

STOP FOOD WASTE

Pocket Guide

Information and tips to help you reduce household food waste.



STOPFoodWaste.ie

**Food waste
begins and
ends with
you ●**




So let's begin...

We all waste food. While the reasons are different for everyone, there are some common themes that you will probably recognise: we buy too much, we prepare too much, plans change, leftovers go off in the fridge, the list goes on.

Day-to-day it might not seem like much but when added up, food waste is a big problem both for your pockets and the planet. No matter what your situation, there will always be something you can do to reduce waste. By taking small individual actions, we have the potential to make a big impact on food waste.

To get you started, we've put together some useful tips on planning, shopping, storage and cooking. We also have helpful advice on food waste with children, food for one, composting and how to get involved with the programme.

We hope this guide can help you reduce your food waste, save money and enjoy tasty meals along the way!



Although nobody likes wasting food, it isn't something we tend to give much attention to, or talk about.

It's a problem that's easy to ignore but once you start thinking about it, it's easy to solve too. Small changes to how we manage our food each day can make a big difference to our overall food waste.

The first thing is to understand our own habits.

Do any of these statements relate to you?

Planning

"I never bother with a shopping list. Even if I buy stuff I already have, I'm sure I'll use it at some stage."



Shopping

"I would rather purchase a bag of six apples for €2, than four for 50c each. Even if I don't eat all six apples I prefer to get value for money."

Cooking

"When cooking, I prefer to make too much than risk having too little."

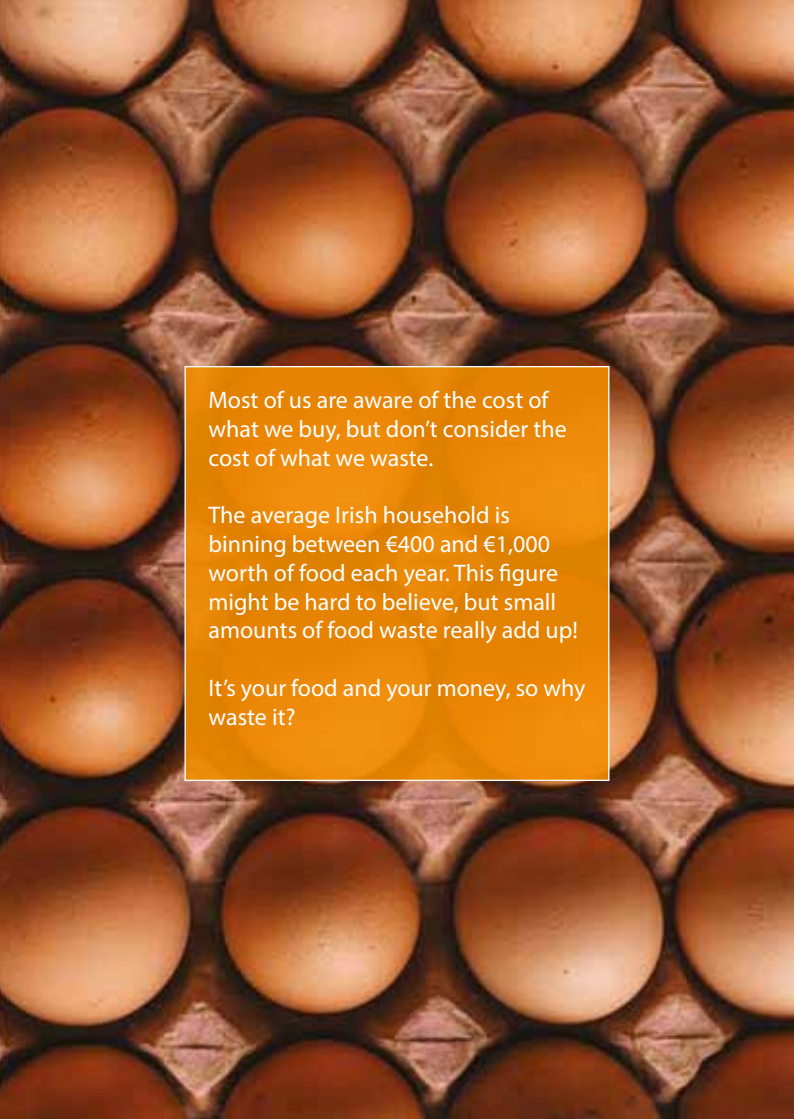


Storage

"I'm forever throwing out leftovers. They end up at the back of the fridge and I forget about them."



