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How long does it take for vegetable peels to decompose

You may not think much of tossing vegetable scraps into the garbage can. After all, most kitchen waste is undeniably biodegradable. Yet food and yard waste take up as much as one-third of the country's landfill space and contribute to ozone-harming methane gas when collected in large quantities. Composting your vegetable scraps instead of throwing them away enables you to reduce how much garbage your household produces while also making free garden fertilizer. Combine high-nitrogen materials like vegetables and grass clippings with high-carbon ingredients such as shredded leaves to achieve the perfect balance that quickly turns your "garbage" into "black gold" for your garden. Rinse salad and leftover cooked vegetables made with dressing, cheese, butter or other dairy products. Milk products and oils go rancid in the compost pile and may draw pests. Clean the crisper drawers in your refrigerator of produce no longer suitable for eating. Lettuce leaves, broccoli heads and soft-fleshed vegetables like eggplant are notorious for spoiling before cooks have a chance to use them. Similarly, look in the pantry for spoiled garlic, onions or potatoes. Collect vegetable refuse in a small bucket when preparing meals. Potato and carrot peels, corn husks and cobs, tough cabbage and kale leaves, winter squash shells, rotten or browning chunks of otherwise usable produce and the inedible stems and seeds of vegetables all make suitable compost. Chop or shred large pieces of vegetable waste before adding them to the compost pile. Corn cobs and husks may be chopped with a sturdy knife, while softer cooked leftovers like acorn squash shells may be either chopped or ground in a food processor. Pull old vegetable plants from the garden at the end of their growing season. Burn or discard diseased plants rather than adding them to the compost pile. Bring all vegetable scraps and pulled vegetable plants to your outdoor composting area. Lay down a 6-inch layer of wood chips or twigs. Combine vegetable scraps and spent plants with other high-nitrogen materials to form a 3-inch layer. Nitrogen-rich ingredients for a compost pile include vegetables, fruit peels and cores, manure and grass clippings. Cover vegetables and other nitrogen materials with a 6-inch carbon layer of ingredients such as hay, sawdust or shredded leaves. Water the layers until they are damp. Add additional layers of nitrogen and carbon materials, watering every few layers. Finish when the heap reaches between 3 and 5 feet tall and wide. Turn your compost pile frequently. Till compost into your garden when it breaks down into black, soil-like hummus. Compost may also be mixed with potting soil for container plants and laid over the garden soil during the growing season instead of store-bought fertilizers. Other food scraps that may be composted include fruit peels, chopped fruit cores, oatmeal, bread, pasta, rice, coffee grounds and tea bags. If you build your compost a little at a time rather than in layers, use one bucket of vegetable scraps for every three buckets of carbon-rich materials like leaves and hay. Poke holes in an existing pile and bury vegetable scraps at least 6 inches deep. This step reduces the risk of rats, raccoons, flies or unpleasant smells from plaguing your heap. Vermicomposting represents an additional way to compost vegetables. These worm bins may be kept indoors and used to dispose of shredded papers and kitchen waste. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 1 lb. of worms may process 1/2 pound of household waste each day. Worm bins may be created from repurposed plastic containers. Specialty vermicomposters are also available at garden centers and online. It's possible to bury food scraps directly into a garden, but you run the risk of disturbing the roots of existing plantings as you dig. In addition, vegetable peels and other scraps release excess nitrogen as they decompose, which may burn the roots of nearby plants. References Tips Other food scraps that may be composted include fruit peels, chopped fruit cores, oatmeal, bread, pasta, rice, coffee grounds and tea bags. If you build your compost a little at a time rather than in layers, use one bucket of vegetable scraps for every three buckets of carbon-rich materials like leaves and hay. Poke holes in an existing pile and bury vegetable scraps at least 6 inches deep. This step reduces the risk of rats, raccoons, flies or unpleasant smells from plaguing your heap. Vermicomposting represents an additional way to compost vegetables. These worm bins may be kept indoors and used to dispose of shredded papers and kitchen waste. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 1 lb. of worms may process 1/2 pound of household waste each day. Worm bins may be created from repurposed plastic containers. Specialty vermicomposters are also available at garden centers and online. (See References 1 and 3) Warnings It's possible to bury food scraps directly into a garden, but you run the risk of disturbing the roots of existing plantings as you dig. In addition, vegetable peels and other scraps release excess nitrogen as they decompose, which may burn the roots of nearby plants. (See References 2) Writer Bio Ellen Douglas has written on food, gardening, education and the arts since 1992. Douglas has worked as a staff reporter for the Lakeville Journal newspaper group. Previously, she served as a communication specialist in the nonprofit field. