

# The **Stop Food Waste** Challenge

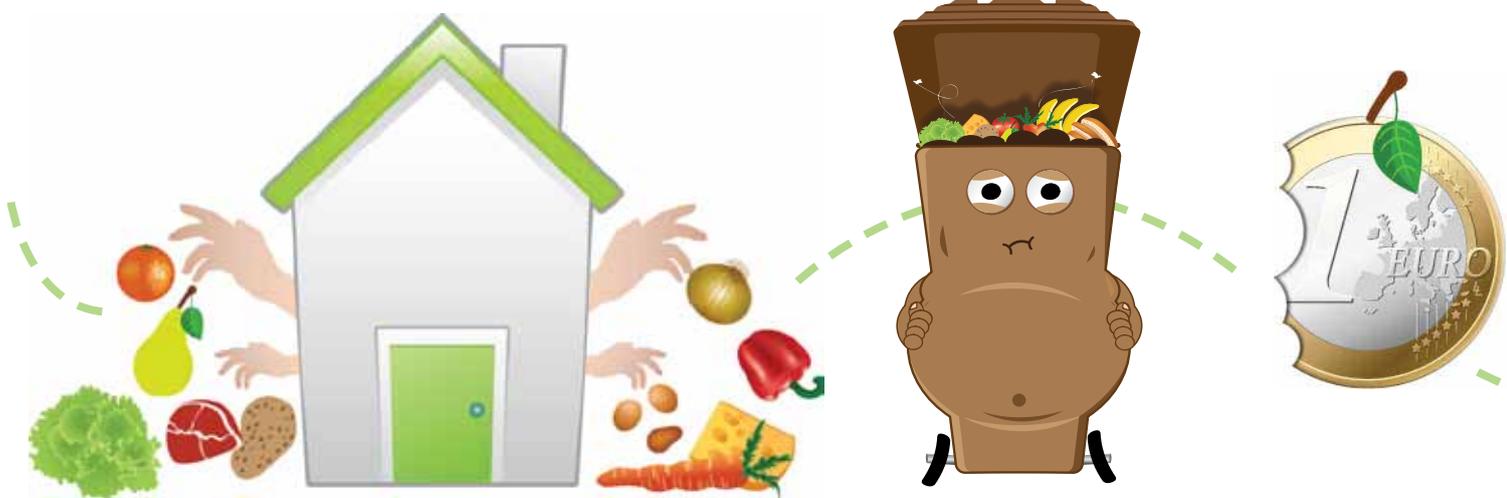
FACILITATORS' EDITION



FoodWaste.ie



# Let's Get Started



## WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

We all waste food. It can't be helped - plans change, we prepare too much, leftovers go off in the fridge, we forget about the stuff in the bottom of the freezer, etc. As wasting food happens for different reasons there will be different ways for each of us to change how we do things to reduce our food waste and save ourselves money.

Stop Food Waste are challenging Irish householders to set themselves a target to reduce their food waste by at least 1/4. By doing this you may be able to save your household as much as €60 a month - that will help with some of the bills!

We have developed this booklet to help groups of householders take the Stop Food Waste Challenge - a tasty road to less food waste and more cash in your pocket. The challenge involves 4 one hour meetings over a 6 to 8 week period and will cover the following:

- **Awareness** of what is being wasted
- The importance of proper **planning** of meals and using your shopping list
- How smart **shopping** can ensure that you don't waste your hard earned money on food that you don't really need
- **Storing** food properly to make the most of what you have bought
- New ways of **serving** and **reusing** the food that you have in your home
- Finally, how to deal with the unavoidable food waste we do generate and the many methods of home **composting**

By working through this booklet we hope that you and your community can reduce your food waste, save money, have some fun and enjoy tasty meals on the way!