What are your food waste habits?



Most of us are aware of the cost of what we buy, but don't consider the cost of what we waste.

The average Irish household is binning between €400 and €1,000 worth of food each year. This figure might be hard to believe, but small amounts of food waste really add up!


It's your food and your money, so why waste it?

Can you afford this waste?



The average cost of buying the food listed above is €12.50. This may not seem like a lot once off, but over time it adds up. Throwing this amount of food out weekly would cost over €650 a year.

Regardless of what you throw out, wasting food will cost you.



It takes a lot to put food on the table.

Growing, processing and transporting food uses a huge amount of resources. If food is wasted, these resources are wasted too. On top of this, uneaten food often ends up in landfill where it releases harmful greenhouse gases.

All of this makes food waste one of the biggest contributors to global climate change. With a third of all food being wasted, there's so much room for improvement!

Any action taken by you, big or small, can have a positive impact on the bigger picture.

There's more to food waste than wasted food



INGREDIENTS

Land, Water, Energy, Soil, Seeds,
Blood, Sweat & Tears, Fertiliser,
Deforestation, Transportation,
Compost, Food Miles, Methane,
Biodiversity Loss, Oil, Refrigeration,
Early Mornings, Packaging,
Erosion, Time, Fuel, Waste,
CO₂ Emissions, Inequality, Pollution,
Hunger, Climate Change...

Planning

Planning meals is one of the most effective ways to reduce food waste and save on food bills. Take a look at these planning profiles to see which approach might suit you best.

I love planning

"I almost always cook at home and I like to be organised."

Know what you have

Keep a running tally of what you need to pick up as it runs out. A blackboard in the kitchen or a shopping list on the fridge is a handy way of doing this.

Make a meal plan

Make a weekly or monthly meal plan. Try to choose recipes so that ingredients for one meal can be used in another. Need half a carton of cream on Monday? Use up the other half in a pasta dish the following day.

Make a shopping list

Starting with the list of foods you've used up and your meal plan will make writing your shopping list quick and easy.



Try to include some seasonal and local food in your meal plan.



I'll give it a try

"I cook at home most of the time but plans sometimes change."

Know what you have

Check your fridge and cupboards to see what you do and don't have.

Make a meal plan

Make a rough meal plan before you shop but leave some wiggle room. Only plan meals for 3 or 4 days, don't be too ambitious!

Make a shopping list

Take your meal plan with you and use it as your shopping list.

I don't like planning

"I go with the flow and shop for food as I need it."

Know what you have

Take a photo of what you have in your fridge, freezer or cupboard before you leave. Make a note of what needs to be used up quickly.

Make a meal plan

Plan your meals one or two days at a time. Try to include food you have already. Use a recipe app to find new ideas.

Make a shopping list

When shopping, use the photos you took to see what you have and remind you of your plan.

This can reduce the overall environmental impact of the food you eat. Check out our Seasonal Calendar at stopfoodwaste.ie.

The Shopping Battleground

The best way to prevent wasting food is to avoid buying too much in the first place. Shops have many clever ways of encouraging us to buy more than we've planned. Here are some ways to get through the shopping battleground with only the food you need!



Going in

The larger the trolley, the more you'll spend. If you can, walk past the oversized shopping trolleys and grab a basket instead!

Head for the back

Our hunter-gatherer instincts give us a thrill when picking out food. Head straight for the basics at the back before you come to the appealing fresh sections. This has an added bonus - picking up delicate foods like bread and fruit last saves them from getting squashed.

