

# EXPIRATION DATES *vs.* EAT BY DATES

Sometimes dates on food are confusing!

The examples below show how long past the dates that food is still safe to eat.



## ***What it means***

**SELL BY**  
**3/15/16**

**ENJOY BY**  
**3/15/16**

This is a freshness date. Food is freshest by the date on the label, but still safe to eat after that date. Examples are milk (up to 1 week after the sell by date) and eggs (3-5 weeks after the sell by date).

**BEST BY**  
**3/15/16**  
**BEST IF**  
**USED BY**  
**3/15/16**

This is a quality date. Food has the best quality if eaten by this date. You can eat acidic canned foods 12-18 months after this date. Examples are canned tomatoes or pineapples. You can eat non-acidic canned foods up to 2-5 years after this date. Examples are canned soup or vegetables.

**EXP 3/15/16**  
**USE BY**  
**3/15/16**

This is a true expiration date. After the expiration date, the food is not safe to eat and must be thrown away. Examples are baby food and infant formula.

**Frozen Food**

Frozen foods remain safe indefinitely, though they eventually get freezer burn. Cook immediately after thawing. The cooked food may be refrozen.

**Nothing**

If there is no expiration date, use the can within one year from when you got it.

**3/15/2016**  
**or 07516**

This is a manufacturing date. It is not an expiration date. Treat this as a "Best By" date and follow the above guidelines.

**A series of**  
**numbers and**  
**letters, like**  
**W15KA253XJ**

This is a packing code. It is used only by the manufacturer. It is not an expiration date. Use the above guidelines.

Never use a can if it is bulging, leaking, rusty, or if the rim is dented.



**RIVER BEND  
FOODBANK**

