

we know to

keep groceries fresh longer



Even the most careful food shoppers sometimes find themselves with spoiled goods. These eight tips from Carol Hawran, lecturing instructor at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, will help you extend your food's shelf life and make the most of your grocery dollars:

- 1. Set your refrigerator's temperature below 40°F** and don't overload it. Air must be able to circulate freely to keep foods cool and fresh.
- 2. Wash fruits right before you eat them rather than before storing** because moisture encourages spoiling. And don't keep fruits with vegetables because some fruits produce ethylene gas, which can cause nearby veggies to go bad more quickly.
- 3. Stash mushrooms in a paper bag in the fridge.** Putting them in an

airtight container will make them retain moisture and become slimy.

- 4. Vegetable stalks, such as those on artichokes, celery and asparagus,** should be wrapped in a moist towel in the fridge for longer staying power.

- 5. Unwrap only as much bread as you'll use in a day or two, store in an airtight container and freeze the rest.** Keeping bread in the pantry promotes molding, and putting it in the fridge can cause it to go stale.

- 6. Put bananas in the fridge to keep them firm longer.** The peels will turn brown, but the fruit inside will be fine.

- 7. Keep tomatoes at room temperature.** Refrigerating stops the ripening process and makes them lose flavor.

- 8. Never store dairy products on the refrigerator door.** They need a constant cold environment for optimum freshness, and opening and closing the door can cause fluctuating temperatures. *Paula Andruss*