

Save your business money and reduce your waste bills

by following our tips to avoid food waste

As a food business owner you will know that around 30% of the waste that your business sends to landfill is food waste. By following our tips to avoid food waste you can improve your business in three ways:

1. Save money by using more of your ingredients and helping them to stay fresher for longer.
2. Reduce your waste bills.
3. Reduce your environmental impact by sending less waste to landfill.

How much money can I save?

A study carried out by the UK Sustainable Restaurant Association in 2010 proposed that the average food business they could save more than £2,000 (around \$4,000) each year in food costs alone by reducing the amount of food waste that they generate by just 20%. You can also make further savings on waste disposal costs when you reduce the total volume of waste that you generate.

How to use the tips





- Use the checklist to see how you are already avoiding food waste and pick up some new ideas.
- Refer to the more detailed guide to avoiding food waste for further information.
- Try one or two of the ideas, and see if these reduce the amount of food that your business generates.
- For a quick and easy way to measure and monitor the amount of food waste within your business, try using the FREE 'Wise up on waste' app, designed for use in professional kitchens (available in Android and iOS).

Please let us know what you think of our tips, or share your own tips with us.
Contact us at resourcewise@canadabay.nsw.gov.au.

**LOVE
FOOD**
hate waste







Smart ordering

	Monitor sales, trends and stock levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check existing stock and order precisely to avoid having too much stock.• Keep a record of the quantities of food you serve and sales each week. This will increase your accuracy when ordering.• Consider weekly and seasonal variations in customer orders and how this impacts on the quantity of stock required.• Keep a record of any stock that is thrown away due to over-ordering.
	Build supplier relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work closely with your suppliers so that they understand your commitment to avoiding food waste.• Putting one person in charge of purchasing can improve efficiency and result in better relationships with suppliers e.g. more likely to be kept informed of specials.• Regularly review the quality of stock to avoid purchasing sub-standard products and provide feedback to suppliers.• Consider daily ordering of fresh produce to minimise spoilage.• Order fish and meat cuts to specification.
	Buy local and seasonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buy local produce; it won't have travelled as far and therefore will generally last longer.• Choose fruit and vegetables that will be ripe when you're ready to use them.• Use in season fruit and vegetables in specials on your menu. They will cost less, last longer and taste better.
	Consider bulk purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare costs of bulk versus non-bulk purchasing. Purchasing in bulk can be economical if your business can use the items before the expiry date and has appropriate storage options.











Smart storage

	Check your fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and clean the seals on fridges and freezers regularly. • Maintain correct temperature control and storage conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fridge temperature - less than 5 degrees Celsius - Freezer temperature - less than minus 18 degrees Celsius - Storage areas should be dry and clean.
	Use and understand labelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff on difference between 'use by' and 'best before' dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'use by' – must be eaten by this date - 'best before' – can still be consumed after this date but there could be some loss of quality. There is scope to use these products in soups, stocks, sauces, jams and smoothies etc. • To ensure safe and regular rotation of food implement a date marking system to all perishable foods. The system should clearly identify the date foods were prepared and consequently the date in which foods are to be disposed of.
	Store in the right spot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotate stock: put just-purchased items at the back of the fridge/freezer/storage area, move older stock to the front so that it is used first. • Avoid storing food items one on top of the other as this can damage food. • Remember to store raw fish and meat at the bottom of your fridge so that they don't drip onto other foods. • Store leftover food in airtight containers. Food will last longer and this also stops odours getting into other products and spoiling them. • Pack food in its correct storage areas as soon as it is received, especially fresh produce. • Remember to defrost meat overnight in the fridge NOT at room temperature. • If you freeze items in small portions they will defrost more quickly and you will be able to defrost only what you need.
	More information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult your local Council Environmental Health Officer or the NSW Food Authority for specific advice on food storage techniques to avoid spoilage and preserve food-safe conditions.

Clever menu planning

	Make specials work for you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your specials menu to use up ingredients that are close to their use by date. • Identify ways in which off cuts or 'leftovers' from one dish can be used for another, for example in soups, quiches, preserves or compotes. Leftover bread has many uses, including croutons, bruschetta, French toast and bread and butter pudding. • Use seasonal produce in daily specials. This will ensure cheaper and fresher ingredients and meet customers' expectations as foods come into season.
	Design an efficient menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify which ingredients can be used in as many dishes as possible. • Consider reducing your menu. A shorter menu may require fewer ingredients. It is easier to keep control of a smaller number of ingredients and less likely that food will be leftover and wasted.
	Analyse sales data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at ordering trends to identify popular and unpopular items. • Adjust or retire menu items depending upon past ordering trends. • When adding new menu items, analyse your current sales and consider the likely impact of the new items to ensure you don't over order.
	Offer different portion sizes and side orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By offering different portion sizes and side orders, customers can order as much as they would like to eat, and avoid leaving excess food on their plates.

Less prep waste

	'Nose to tail' cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ 'nose to tail' cooking: Using the whole of an ingredient. This can apply to meat or fruit, vegetables and herbs. • Use excess meat and vegetables to make stock. • Use edible food items that are often thrown away: Try keeping skins on vegetables or using leaves (e.g. beetroot) in salads, orange peel for making marmalade, parsley stalks for stocks. • Maximise the use of ingredients by avoiding over trimming and using all parts of the produce when possible. • Try using less expensive cuts of meat. These can be excellent value and just as tasty when cooked correctly.
	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider when and how food should be prepared to maintain freshness. Could you prepare smaller amounts more frequently so there are fewer leftovers and food is fresher when served? • When deciding how much of a menu item to prepare, consider whether it is better to run out of an item (customers will probably order something else from the menu) or have food left over at the end of service? • Review your staff training. Do they have all of the skills that they need to minimise food waste?