## WHY BOTHER?

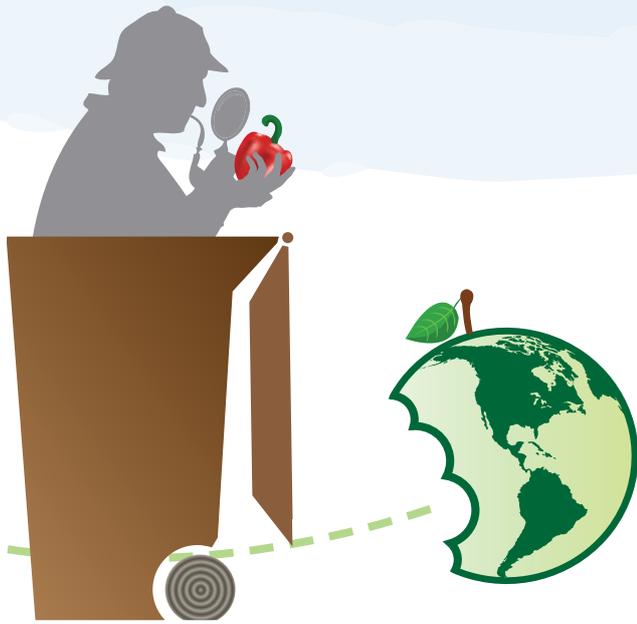
Well, first of all, it is costing us all a lot of money. We waste about 1/4 of the food we buy and this is costing Irish households between €400 to €1,000 a year. A lot of this food waste could be avoided by making some small changes in the way we do things everyday.

Secondly, in Ireland there are over one million tonnes of food waste disposed of each year. 1/3 of this comes from households and this means that at home each person is throwing out about 80kgs of food waste each year – this is the same weight as a grown man!

This may not sound like a lot on its own but when we add it up for all the people in Ireland it means over 300,000 tonnes of food going to waste each year from our homes. Much of this food waste ends up going into landfills where it rots and causes all sorts of problems for the local environment.

So, while the environmental costs of food waste for Ireland are huge, when you think about the whole food cycle globally, they become absolutely massive. Consider the following:

- If food waste were a country it would be the **3rd largest emitter** of greenhouse gases globally after America and China.
- Each year 1.4 billion hectares of land, or **200 times the land mass of Ireland**, is used to produce food that is then lost or wasted. And all this while 1 in 10 Irish people suffer from food poverty.
- Each year over **100 times the water that flows through the river Shannon** is used to produce food that is ultimately wasted.
- As a result of all this, the economic losses associated with food loss, excluding seafood, are estimated to reach **€550bn a year globally**. And this at a time when the global population is getting ever bigger and putting a huge strain on the existing food supplies.



## OK, WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Stop Food Waste wants to work with local authorities and community groups to help householders reduce their food waste in an easy, fun and effective way.

The idea is that small groups of householders (8 to 12) come together 4 times over a couple of months to work together to reduce food waste, save money and have some fun while doing so.

The four main meetings, which should be about 1 hour long, should cover the following:

### 1. Know your waste

- Introduction to the challenge
- Food waste in Ireland and what it's costing
- The main types of food we waste
- Know what and how much you are wasting

### 2. Planning and Shopping

- Discuss what you found from your own food waste
- The importance of planning your meals
- Using a shopping list
- The shopping battleground

### 3. Storage, dates and the art of reuse

- Discuss the hints and tips used since last meeting
- The importance of proper storage
- Food dates will be discussed
- Tricks and tips to prolong your food

### 4. How have you done?

- Discuss the hints and tips used since last meeting
- How the changes impacted on your food waste and food bills
- The good, the bad and the ugly of home composting

**“We want this to be fun for everyone and most importantly it should be easy to incorporate into what you are already doing”**

# How this works...

It's simple: just 4 one hour meetings over the next few weeks!



**Meeting 1**  
**Know Your Waste**



**Meeting 2**  
**Planning & Shopping**



**Meeting 3**  
**Storage, Serving and Reuse**



**Meeting 4**  
**Overall Assessment & Home Composting**

# Meeting 1

## Know your waste

*Aim:*

There are three simple aims for this first meeting:

1. *To introduce people to each other*
2. *Outline and explain the Stop Food Waste Challenge*
3. *Get people started by having a look at the amount of food they waste and the main reasons that this happens*



# MEETING 1 - PART 1

## Introductions

Welcome to your first Stop Food Waste Challenge meeting. During this meeting we will first get to know each other a bit before getting stuck in! Start by introducing yourselves to the group and telling the group why you are taking part and what you hope to learn over the coming few weeks.

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment.

## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

- As people arrive before the start of the workshop, greet each of the participant and introduce yourself as they come in to the meeting. Ideally you should have spoken with each of them before the meeting, either by phone or in person, depending on how the group was organised.
- Have a registration sheet that people can fill in their contact details (including email) so you will be able to contact them over the course of the workshops if there's a change to meeting times/dates, or to follow up with them to see how they're getting on. Also ask for their preferred contact method. An example sheet is in your pack.

## Opening the meeting:

- Start by introducing yourself.
- Talk a bit about what the SFW Challenge is about – number of meetings, different focus for each meeting and in between the meetings the fact that there will be different challenges that we want them to try out at home.
- Explain that each meeting will be about 1 hour long, it will be mainly discussion led and it is about having fun and sharing experiences.

