

Use By & Best Before

Kitchen

Two very different dates, and which one is about safety.

Use by — safety

- Do not eat after this date
- On perishable, high-risk foods
- Meat, fish, dairy, prepared salads
- Cannot be judged by look or smell
- Freezing before the date extends it

Best before — quality

- Safe after, but may be poorer
- On shelf-stable foods
- Tins, pasta, biscuits, frozen goods
- Judge by look, smell and taste
- Often good for months after

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Most food waste comes from treating best before as if it were use by. They are legally different labels.

Eggs carry a best-before date. The float test is a better indicator of whether one is still good.