Beware of special deals

Be careful with deals on perishable foods like fruit, veg and salads. No matter how cheap it is, it's not good value if it ends up in the bin!

Avoid hungry spending

Shopping when you're hungry or thirsty is a sure-fire way to buy more than you need. Have a glass of water and a snack before you go or use the free in-store tasters to your advantage.

Check the date

For items that you find hard to use-up, root around at the back of the shelves. You'll often find items with longer 'use by' dates.

Shop online

If it's an option for you, try shopping online for the basics. You get only what you want with less distractions and a running tally of the cost.

Avoid checkout buys

Put your blinkers on in the queue. This is the one of the most profitable areas in a shop and where we tend to buy food we really don't need.



The **Stop** Food Waste Challenge *(lite version)*

The Stop Food Waste Challenge, a community based campaign, brings people together to learn and share ideas about reducing food waste. This lite version outlines the five key steps of the Challenge. Have a go and see how much you could save. To find out more about the full Challenge, visit stopfoodwaste.ie.



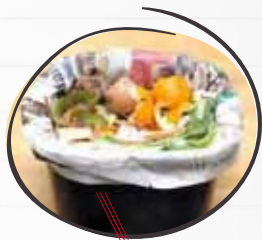
“The best way to start reducing food waste is to know what you’re wasting and understand why.”

1. Know your waste

For one week, put all your food waste in a separate container. Make a note of what you’re wasting. Record the weights using a scales if you’re keen.

At the end of the week, identify what food was wasted the most.

For this example, let’s say it’s **bread**.



2. Planning



How much bread did you buy last week? What are your plans for the week ahead?

3. Shopping



Remember your shopping list. Resist the bakery smells and stick to your plan!

4. Cooking/using



There's lots of ways to use up stale bread. Try dipping it in beaten egg and frying it to make French toast.

5. Storage



Fresh bread is best stored at room temperature, not in the fridge. Freeze slices of bread to thaw or toast as you need.

Storage

The way you store your food has an impact on how long it lasts. With so much information available, it can all get very confusing.

Here are some of the most common food storage mistakes to avoid!



- ✗ Storing new food at the front of cupboards/fridge



- ✔ When you're unpacking the shopping, put the new items to the back and move the older ones forward so they're eaten first.

- ✗ Throwing out food's original packaging



- ✔ Packaging is made to make food last and displays helpful info on portioning and cooking the food. Most of the time, it's best to keep food in its packaging.

- ✗ Putting all your fruit in one bowl



- ✔ Some fruits like apples, bananas and nectarines release ethylene gas which speeds up ripening. Keep these fruits separate or somewhere with good ventilation to slow down ripening.

- ✗ U.F.O.s - Unidentified Frozen Objects



- ✔ It's hard to remember what's in your freezer after a few months. Either label the items as you freeze them or stick a list to the door of your freezer.

Easy Freezy!

Befriend your freezer and get the most out of your food. Ice-cube trays, muffin trays and small containers make freezer storage easy.



Sauces & Stocks

Just put them in ice cube containers.



Fruit

Frozen grapes make a great icy treat!



Peppers & Onions

Dice them up and pop them in freezer bags.



Bread

Slice it first and take it out for toast as you need.



Cheese

Sliced or grated, hard cheese can be frozen.



Eggs (no shells)

Freeze raw in bun trays, thaw and use as normal.



Milk & Cream

Use within 24 hours of defrosting.



Nuts

Keep nuts for longer in the freezer.



Good Cook, Bad Cook

From beans on toast to Sunday roast, there are many ways to prepare your food without wasting it. Make sure to get value from your food and avoid the mistakes we all can make.

Know your portions

Use websites, measuring tools or weighing scales. Regardless of how you do it, try to measure out your food portions.

Lay it out

Serve food in dishes in the centre of the table and let people take what they need. We're more inclined to save leftovers from a serving dish than from someone's plate.

Mix and Match

Try cooking with ingredients that you can use in different ways, for different meals.

