

## AVOID FOOD WASTE

I'm sure that you have often heard it said that one man's waste is another man's riches! That is true too about our kitchen leftovers and household waste materials as it will provide a handsome hole in your wallet!



**The Food we Waste**

We all generate Food Waste - at home, in school, at work, on the run...everywhere.

Nearly all this food waste is thrown in the bin, and while some is composted most of it ends up in the local landfill. In the landfill, rotting food decomposes to make methane and other gases. In addition to the smell, these are really bad greenhouse gases.

What is in our black bins....

So what do we know about the waste we throw out in our black bins in Ireland?

*Here are some interesting figures:-*

The average Irish household throws out about 1.2 tonnes of rubbish each year - this is the weight of a small car!

The average person throws out almost 300kgs of black bin rubbish each year (the same as three grown men)

Of this, about one grown man's weight is organics (about 37%) and this is made up of ~30% food, with the other 7% is garden & landscape materials. Often we forget about garden wastes but they casue a lot of problems when they go into our landfills.

Of the rest of the rubbish, 35% is potentially recyclable.

So if we managed to prevent generating some of this waste and also composted and recycled at home we could reduce our rubbish by almost 70%!!



### Better Buying

Preventing food waste starts when you go shopping and continues at home in the way you store, cook and use food. First of all, it is very important to have a well stocked kitchen - especially of the essentials. Much of the food we waste comes from 'perishables' - things like fruit, veg and dairy products.

So, when you are going shopping consider some of the following tips and see if you can save yourself money and reduce food waste

On average, wasted food costs each Irish household €700 a year. For some households this can be over €1,000! This is an unbelievable waste of money and food - think of the holidays you could have instead of throwing all this food out!

And food waste CAN be avoided. That's what **STOP Food Waste** is all about. The first step is to learn more about what we are throwing out, then we can do something about it.

**TIP!** Next week, make a list of what you throw out - you'll be surprised by what you find.

**GUESS?** What are the main types of food we throw out?

Main Types of Food we Waste

It has been found that the main foods that are regularly thrown out are:

- Bread
- Apples
- Potatos
- Salads - almost 50% of what we buy we throw out!
- Meat and fish
- Yogurts and milk
- Spreads and dips

So when you're shopping or eating, watch out for these foods in particular.

Remember that by preventing food waste you save twice:

by buying less food and by having less to dispose of.

Stopping Food Waste starts when you are buying your groceries, then continues in the home where you store what you've bought, and then cook your food.

### **TOP SHOPPING TIPS!**

- Don't go shopping when you are hungry - you'll buy more than you need!
- If you are shopping for the week try and plan your meals ahead.
- Check your fridge, freezer and cupboards before you go shopping and plan meals around what you find.
- Then make a shopping list....and then try to stick to it!!
- Beware of special deals - these are great for toilet rolls and shampoo but bad for fruit, veg and salads (anything that can go off quickly). These are the things we buy because of a "good deal" but often does not get eaten.
- Try and buy loose fruit and veg - you get what you need and can cut down on packaging wastes in your bin as well.
- Check use-by dates to avoid buying food that might get thrown out if not eaten immediately.
- Poke around at the back of shelves - you'll often find 'use-by dates' that are further away.

- Shop for what you actually eat, not for what you want/wish you would eat (e.g. "I am going to be really healthy this week and eat lots of yogurts!") and then not eat them!
- If its an option for you, try shopping on line for the basics - you get what you want and save money - it's like magic!

This information is from the fabulous Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [stopfoodwaste.ie](http://stopfoodwaste.ie) website - for more helpful information on buying, storing and cooking food log on soon and you could start saving Euros right away!!...

And don't forget the shops only close for ONE DAY at Christmas so there really isn't a need to stock pile!

#### **Putting Irish "out of home" food waste into context:**

**Unilever Food Solutions** recently published global research titled "World Menu Report - Sustainable Kitchens: Reducing Food waste" and the statistics of food waste in Irish restaurants, hotels, cafes etc is equally staggering.

We learned at the Unilever Food Solutions' United Against Waste event that food waste out of home is a big issue. According to Unilever Food Solutions' second World Menu Report, food waste costs Irish restaurants a staggering **€125 million** annually - that's the equivalent of **7,959 double decker buses** or enough food to cover Croke Park 8 times! In fact, the findings of this research showed that the majority of Irish chefs and operators (85%) are concerned about the amount of food wasted by their businesses, with a further 71% willing to avail of an expert food waste audit to learn how to manage food waste more efficiently.

Unilever have now created and launched a waste reduction toolkit, appropriately named "**wise up on waste**" visit [unileverfoodsolutions.ie/wastetoolkits](http://unileverfoodsolutions.ie/wastetoolkits) to access the toolkit, which was prepared in partnership with the Sustainable Restaurant Association, the toolkit is designed to help chefs and food business operators make their businesses more efficient, offering simple solutions to monitor and measure food waste and ensure the whole team, both back and front of house, are aligned. It includes a manual waste audit that only takes 10 to 15 minutes a day to complete and is expected to reduce food waste by at least 20% when implemented.

The **Wise up on Waste** toolkit and audit is designed to provide Irish chefs and food business operators with all they need to start an effective waste management programme. The audit helps monitor where waste occurs in the kitchen, while case studies, FAQs and a Food Waste data tracking sheet help to link food waste management to KPIs. The toolkit also contains a range of useful posters to utilise around the kitchen, plus recipe templates, menu planning aids and information on plate waste awareness and efficient monitoring.

Unilever Food Solutions' managing director Tracey Rogers said: "The phrase waste not want not comes to mind. We know that the Irish Government is committed to moving toward a zero waste society and our actions in foodservice are going to be under the spotlight. We have the opportunity to take the initiative to be 'United Against Waste' and with small everyday steps we can reduce waste, respond to consumers concerns, improve kitchen efficiency and also help caterers to save money. Some caterers are already reducing avoidable food waste very effectively and the toolkit, which is available today, will help caterers to make their businesses more efficient. Together we must be united and share best practice so we can tackle the issues head on."