## Participants introduce themselves

- This should be short and sweet, ask participants to give their names and what they hope to get from taking part.
- Once participants have introduced themselves thank them all and to put them at ease, give them some information on food waste and talk briefly about your own experiences.

For example: you're not alone, in fact...

- Do you know the average person wastes the weight of an adult in food every year;
- One third of what we buy is thrown in the bin, costs average household around €700 but can be up to €1,000 in some households;



- Not all of this is avoidable but the majority is and this is what we hope to focus on;
- Discuss briefly your experience in relation to food waste (if you can bring some of your food waste and tell its sad, sad story). It may be an idea to be prepared with your own stories such as "I always wasted XXX until I found out" (see box below).

### - Example story:

We always thought we were pretty good in our house. We like to cook, so much of our food waste was peelings and bits of leftovers - or so we thought. The first time we properly looked at our waste we were really surprised. When we cooked food we nearly always had leftovers and we used to put these in the fridge. But we had a weekly plan so if someone forgot to use them for lunch they often got forgotten in the fridge and then got dumped a week or 2 later.

### - Question to Group:

Any suggestions on things that we could do?

### - Our Solution:

We put a magnetic white board on the fridge to note our leftovers. Cross them off when finished and use them up towards the end of the week for Thursday/Friday dinners – also means not having to cook which is always nice!

## MEETING 1 - PART 2

### Food Waste Exercise

We all waste food for different reasons so there will be different ways for each of us to reduce the food we waste. To get an idea about what people waste write down on a piece of paper the last food that you threw out and why you threw it out. Put all the pieces of paper together and pick 3 of them out. Then have a brief discussion about how these foods could have been managed differently or reused somehow, taking the reason for waste into account.

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment

### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

The objective of this exercise is to highlight that we all waste food and do so for different reasons and because of this there will be many different solutions that can work.

However, sometimes getting people to open up and discuss their own food waste can be tricky. This is due to the fact that people may not be aware but also because they are shy about discussing these things, especially on the first week of a programme.

By using the exercise above people will be more open for discussing their own food waste and potential ways to improve their situation.



## MEETING 1 - PART 3

### Presentation – Food waste, Ireland and you!

This presentation outlines the food waste situation in Ireland, the implications of this waste and some of the positive impacts that small changes and initiatives can make.

The purpose of the Stop Food Waste Challenge and the importance of reducing food waste (economic, environmental and social) will also be discussed as well as the new household food waste regulations and how they may impact you. (though initially only in urban populations).

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment

### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

Each week will involve a number of different parts – usually an introduction followed by a discussion about what has happened since the last meeting (or in the case of this first meeting a discussion about the food we waste). This will be followed by a presentation on the main topics for discussion that week (you will either have these supplied on DVD or can access/download them from our website).

This presentation will introduce the issues of food waste in Ireland, outline the main steps involved in the Stop Food Waste challenge and detail what people are expected to do before the next meeting.

Use slides to prompt discussion around the following points:

- How much food do we waste?
- How much does food waste cost us?
- Why do we waste food?
- What are the foods we throw out?
- How can I stop food waste?
- To conclude, tell the participants that trying to make all the changes at once might be very daunting and could prove to be difficult so starting with assessing their waste will help narrow down where they need to focus and they can then try one or 2 changes that suit them.

## FOR THE NEXT MEETING - PART 4

### Challenge for next meeting

Before the next meeting, separate out and weigh the food you waste at home. From this you can target a ¼ improvement in the quantities of food wasted.

- Keep a note of all food thrown out (don't forget stuff that goes down the sink), weighing it (or noting how much) and identifying why it was thrown out.
- Keep receipts from all grocery shopping so participants can place a value on the food wasted.
- Take pictures of your wastes.

**Resources:** Food Waste Recording sheets that you can stick on your fridge or cupboard will be supplied.

So, before the next meeting what actions do you think you will try? Use our Action Checklist below to identify at least two things that you will try and do for next week

What you commit to do before the next meeting	Commit to try	Did you do it?	Comments
Record the food wastes you throw out			
Identify why each type of food waste was thrown out			
Estimate the amount of the different foods you throw out			
Weigh the total amount of food that you throw out before the next meeting			
Weigh the individual quantities of the different foods you throw out			
Take pictures of the some of your main food wastes			
Keep the receipts for all your shopping during the week			
Try and estimate the cost of some of the main foods you throw out by comparing your receipts with your food waste			

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment

### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

This first challenge is very important, as it may be the first time people really start to look at their own waste. This can be tricky as some people do not want to handle food waste.

