



DID YOU KNOW?

The only foods that are required by federal law to have expiration dates are baby food, infant and baby formula. In fact, an actual expiration date is only used on baby formula, baby food, yeast and baking powder.



DATES ON FOOD PACKAGING:

What do they mean?

Understanding dates on food packaging to promote food safety and reduce food waste.



Many dates on foods refer to quality, not safety

It may happened to you: Looking for something in the freezer or pantry, and discover food with a passed sell by, use by date, etc. Your first impulse is to throw it out, but WAIT! Is it still good?



TURN PAGE

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF DATES YOU MAY SEE ON FOOD

Many canned and boxed products are **safe to eat** long after the date on the container, and the shelf life of refrigerated and frozen foods can be extended **if they are handled properly**.

Once a perishable item is FROZEN, it doesn't matter if the date expires—foods kept frozen continuously are safe indefinitely, though the quality slowly deteriorates over time.



**** If you have any questions about the date on food items you receive, please reach out before throwing anything away.**

'Expiration Date'

(Examples: "expires 11/15/21" or "do not use after 11/15/21")

Look for it only on: Baby food and formula, yeast, baking powder.

What it means: Do not distribute infant formula and baby food after this date! Yeast and baking powder do not work as well after the date but are still safe to eat.

'Sell By' Date

(Examples: sell by 1/9/21. Also called 'Pull Date')

Look for it on: Refrigerated foods such as dairy products, eggs, lunch meat, packaged salad mixes.

What it means: The store must sell the food before the date listed. If the food has been handled properly it is still safe to eat and will still be of good quality. Food bank staff monitors this food to ensure the quality remains good.

'Use By' Date

(Examples: "Best if used by 2/5/21", or "use before 4/5/21")

Look for it on: Crackers, cookies, cold cereals, and other dry, shelf stable foods.

What it means: The date is the manufacturer's recommendation for how long the food will be at peak quality. After the quality date, the food is still safe to eat but slowly begins to lose nutrients and the quality begins to lessen.

'Pack Date'

(Examples: "Packed on 3/01/21" or "22:5306412" or "KL064")

Look for it on: Canned food, eggs, crackers, cookies, spices.

What it means: This is the date the food was packaged. A code is often used that cannot be understood by the general public. Usually this food is safe to eat for a long time past the date. The number is created/used by the manufacturer to track when the items were made.

Inspect food, make sure that it is wholesome, check the quality and use it in a delicious meal
Recipe ideas? <https://www.gcfb.org/fighting-hunger/resources/>