Freestyle it!

Don't be too worried about following perfect recipes. Get creative and throw whatever you have together! Wraps and curries are great for this.

Know your dates

Use your own judgement, check the dates but also check the food. Remember that food isn't like Cinderella – it doesn't go off on the stroke of midnight!





Beware hungry cook

We tend to cook too much when hungry. Pay attention to portions when cooking on an empty stomach.

Throwing out food?

If you are throwing cooked food away, ask yourself why it was wasted. Understanding and taking note of your food waste is important to effectively reduce it.

No meal plan

Trying to dream up what to cook day after day can be draining. Make your meal plan for the week at the weekend and avoid the ongoing “what will I have for dinner?” dilemma.

Straight to the bin - think again

Before you go to the bin with unused food, ask yourself a few simple questions:

1. Can I freeze it and use it later?
2. Can I use the leftovers for another meal?
3. Is there someone else who might want it?

**Remember,
you don't have to be a gourmet
chef to make the most of your food!**



Food Waste & Children

When children are involved it can be difficult to manage food at home. Here are a series of tips to help you reduce food waste and save money.



Shopping

Get the kids to help make a shopping list that you all have to stick to. Then give them the job of ticking off the items as you shop.

Make sure they're fed – they will be less cranky and less likely to try to grab all the goodies they fancy.

Small sized fruit are great for kids. They cause less waste, fit in lunch boxes, and don't put kids off. Often too much food is seen as a challenge for the little ones!



Cooking

Involving children when cooking is a fun way to get them familiar with what they're eating and used to trying different foods.

Root around the kitchen to find cups or bowls you can use as child-sized portion measures.

Small portions of leftovers, which may not be enough for adults, can be the perfect amount for kids the next day.





Serving Food

Small stomachs fill quickly, so don't overload their plates. They can always come back for more if they are still hungry.

Kids are easily distracted, so try to keep the basics on the table and the TV switched off.

If they don't want to eat their food now, put it in the fridge to eat later.



School Lunches

Make sure you know how much time they have for lunch. Be realistic in what will be eaten.

Use lunch boxes with small compartments - they're great for small snacks and avoiding the dreaded soggy sandwich.

Eating Out

Sometimes, even kids' portions are way too big. Make sure to communicate with staff about what you want for the children. If all else fails, ask for a puppy bag!



Food for one, waste for none

It can seem hard to avoid food waste when shopping and preparing food for one person. Here are some tips to help you fight food waste, solo!

Start a dinner exchange

Organise with friends or family to share dinner duties. Cooking group meals can reduce food waste, save time and money, and creates a nice chance to catch up.

Think about where you shop

Find out where you can buy loose or bulk food. Shopping at your local butcher, greengrocer or fishmonger lets you buy exactly what you need. Although it may be more expensive per item, it can reduce the amount of food you buy and end up throwing away.

Frozen veg

Buying frozen means you can have single portions of great quality veggies without any going to waste. Try veg like broccoli, spinach and squash that, when fresh, can be hard to use up.

Please eat me!

If you're in a houseshare, create a 'Please Eat Me' spot in the kitchen to make it easy to share food that may not be eaten.



Grow your greens

It can seem impossible to use up a bag of salad before it goes brown. Growing your own herbs and salads is a cheap alternative and all you need is a windowsill. You can pick a few leaves when you need them, giving you super-fresh greens, waste-free.

Shop frequently

If you have an unpredictable schedule, try doing small, quick shops more often. This way you can buy just what you need for a couple of days and avoid those wishful thinking buys.