#### Show them how to do it

What you will need for this will be a container with some of your own food waste, a regular kitchen scales and the recording sheet.

#### Recording information

- When recording food waste the most important thing is to keep a record of what is thrown out and the reasons why.

#### Recording weight

Ideally you want people to weigh the food waste as they throw it out. This lets people see how much of the different items they waste. However, this doesn't always work out so keep the following in mind:

- If people can't/don't weigh the food waste as they go ask them to make an estimate instead.
- In order to get an accurate weight for the week the easiest thing is to put it all in a separate container (lined with a bag) and weigh it all at the end of the week. This can then be put into whatever bin it would go in normally.
- Finally, ask people not to forget the stuff that goes down the sink, to the dogs or animals, or into your composter. Make a note of these and add them to the recording sheet.

For more information on doing this there is a Snapguide available online at: [www.snapguide.com/guides/know-your-food-waste/](http://www.snapguide.com/guides/know-your-food-waste/)

## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR (Continued):

### Checklist

- Go through the different actions in the checklist – this will really summarise what has been said before
- Ask people to tick at least two action points, though they can tick them all if they wish! The first and second actions are the mandatory ones that we want people to commit to
- Go around the room and ask each person to tell the group which one they will do

### Before you go...

There are a number of videos that we have on our Youtube page which give information about food waste in Ireland and some of the initiatives currently underway to reduce it.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

### Showing videos

Depending on the facilities you have available you may not wish/be able to show videos. If you can we would recommend using them as we have found it can be a great introduction to different food waste topics. They are especially useful at the end of meetings, as they reinforce the main messages we want people to remember.



During this first meeting there are a number of different videos that can be used. There are 2 short ones that we would recommend. One – *The Food We Waste*, was made during the production of the *Waste Watchers* programme. The other is *Your Food = Your Money* which was made by Monaghan Co. Co. LAPN programme. The 2 longer videos – *Waste Watchers* and *EcoEye* – provide much more information so we recommend people watch these at home (though the first 15 minutes of *Ecoeye* could also be used during the first meeting). These provide an in-depth view of the food waste situation in Ireland and looks at the wider impacts of this food waste.

### End of meeting

- Thank everyone for coming (hope you had fun and learned something etc.)
- Tell people that you will be in touch before the next meeting and if they can't make it, no worries. The workbook is there to help and they can catch up easily.
- If people have any queries get in touch
- Take a photo of group
- Remind participants to bring completed food waste sheets to next meeting.

# How to survive the SHOPPING BATTLEGROUND

Your mission, to get in and out of your store without overspending and overfilling your fridge. Good luck and Stop Food Waste!



## GOING IN

Outside creep slowly past the **Oversized Shopping Trolleys**  
The larger the trolley, the more you'll spend so grab a basket instead.



Once inside watch out for the **FRESH SMELL SENSORS**  
Fresh smells like bread & flowers create a tempting sensory experience which often leads to over spending. Buy your fresh produce at the end of your shop.



Budget and beat **THE ATM MACHINE**  
Set a budget before you go to the shop and bring a calculator to keep a running tally.



## IN THE STORE

Show no mercy to the **END CAP DISPLAYS**  
These displays don't always mean a discount. A lot of times, they are only new or in season items but can be marketed to appear like a deal. **BE WARY!**



Avoid being trapped in... **THE CENTRE ISLES**

General merchandise and canned goods are located here as they draw the shopper deeper into the shop and expose them to nonessential items along the way. Stay focused on your list!



Know your enemy...

## THE SAMPLE STATIONS

Designed to slow you down and expose new products, use the free samples to your advantage. Eat these at the beginning of your shop to avoid hunger driven purchases.

Be calm when the **SHOP LAYOUT CHANGES!**

Shelves changing position is often done on purpose, because if you don't know where the items are, you'll end up spending more time in the shop. Again, stay focused on your list!!



## GETTING OUT



Get in and get out of **THE BACK-OF-SHOP-TRAP**

Dairy products, eggs, meat, snacks and bottled goods are usually at the back of the shop so you see more than you need to. Avoid overspending, go straight to the very back and work your way to the front.

Know what they want you to see **THE SCIENCE OF SHELF LAYOUT**

**TOP** – Smaller and gourmet brands. These smaller brands usually don't have the budgets to pay for more favourable placement.

**MID** – The "bulls eye" zone. There's no advantage for the supermarket to show you the lowest-priced item in the most effective spot. So here you tend to see higher-priced items or items with the highest markup.

