

Health and Wellbeing

Love Food Hate Waste

The Waste and Resources Action Programme WRAP, recently conducted the largest ever survey into food and drink waste in the UK. The survey found that **UK households throw away over 7 million tonnes of food every year - over 4 million tonnes of which is still edible!** This waste costs the average family around £60 a month. Not only is this bad news for our budget, but it's harmful to the environment too. As well as the food itself, the energy, water and resources that have gone into producing, manufacturing and transporting the food is equal to releasing 20 million tonnes of CO2 every year.

The good news is there is a lot we can do to help cut down food waste and save money! The survey found there are two main reasons we waste food- we have prepared or cooked too much, or we have not used the food in time, so WRAP has launched the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign, to help householders recognise and tackle the issue – with 5 easy tips to help us save money and waste less!

- ⇒ **It Pays To Plan:** Planning meals is an effective way of saving on food bills. Knowing what's in the fridge/freezer and store cupboard before you shop can help us avoid buying too much, and cuts down those last minute dashes to the supermarket. Check the family calendar for who's in and who's out to avoid cooking too much!
- ⇒ **Know your Labels:** Make sure you know the difference between food date labels. **'Use by'** is a safety date on foodstuffs like fresh fish, meat and cheeses, but remember you can still freeze some of these items right up until the 'use by' date, or cook them and freeze them to heat up and eat later. Lots of food is still edible when it has reached the **'best before'** date which refers to quality, rather than safety, but colour or texture may be less than perfect.
- ⇒ **Savvy Storage:** Storing food properly can make it last days or even weeks longer! The packaging on many fruits and vegetables has been especially designed to allow it to 'breathe' and make it last longer. Keep the wrapping on items like tomatoes, sliced meat and cucumber until you're ready to eat them. Keep your cupboard stocked with staple items like tinned beans, nuts, pasta, rice and dried fruit- they all have a long shelf life and mean you'll have the ingredients you need to jazz up some leftovers for a last minute meal! Check out the Store Cupboard Essentials on the Love Food Hate Waste website www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.
- ⇒ **Perfect Portions:** Avoid wasting up to a plate worth of food every day by taking the guesswork out of portion sizes! If you don't have kitchen scales, invest in a measured portion scoop for items like rice and pasta, or use a cup or mug, tablespoon or even a 'handful'. A mug full of uncooked rice is on average enough to serve 4 adults. An average child portion of dried fruit, rice or beans is 2 ½ tablespoons- pop one in the kids cereal box and cut down the cereal going in the bin each morning by up to half! Use the Portion Calculator on the Love Food hate Waste website to help you.
- ⇒ **Love Your Leftovers:** leftover food doesn't have to be second best if you use some the great tips and recipes on the Love Food Hate Waste website. Most leftovers can last 24-72 hours in the fridge if cooled first, and kept covered in the bottom of the fridge. For example, leftover meat like chicken or bacon, or even flaky fish can be mixed with some mayonnaise for great sandwich fillings! Use up yogurts in smoothies or as a topping on cereal.
- ⇒ Did you know NFDC now offers **free** and informal Love Food Hate Waste workshops to community groups and social clubs, with activities, advice and free gifts to help you *save money and waste less!* For more information contact mandy.pickard@nfdc.gov.uk

Top Tips

- **Keep a pad by the fridge** to jot down items as they're used up.
- **Check items in the fridge regularly for 'use by' dates** and bring items close to expiry –like yoghurts, to the front, so they are eaten in time.
- **Buying larger quantities** of meat or fish can be more economical— make it last longer by dividing into smaller portions and freezing.
- **The optimum temperature for your fridge is 5 degrees** or below. Invest in a fridge thermometer— your dairy products could stay fresh up to 3 days longer!
- **If you've cooked too much**, bag up the excess and pop it in the freezer for a quick lunch or last minute meal.
- **Avoid overcrowding** your fridge, air needs to circulate to keep it cool.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