Make a plan

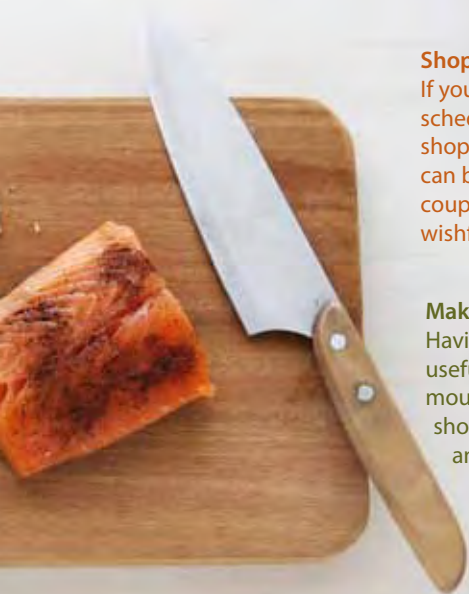
Having a plan is even more useful when you've only one mouth to feed. Before you shop, look at what you have and write a meal-plan and shopping list.

Befriend the freezer

If you have freezer space, make the most of it by batch cooking meals and freezing ingredients. Buy large packs of meat, butter and other freezable items and take some time to portion and freeze food as you unpack the shopping.

Shop online

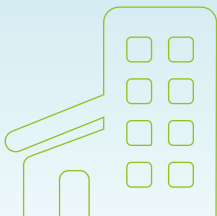
Get together with friends to order groceries online. This way you can divide up larger packs to get the best value and split the delivery charge.



Which composter are you?

Composting is fun - it keeps organic waste out of landfill, and it gives you a great resource for your garden. Anyone can compost to suit their lifestyle. See below for an option that might suit you.

The Urbanite



The Householder



Habitat details:

Apartment or terrace house with small or no outdoor space

Motivation:

To reduce environmental impact and save money on bin charges

Type of composter to use:

Wormery, bokashi, food tumbler



Habitat details:

House with garden

Motivation:

To reduce bin charges, make compost for the garden and learn about nature

Type of composter to use:

Compost bin, food digestion cone



For more information on composting, visit stopfoodwaste.ie and download the composting booklet from our resources page.

The Gardener



The Non-Composter



Habitat details:

Home with large garden or allotment

Motivation:

It's a great way to deal with green waste and produces your own peat-free compost

Type of composter to use:

Turning system or compost bin



Habitat details:

Anywhere

Motivation:

Not interested in composting but does not want to put food waste in general waste bins

What's the alternative:

Using a brown bin service or check if your local civic amenity site accepts food waste

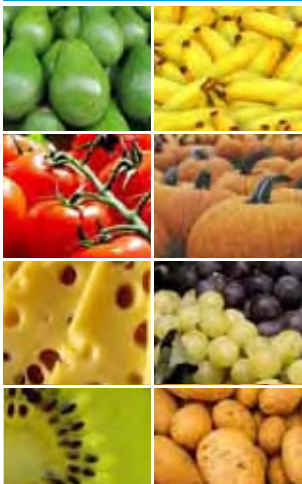




STOPFoodWaste.ie

If you want to find out more about any of the topics highlighted, and much more, please visit our website. Here is just a taste of what you can find at **stopfoodwaste.ie**.

A to Z of Foods



The A-Z of Foods is a resource packed full of tricks and tips on buying, storing, freezing, and using up your food.

Resources



Take a look at our resources section for helpful downloads to suit your needs.

Composting



Learn to compost unavoidable food waste for the garden or potted plants.

Events



We're more than just a website!
Find details of our events and courses across the country.

The Food Waste Charter for Ireland



Get your business to commit to the Food Waste Charter for Ireland and help reduce Ireland's food waste by 2030.

Meal Planning



Get more tips and download sample meal plans.

Seasonal Calendar



There is good reason to buy foods in season. Find out what's in season now.

Food Waste and the Environment



Find out why preventing food waste is one of the best steps you can take to help the environment.

The Stop Food Waste Challenge



Join the nation in reducing food waste by taking the Stop Food Waste Challenge!

We hope you have enjoyed the Stop Food Waste Pocket Guide. If you are finished with this little book please don't bin it! Pass it on to someone else and help spread the word.

For more information, including how to take part in a Stop Food Waste Challenge, contact us on Facebook, Twitter or at info@stopfoodwaste.ie.



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