**Kid's eye level** – As if shopping with kids wasn't hard enough there are products specifically located with kids appeal. As anyone who shops with kids will know they will react and reach out to a product.

If possible, leave the children at home



Keep the blinkers on and **AVOID CHECKOUT BUYS!**

How often do you buy things when waiting in line? This is the one of the most profitable areas in a shop. The goal is to turn waiting time into buying time. Put your blinkers on when you are in line and get out of there!



# Meeting 2

## Planning & Shopping

*Aim:*

Now that people know the main types of food waste their households produce it is time to start trying to figure out how to stop it. The aim of this meeting is:

- 1. To get people to plan meals and use a shopping list*
- 2. Get people to check the fridge, freezer and store cupboard before going shopping*
- 3. Get people to shop smarter and buy only what they need*



# MEETING 2 - PART 1

## Introductions

Welcome back. Hope you had fun investigating your food waste! This meeting is all about food before you bring it home – that is the planning and the shopping. First, we will start with a group discussion on the experience of recording the food wasted at home before looking at meal planning, using a list and negotiating the shopping battleground!

Allow 5 – 10 minutes for this segment

## Food Waste Exercise

Examine the completed food waste recording sheets and note the following:

- Weight of food waste thrown out by each person and/or the group
- What are the most common foods thrown out?
- What are the most common reasons that food is thrown out?

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment



Discuss these findings, what are some of the easy ways to overcome the main wastes and what they equate to in euros.

## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

- **Welcome people as they arrive -** ideally you should have been in contact with each of them since the last meeting, based on their preferred mode of communication. Usually do this as part of reminding them about the upcoming meeting but use it as an opportunity to discuss, one on one, any issues or things that the person maybe too shy to discuss in front of the group.
- **Open by asking people how they got on with their actions since the last meeting. Go round the room and ask:**
  - How did you get on?
  - What did you find difficult?
  - What was the total weight of food waste?
  - What was the type of food you threw out the most of (e.g. bread)?
  - What was the main reason you threw out food (e.g. plate scrapings, unused leftovers, etc.)
  - Can you put a cost on the value of your food waste?
- **Collect the food waste recording sheets**
- **Keep a note of people's comments and experiences**



## MEETING 2 - PART 2

### Group Activity – Planning, lists and the shopping battleground

Planning meals is one of the most effective ways to reduce food waste and save money. Planning meals and making a shopping list will help you shop smarter and ensure you do not buy more food than you need.

In this part of the meeting we will explore the importance of **meal planning** in food waste reduction. This can be done in a couple of ways – using meal plans for what you want or to plan meals around what you already have. Regardless of how you plan, you should always end with a **shopping list**. If you are interested there are also some modern technologies that you can use to help with this.

**Shopping** is the one place where you can waste food before you even buy it so being aware of the weapons that are used against you is essential. During this group activity we will discuss some of the key things that will help you stick to your plan and minimise the things that you buy that will become waste.

Allow 20 – 30 minutes for this segment

### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

This section will introduce this week's topics – planning and shopping. This part of the meeting can either be a discussion around the supplied presentation or an exercise for the participants to come up with actions followed by, if needed, a presentation to cover anything that was missed.

Regardless of how you do this section the main steps involved in proper planning should be covered and how it should end up with a shopping list being made. From here the main potential issues that arise when shopping should be discussed – this is all about knowing the enemy and thinking about shopping as a battle between your needs and your wants!

While time consuming, small group exercises can be a very effective way to get people to engage with actions that they may use themselves. If you decide to do this split your group into 2. Have one group brainstorm planning actions and the other brainstorm shopping actions for 10 minutes. Afterwards have a group feedback session. You can use the supplied action sheet to make sure that all the main actions have been covered.

#### At the start of this section give a short introduction:

- Good planning makes life easier, saves you money and reduces food waste.
- This week the aim is to get people checking the fridge, freezer and store cupboard before going shopping, planning what they are going to eat and making a list, to buy only what they need.

#### Whether using the slides or in a group based exercise try to prompt discussion around the following points:

##### Planning

- There are different ways to plan but the goal is to make sure you don't end up in the shop buying based on what you see and what you think you need – this is what the shops want!

