-largest exporter would be not only competitive but also economically more advanced than every other European country despite getting a fifth of its electricity from renewable sources.”

When it comes to food waste, people in Germany have come up with many inovative ways to reduce the 11 million kilograms of food every year that go to waste in the country. The Agriculture Minister, Christian Schmidt, has a plan to halve that amount by 2030. He, agreeing with the points made in the video that we watched for the Green Challenge today, says that expiration dates on food have “a lot to with food waste” (Schmidt). He has also commented and said that “too much food ends up in the trash, even though it’s still edible” (Schmidt, HuffPost Germany), which exactly encompasses our theme for today’s challenge.

His ideas for reducing the amount of food waste is for food products to use “smart packaging that can inform consumers when it is no longer edible” (Schmidt, HuffPost Germany). This would be something like having a computer chip in a yoghurt-cup could measure if it’s still good to eat, instead of having a printed expiration date that is far from accurate.

Coming from this background of seeing a country that is incredibly environmentally conscious, I am very disappointed, and almost embarrassed by the lack of regulations in place to protect the environment in the United States concerning food waste.

Through this article, however, I learned many things about how to make certain products last longer. For example, placing ripe avocados in the fridge will make them last longer, keeping flour in the freezer can make it stay fresh almost twice as long, and using a slice of bread to soften up hardened brown sugar can reduce the amount thrown away. These are all methods in which I can personally help this country's food waste problem.

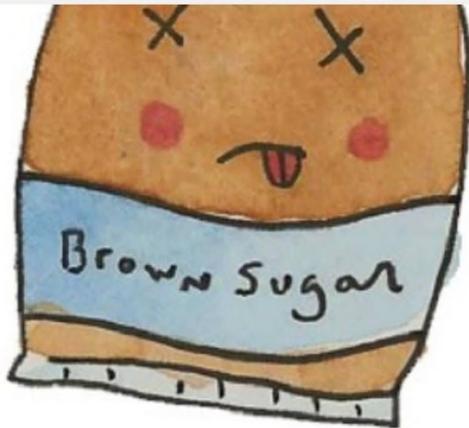
Finally, I learned though a comparison how much of an impact food waste makes. "Food is the number one thing in America's landfills, and it contributes more to climate pollution than all of the cars in Georgia." This is shocking to me. According to statista.com, Georgia had approximately 3.5 million private and commercial automobiles registered in 2016! If our food waste can produce more pollution through methane than 3.5 million cars, one can clearly see that we are doing something wrong.



To keep a bunch of bananas fresh for longer, wrap the stems in some plastic wrap. This prevents ethylene gas from reaching other parts of the fruit and prematurely ripening it.

To make flour keep good almost twice as long, put it in the freezer.

Using a slice of bread to soften up hardened brown sugar can reduce the amount thrown away.



laraprojectgreen Oh no! My brown sugar is all hard and dry! Well, I guess there's nothing that I can do :(BUT WAIT! look there! There's one little piece of bread left over from breakfast! Here's an idea: I'll try putting the bread in the sugar to see if it will help!
"A few moments later"
AHA! Now I have perfectly fine brown sugar again! Nothing can defeat me as long as I have this bread!

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43 SECONDS AGO

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