



What's in My Cart?



At Loaves & Fishes each household receives a full cart of food, and we can meet special diet requirements. We follow strict food safety rules and are dedicated to providing a variety of nutritious foods, including dairy, fruit, vegetables, and meat. Much of our food is donated by local grocery stores and the selection of groceries we offer changes daily.

You may find items in your cart that are past date (read below about food dating).

These are still safe to eat.

If there's something in your cart that your family won't eat, leave it in the cart; we can give it to someone else!

A note about food dates: Manufacturers put dates on food to indicate when food is the best quality. Except for infant formula, dates are NOT an indicator of food safety. According to the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), many foods can be consumed past their expiration dates *unless you see signs that the food has spoiled*.

"Best if used by/before": Indicates when a product is the best quality or flavor. It is not a purchase or safety date.

"Sell by": Tells grocery stores when to remove the product from shelves. It is not a safety date. You can still store and consume the food in your own home after this date for several days to several weeks, depending on the item.

"Use by": This is the last date that guarantees the best quality of a product. It is not a safety date except for infant formula.

"Freeze by": Indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

If you're still not sure whether a food item is worth saving past its date label, the USDA's free Food Keeper app can help.



-PRODUCE BAG-

Your produce bag is a mix of vegetables and fruits. *There are items in your bag that need to be consumed quickly (i.e., berries and salad mixes), but staples like onions, potatoes, and carrots will last longer when stored correctly.*



-MEAT BAG-



If the current date on meat you receive here is beyond the SELL BY date, it was frozen before this date and then donated to us by local grocery stores. *It is safe to eat.* Loaves & Fishes follows strict food safety rules and we do not give out meat that has not been completely frozen.

We will ask you at registration if there are any meats you do not eat and will try to accommodate your preferences. We also offer Halal meat to accommodate the dietary preferences and cultural needs of our diverse community.

-SHELF STABLE ITEMS-

You also will receive an assortment of shelf stable food. This could include cereal/oatmeal, canned beans fruit or vegetables, rice, pasta, dried fruits, nuts, soup, tuna, or other canned meat.



Generally, if unopened, most canned foods can be stored for two to five years, and high-acid foods (canned juice, tomatoes, pickles) can be stored for a year or even 18 months. However, watch out for dents and bulges in cans, this is a sign it's time to toss those products.



-DAIRY AND BAKED GOODS-

We provide all visitors with milk and eggs. If you receive milk that is close to its "best by" date, it is safe to drink for at least 3 days past that date once opened, and up to 1 week past date if unopened.

We will also provide you with bread and a sweet treat. We often have gluten-free products and plant-based milk alternatives; please let us know if you need these options.