##### How do you plan?

- Use meal plans and then check your cupboards, freezer and fridge
- Check your cupboards and come up with a meal plan
- Make sure to incorporate what you already have that needs to be used in to your plan
- Keep in mind the foods you have been wasting and make sure to only include them if you are going to use them

##### Think about weekly plans and what suits you

- Use perishables early in the week so leftovers can be used towards the end of the week in a fridge clear out
- Try and have a couple of easy meals that can be cooked from store cupboard essentials.
- Don't plan on cooking every night, this gives you a chance to use up some of the things you have already.
- EXERCISE: a good exercise to show how easy it is to make a weekly meal plan is to ask participants to write down 5 recipes they like. That is a weekly meal plan.

##### Shopping list

- Have a list pad easily accessible
- Random pieces of paper nearly always gets lost
- Hand out the fridge magnets to people
- There are many apps and websites which can help with meal planning and making shopping lists. Show some of the apps either on a phone or as part of your presentation

##### Shopping

Shops are great and provide us with an amazing variety but this is also where we buy our food waste. Some of the key things to remember when it comes to smarter shopping are:

- Sticking to your shopping list (NB Don't over buy, e.g. bags of fruit, veg, etc., beware of special deals, link to blank shopping list)
- Start at the back of the shop (buying non-perishables) and work your way to the front. Perishables go on the top of your trolley and don't get damaged; people tend to buy less of the typically wasted foods doing this.
- Don't go shopping if you're hungry (have a snack, or treat yourself to something in the café before you hit the aisles!)

## MEETING 2 - PART 2 (Continued)

- Does the way you shop cause food waste? Weekly shops maybe the best option for you – or maybe not?? Often you can get better deals from local butchers and grocers so use large supermarkets to get your staples. Or have you considered online shopping – great if you have to go shopping with kids or are tight on time
- Use modern products to your advantage e.g. Choosing packaging to make the most of your food re-closable bags, split packs, smaller packs, etc.
- Beware of the cost of convenience
- Know your dates - understand the difference between use by and best before dates, make sure to choose products with dates far enough away that you will get to use food on time.

## MEETING 2 - PART 3

### Challenge for next meeting

Depending on how you plan and shop see if you can improve with many of the tips and pointers on [www.stopfoodwaste.ie/food-we-buy](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie/food-we-buy)

#### Resources for you:

- Meal plans with associated shopping lists from Sian Breslin and Sheila Kiely
- Fridge magnet with planning pad

#### Handy information leaflets:

- Stop Food Waste Challenge, Cost of convenience, Smart Shopping

So, before the next meeting what actions do you think you will try? Use our Action Checklist below to identify at least two things that you will try and do for next week

What you commit to do before the next meeting	Commit to try	Did you do it?	Comments
Try using a meal plan – either one of the supplied ones or from another source			
Create a list of your family's favourite meals and write out the ingredients needed for each			
Identify 2 meals that you can make with just stuff from the cupboard			
Have an inventory day – go through your cupboard and freezer and plan a week's meals starting with what you already have			
Start to use a shopping list			
Try shopping in a different way to how you normally shop			
Go into a supermarket and buy just one thing from the back of the shop			
Try using modern technology to help you – either with planning (meal plans) or shopping (online)			
Continue to monitor your food waste and receipts			
Any other ideas??			

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment

## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

As part of the presentation in the previous section the key elements of the challenge will have been outlined. The key aspect of this week's challenge is for the participants to consider how they are currently planning and shopping. Thinking about these in terms of the food waste they generate should give them a few ideas about small changes that they can make to improve.

### Checklist

- Go through the different actions in the checklist – this will really summarise what has been said before.
- Ask people to tick at least two action points, though they can tick them all if they wish!
- Go around the room and ask each person to tell the group which one they will do.

For this second week of the Challenge provide the participants with some of the following items. These are meant to provide them with some information and prompts to help them on their way.

- Fridge magnet with shopping list/meal planner
- Meal Plans from Sheila Kiely and Sian Breslin
- Stop Food Waste Challenge outline
- Cost of Convenience poster
- Smart Shopping
- Leaflet – Smart Shopping

### Before you go...

There are a number of videos that we have on our Youtube page which give information about planning and shopping and how these can save you money.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

### End of meeting

- After going through the checklist show people a short video which summarises all the topics addressed during the meeting. We recommend two shorts from the Waste Watcher series - *Meal Planning* and *Better Buying*.
- After the video thank everyone for coming (hope you had fun and learned something, etc.) and refer to the video as a reminder of what they are to do before the next meeting (make sure to confirm the date).
- Remind people that you will be in touch before the next meeting and if they can't make it, no worries. The workbook is there to help and they can catch up easily.
- If people have any queries get in touch.

Ask that people continue to monitor their food waste using the food waste recording sheets (provide more if needed) and encourage people to try and weigh their wastes where possible and also take pictures of any of the new things they try.