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Connecticut. To cut right to the chase - it depends on the landfill. A banana in a correct decomposition environment should break down between two and ten days. On the other hand, depending on the chemical composition, size, and the heat of the landfill, it could take up to two years to properly decompose. Why is this important? Well, it all comes down to a common misconception we have about natural waste products. When we casually toss a banana peel behind ourselves on a hike or just chuck it straight in the regular garbage and do not compost it, we naturally make a few assumptions. "It's natural, right? It'll break down into compost, that's good for the environment!" "Banana peel breaks down quickly, that's why it works for compost!" "Even if it doesn't break down quickly, surely it cannot hurt the environment!" Unfortunately, all of these are wrong. Well, they are wrong in certain ways. While banana peel will compost, it can take a huge amount of time to do so when not placed in a proper composting environment. Furthermore, the notion that because it is natural, it will be good for the environment does not quite track. These banana peels can be exceptionally bad for animals that go past and try to munch on them, often becoming choking hazards. In the rest of this article, we will be breaking down how bananas decompose, why it sometimes takes them so long in a landfill, and what the ideal environment is for banana peel decomposition. What's the science behind banana peel decomposition? When it comes down to it, a lot of myths and misconceptions around the decomposition of banana peel arise from slight, understandable misinterpretations of the science. When something decomposes, it first reaches an ambient internal temperature that bacteria and microbes enjoy - allowing them to develop and fester inside the object or thing. Another important factor that plays into proper decomposition is oxygen content and availability in the air. As with most living creatures, our lovely little microbes require access to plentiful oxygen so they can thrive. Soccer players often train in low-oxygen areas to optimize how much oxygen they use - and if you are a microorganism decomposing a large banana peel, you might well need an equivalent access to oxygen. Alongside that, it develops enough moisture to foster a warm, damp internal and external environment that is also good and nurturing for the little microbial creatures. All these conditions need to be met for those tiny organisms to do what they do best. Now you understand the science behind the decomposition of banana peel, it will be much easier to understand exactly why it takes so long to break down in a landfill. Spoiler: it has to do with this wide-ranging list of different criteria not being properly met. So, why does a landfill not decompose banana peel properly? The reason that environmentalists recommend you compost your vegetable and fruit peel is that introducing it to a classic landfill is probably one of the worst things you can do for a piece of this peel. First things first, you need to consider the surrounding environment of a landfill. The name itself, a portmanteau of "land" and "fill", tells you a bit about this. The very purpose of a landfill is to fill it full of stuff, and as such, there is unsurprisingly a bad oxygen flow throughout these areas. This means that one of the key requirements for decomposition is not properly met - the huge number of organisms needed to decompose the banana peel have to compete for a relatively tiny quantity of oxygen. The temperature of a landfill is one that constantly fluctuates and is not a carefully controlled area of biological cultivation, as a proper compost would be. In the winter, this temperature will plummet, and for several months of a year it will be at a temperature that is inhospitable to microbial activity. As a result, microbes do not get access to either oxygen or temperature in a consistent manner in a landfill. Because of this, banana peels are not put in a proper environment for effective decomposition when they are placed in a landfill. As such, you will often find fruit peels sticking around for up to 2 years in these environments. Where would a banana decompose quicker? As you may have gathered from the rest of this article - banana peel does not decompose as quickly as it should do in a landfill. Some fruit peel has even been reported to fossilize in certain landfills and other places of non-optimal decomposition. Archaeologists have done digs and carbon-dated some fossilized fruit peel, discovering that it originated from some landfills in the 1950s! If you want to get rid of your fruit peel in a way that is good for the environment, consider investing in a compost bin or making your own. What you need is a bin or trash can that have plentiful holes in the outside (which you may have to do yourself). Fill this can be full of dead leaves up to about halfway. Start collecting any waste vegetable matter you have (banana peels, onion skins, slightly decaying peppers, that kind of thing) in a container in the freezer (which halts decomposition until you have enough vegetable matter). When you have a large amount (maybe consider a plastic shoebox of some kind for a good size container) of this waste vegetable matter, take it from the freezer. Place it in with the leaves and mix it around. This provides what is known as an "aerobic" atmosphere for the decomposition to take place - meaning there is a whole heap of oxygen being released around the banana peel and other vegetable matter. When placed in this kind of composting environment, banana peel can take as little as 2 days (up to around 10) to fully decompose - considerably better than in a landfill.

how to decompose vegetable peels. how long does it take for fruit peels to decompose. how long does it take for carrot peel to decompose

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