

## Best-by, Sell-by and Use-by

There are three types of date terms that suggest how long you can eat a product. They are “best-by,” “sell-by” and “use by”.

According to the USDA, the best-by date indicates when a food product will have the best quality or have its best flavor. Best-by is when the products are at their peak if they are consumed by these dates. Fresh foods that can spoil like lettuce and poultry will usually be marked best-by or use by dates. Nutritional quality can decline if you extend the shelf life. Canned foods are commonly labeled best-by dates. They may be safe for years if the can is not dented. A lot comes down to how the cans are stored. It is a good idea to look at the cans and the contents for signs of mold or rancid smells.

Sell-by dates are specific to the grocery store. These are foods that should be refrigerated or frozen when they get to your kitchen. Sell-by dates may be more common on eggs. Sell-by dates are usually a certain number of days after the eggs are laid and packaged to make sure stores are rotating inventory. Eggs will typically last three to five weeks past the sell-by date but if you are unsure look for signs of mold or stinky odors.

Use-by dates are the last day the manufacturer recommends eating the product for quality reasons. Taste, texture, and appearance of a product can still be considered safe to consume a product. You should not extend the date too far.

When in doubt always throw it out.