Useful links

Love Food Hate Waste for Business:

<http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au/business/home.aspx>



Wrap UK – Hospitality and Food Service:

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/hospitality-and-food-service-wraps-work-0>



Wise up on Waste Toolkit:

<http://www.unileverfoodsolutions.com.au/our-services/your-kitchen/waste-management/waste-audit/toolkit>

Less plate waste

	Feedback from customers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from your front of house staff and customers is vital to avoiding food waste and when serving food. • Observe patterns of items that are consistently returned uneaten, such as some salad items and condiments. • Consider changing or removing garnishes, side dishes or side serves if they are not being eaten. • Advise customers if it looks like they may have over-ordered.
	Control portion sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate portion control is key to reducing waste and increasing profitability. • Review portion sizes and offer different serving sizes to customers • Develop side order dishes so customers can choose how much they wish to eat • Deliver optimal portion sizes: What is the ideal size for a menu item? If your portions are too large they will end up in the bin and reduce your profit. • Define your portion sizes, then train staff and develop clear recipe cards to help them correctly deliver accurate optimal portion sizes.

Recycled leftovers

	Customer leftovers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your business can choose to provide 'doggy bag' containers to customers so that they can take home leftover food. • It is the customer's responsibility to store and handle the food safely to prevent risks of food poisoning. You can help to minimise this risk by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transferring food into new, unused food-grade containers. - Reminding customers to store and handle food according to food safety guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Refrigerate food as soon as possible * Food not refrigerated to below 5°C for a total of two hours (including the time in the restaurant)should be discarded * Food should be reheated until it is steaming hot. <p>You can print labels or business cards that include the above guidelines to stick on takeaway containers. Design your own or use the label template provided in the 'Love Food Hate Waste' section under 'Sustainable Business' on Council's website.</p>
	Excess food	<p>A number of food charities will collect excess food from businesses and redistribute the food to people in need. This is a free service that can reduce your business's waste costs and help people in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food that can be donated includes: Leftover unused portions of food that have not been served to customers or clients (e.g. sandwiches, salads or cakes from a café), food purchased by a food related business that becomes surplus to their requirements or excess food at food markets or supermarkets. • You cannot donate food that is on or past its 'use by date'. • You can donate food that is past or close to its 'sell by' date as long as it has been stored appropriately and is in good condition. • NSW legislation protects businesses who donate food, as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the food is donated in good faith for a charitable or benevolent purpose - the food is donated with the intention that the receiver of the food does not have to pay for the food - the food is safe to eat when it leaves the possession or control of the donor, and - the donor gives the charity any information it needs to ensure the ongoing safety of the food. <p>For more detailed information of donating food please see the 'Love Food Hate Waste' Food Donation Tool Kit.</p>



Waste Less - \$ave More

checklist for food businesses

When ordering stock do you?



- ☐ Check stock levels before ordering
- ☐ Consider seasonal and weekly variations
- ☐ Keep track of your sales each week and adjust the amount of ingredients that you order
- ☐ Keep a record of any stock that is thrown away due to over-ordering
- ☐ Put one person in charge of purchasing
- ☐ Regularly review quality of stock delivered and provide feedback to suppliers
- ☐ Buy local produce if possible
- ☐ Where possible use seasonal fruit and vegetables in your menu
- ☐ Choose fruit and vegetables that will be ripe when you are ready to use them

When updating your menu, do you?



- ☐ Review menu regularly
- ☐ Use your specials menu to use up ingredients that are close to their use by date.
- ☐ Think of ways that offcuts or 'leftovers' from one dish can be used for another
- ☐ Use core ingredients across the menu
- ☐ Design a lean menu using fewer ingredients
- ☐ Adjust or retire or revise menu items depending upon popularity and past ordering trends
- ☐ Offer different portion sizes and side orders so that customers can order as much as they would like to eat

Do you review your portion sizes and pay attention to food that is left over?



- ☐ Get feedback on portion sizes from front of house staff and customers
- ☐ Observe which items are often returned uneaten or only partially eaten
- ☐ Offer different portion sizes and side orders
- ☐ Advise customers if it looks like they may have over-ordered
- ☐ Define portion sizes, then train staff to consistently deliver optimal portions

Do you and your staff know the following about storing food?



- ☐ Seals on fridges and freezers should be checked and cleaned regularly
- ☐ Fridge temperature should be less than 5 degrees Celsius (5°C)
- ☐ Freezer temperature should be less than minus 18 degrees Celsius (-18°C)
- ☐ Storage areas should be kept dry and clean
- ☐ Food must be eaten by the 'use by' date
- ☐ Food can be eaten after the 'best before' date as long as it is still in good condition
- ☐ Perishable food should be marked with the preparation date
- ☐ Stock should be rotated: older at the front, newer at the back
- ☐ Store raw fish and meat at the bottom of your fridge so that they don't drip onto other foods
- ☐ Pack food in its correct storage areas as soon as it is delivered, especially fresh produce

Have you tried these ideas to reduce preparation waste?



- ☐ Employ 'nose to tail' cooking: Using the whole of an ingredient. This can apply to meat or fruit, vegetables and herbs.
- ☐ Avoid over- trimming of meat, fish and vegetables
- ☐ Use edible food items that are often thrown away: Keep skins on, use leaves in salads, use parsley stalks in stocks and soups
- ☐ Use excess meat and vegetables to make stock
- ☐ Prepare smaller amounts of a menu item so that food is not left over at the end of service
- ☐ Review your staff training. Do they have all of the skills that they need to minimise food waste?

Have you considered these options for leftover and excess food?



- ☐ Allowing customers to take home leftover food in a 'doggy bag' containers
- ☐ Contacting a food charity to pick up excess food free of charge