

REDUCING FOOD WASTE seems to be on everyone's mind these days. We're finding solid advice in *Waste-Free Kitchen Handbook* (Chronicle Books, 2015; \$19) by Dana Gunders, a scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council—tips on smarter shopping, organizing, and cooking. It's reminded us of three great ways to prove that leftovers can be delicious as well as virtuous.



EASY APPETIZER | *Cheese-drawer bounty*

Long before nut-covered cheese balls hit the dairy case, French home cooks were making a delicious spread called *fromage fort*. The basic concept—blending leftover hunks and heels of various cheeses with a little wine and seasonings—is both thrifty and open to plenty of improv (we like to use Western cheeses, of course). Here's the method, along with a couple of combinations we especially like.

Basic Fruit and Nut Cheese Spread

MAKES 1½ CUPS / 20 MINUTES

In a food processor, whirl ½ lb. (1½ to 1¾ cups) coarsely chopped cheese until finely chopped. Add 3 tbsp. white wine and whirl until very smooth. Scrape into a bowl and stir in 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves plus ½ cup each chopped dried fruit and chopped unsalted roasted nuts. Season generously with pepper. If needed, stir in a bit more wine until the mixture is spreadable (it thickens as it stands). Serve with crackers, toasted baguette slices, or raw vegetables. Keeps, chilled, up to 1 week.

APRICOT ALMOND Use equal parts fresh goat cheese such as Laura Chenel and parmesan + Sauvignon Blanc + dried apricots + almonds.

DATE PISTACHIO Use sharp white cheddar such as Tillamook or Beecher's 4-Year Aged Flagship, or aged gouda such as Oakdale + Viognier or Chardonnay + Medjool dates + pistachios.