# A few tips on Savvy Storage and making things last!

Give your food a good home, know your dates and make things last.

The door is the warmest part of your fridge



**Fridge Door**  
Condiments, salad dressings, oils and juices



**The Freezer**  
The freezer is for short term storage, not a final resting place!

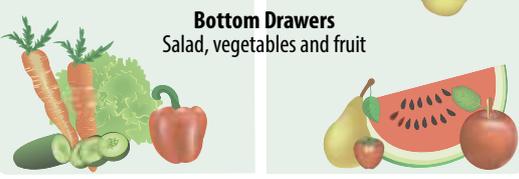
**Top Shelves**  
Ready-to-eat foods



**Bottom/Mid Shelves**  
Raw meat, poultry and fish



**Bottom Drawers**  
Salad, vegetables and fruit



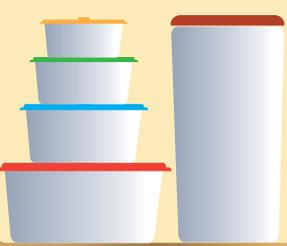
**Know your best before dates**



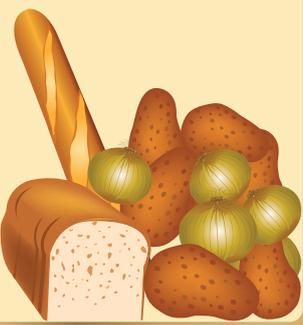
**Stock well waste less**



**Smart storage saves money**



**Don't forget what you have**



# Meeting 3

## Storage, Serving and Reuse

*Aim:*

After figuring out the food we waste, we looked into improving how we plan and buy food. The aim of this meeting is:

- 1. Make sure we make the most of the food that we have bought*
- 2. Introduce the good the bad and the ugly of storage*
- 3. Understanding date labels and making food last*



## MEETING 3 - PART 1

### Introductions

Hi again – hope you had some fun battling the shops and figuring out the tricks they use. This week is all about food in the home but first things first – we will have a quick discussion about your food waste, how the planning and shopping went and then get into storage, dates, serving and the art of reuse.

### How did you shop?

Discussion on the tips and pointers from the last week and how they affected shopping, bills and waste. Main discussion points should include:

- What sort of planning works best for you?
- Best ways to make a list and remember it
- What is the best way for you to shop?
- What you noticed about shops and the way they sell

Also, discuss the amount of waste that you recorded, the reasons why and if there is a trend (either they types or reasons) in the food waste you generate.

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment



## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

- **Welcome people as they arrive -**  
As with previous weeks you should have been in contact with each participant since the last meeting, based on their preferred mode of communication. As before, do this as part of reminding them about the upcoming meeting and where appropriate use it as an opportunity to discuss, one on one, any issues or things that the person maybe too shy to discuss in front of the group.
- **Open by asking people how they got on with their actions since the last meeting. Go round the room and ask:**
  - How did you get on?
  - What did you find difficult?
  - What was the biggest challenge for you?
  - Did you try any one thing that made a difference to your planning and shopping?
  - Did this have a direct impact on the amount of food you waste?
- **Keep a note of people's comments and experiences**



## MEETING 3 - PART 2

### Group Activity – storage, dates and the art of reuse

Now that you have bought your food and brought it home how do you make sure that you use it to the max? In general we are wasting 1/3 of our the food we buy. So if you have 3 bags of groceries 1 will end up being wasted. A lot of this is down to how we store, serve and reuse (or not) our food.

In this part of today's meeting we will go through the proper way to store your fruit, veg and bread – some of the main food waste offenders. Also covered will be the fridge and freezer which can be friend or foe depending on how they are used. Finally, some of the tips and tricks on serving, proper portions and preserving food will be discussed.

Allow 20 – 30 minutes for this segment

### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

As with the previous meetings, this section will be used to introduce this week's topics – storage, serving and reuse. Depending on how you want to do this part (using the presentation to lead a discussion or doing a group exercise similar to Meeting 2), the following topics should be covered:

- Storage and making things last
- Knowing what the different dates mean
- Making the most of your fridge and freezer
- Serving and proper portions
- Reuse and recipes

