

SUSTAINABILITY

WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT 'EXPIRATION' DATES

Did you know, in the US, we do not have “expiration” dates for food? These dates you see on packaging for ready-to-eat food—like “best by,” “best if used by,” “sell by” or “freeze by”—are determined solely by the manufacturer and are not regulated by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) or the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

- Food manufacturers set these dates based on when they believe to be the end of the peak quality of their product—not the date by which the food will spoil.
- As a general rule, if a packaged, ready-to-eat food item has been properly stored and is past the date on its package, observe the odor, flavor, texture, and taste. If all are fine, the food is generally safe to eat.
- The only exception to this is infant formula, which does have expiration dates. Other than these products, the dates on packaging do not indicate expiration.

