



Nut Ed
by email

Food Waste

Food waste is a growing problem in Australia. In fact, every year we throw away 7.3 million tonnes of food – that's 1 in 5 grocery bags! All this wastage makes us the fourth highest food wasting country globally. It also costs our economy around \$20 billion dollars every year. For the average Australian household, that is just over \$1000 a year.

Not only does food waste hurt your back pocket, it also hurts our planet. When food waste is sent to landfill, it contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. The impact of this is so large that if food waste was a country it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter globally, behind the USA and China!

Who wastes the most food?

Food waste can occur at a number of stages along the food system. This includes food that never leaves the farm, food that is lost during transport, or food that is wasted from the hospitality sector and households. While supermarkets and the hospitality industry have a big role to play, individual households are actually one of the largest contributors, making up 34% of total waste.

How can I reduce my food waste?

There are several ways to combat food wastage in the home and the key is developing good habits. You can help reduce food waste by:

- **Meal planning** – try planning out your meals, doing an inventory check of your fridge and cupboard and writing a shopping list before you visit the supermarket. This will save you both time and money
- **Love your leftovers** - reuse leftovers for lunch or dinner or try freezing any food you don't plan on immediately eating
- **Compost** – worm farm or compost spoiled fruit or vegetables rather than throwing them in landfill
- **Share your waste** – if you don't have space or facilities at home, try sharing your kitchen scraps with neighbours or community collections/programs that are already composting, worm-farming or keeping chickens
- **Don't judge by appearance** – many retailers now offer discounts on 'ugly' fruits and vegetables that don't meet cosmetic standards. Give them a try – they taste the same!
- **Smart storage** - store food correctly and hygienically to get the most out of your grocery shop
- **Use it all** – the skin of many fruits and vegetables are edible and packed with loads of health benefits from the additional minerals, vitamins and fibre. You could even try adding stalks, leaves and the tops of vegetables you would usually throw away into smoothies or stir-fries
- **Understand labels** – get to know the difference between 'best before' and 'use by' dates. Where 'use by' dates indicate that food has to go, 'best before' is a quality guide which means that food could still be eaten after this date, as long as it has been stored correctly.
- **Eat what you buy** – it might be tempting to order takeaway but make sure you cook what you already have at home if your fridge is well stocked
- **Check your portion size** – try not to put too much food on your plate and make sure your serve sizes match your nutritional requirements. Get to know your serve sizes and how many serves you need from each food group by checking out the Australian Dietary Guidelines. You can find these details and more on the [Eat for Health website](#).