#### Storage

- Storing food, just like buying it, is often based on habits. We put things in the same places, we forget about things in the freezer, we put the new stuff at the front, etc.
- **What are the main foods that you waste** – make sure that you know the best storage conditions for these. Discuss the following.
  - Fruit and veg – the issue of ethylene.
  - Bread and bakery – bread bins, freezing, breadcrumbs.
  - Dairy, meat and fish – use your freezer or buy as you need.
  - Unused leftovers or half used ingredients – these are often forgotten in the fridge, use white boards.
- **How can you improve on your main food wastes?**
  - Technology – phones, stay fresh bags, etc. all can help, depending on what suits you.
  - Use white boards – these are great for leftovers and half used ingredients. Remember Sheila Kiely's Meal Planner and the 2 meal ingredients.
  - Use the fridge and freezer properly – these are often used as dumping grounds, so beware. Make sure to label and date everything that goes in.
  - Use the benefits of modern packaging – split packs, dish size packs, re-sealable products, half loaves, etc. Again, depending on how you currently use and consume food these may help you.
- **When in doubt, copy the shops.** They are smart and want their foods to last as long as possible so copy how they do things.
  - Read the labels – it is small print but valuable information on how best to store food is there.

#### Dates

- The different dates on food are very confusing – some are very important, others not so much. We'll go through these differences.
- Use the handout: The good, the bad and the ugly – all you need to know about dates.

#### Fridge and freezer

- Depending on how you use them these can be the best or worst of modern appliances when it comes to food waste. Make sure they are not a dumping ground.
- If you tend to forget about stuff in your fridge/freezer use white boards as an easy reminder.
- Keep some fruit and veg in the fridge. They will last longer and can be taken out to ripen later.
- Have freezer clearouts – the stuff in there should turnover every 3-4 months. Use this for a week where you don't spend money (end of the month) and clear things out.
- **Manage these properly:**
  - Make sure that you maintain them correctly (defrost, clear out drainage holes, clean the grills at the back with a soft brush, etc.)
  - Set to correct temperatures.
  - Label things clearly and also date them if going in the freezer.
  - Put things in the best parts of the fridge for their type.

#### Serving

- Use portion measures for proper portions.
- Check out the serving instructions on the packaging and don't be afraid to be a nerd and weigh food out!
- Serve food in bowls – more for leftovers and allows people to take what they want.
- Use apps for leftover recipes and link these in with future planning.

#### Recipes

- Loads available on Stop Food Waste website in booklet form.
- Websites, apps, also available.
- Try them out.

## MEETING 3 - PART 3

### Challenge for final meeting

Now that you have your food at home, make the most of it. For hints, tips and tricks on how to preserve your food (and money) see [www.stopfoodwaste.ie/food-we-eat/](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie/food-we-eat/)

#### Resources for you:

- Stay fresh bags, Rice and Spag measures

#### Handy information leaflets:

- Where to store fruit and veg, Know your Dates

So, for the next meeting we want you to try to change how you store, serve and reuse food. Use our Action Checklist below to identify at least two things that you will try and do before the next meeting:

What you commit to do before the next meeting	Commit to try	Did you do it?	Comments
Look at how you store fruit and veg. Change how you do this to extend the life of your food			
Is bread waste an issue for you? Try changing how you manage your bread			
Do a freezer clear-out and note the things in it that you need to use up			
Do a fridge clearout and rearrange for optimal storage of different ingredients			
Portion plan like a scientist! Use measures or weigh out what you need. If you want leftovers for lunch add an extra portion			
Try serving your meals in bowls on the table			
Use a white board or fridge blackboard for your leftovers and half used ingredients			
Try using modern technology to help you use up food that might be about to go off			
Continue to monitor your food waste and receipts			
Any other ideas?			

Allow 10 – 20 minutes for this segment

## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

As part of the presentation in the previous section the main parts of the challenge will have been outlined. The main thing we want people to consider is how they store the main foods that they waste. If by changing the way they store food they can prolong its life, ensure that it is all used then they will have less food waste and more money.

For this week of the Challenge provide the participants with the portion planners and the stay fresh bag to help them at home. Also, give them copies of where to store your fruit and veg and the know your dates handout.

## Checklist

- Go through the different actions in the checklist – this will really summarise what has been said before
- Ask people to tick at least two action points, though they can tick them all if they wish!
- Go around the room and ask each person to tell the group which one they will do

### Before you go...

There are a number of videos that we have on our Youtube page which give information about storage and reuse and how these can save you money.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

### End of meeting

- After going through the checklist show people a short video which summarises all the topics addressed during the meeting. We recommend two shorts from the Waste Watcher series - *Savvy Storage* and *Canny Cooking*.
- After the video thank everyone for coming (hope you had fun and learned something, etc.) and refer to the video as a reminder of what they are to do before the next meeting
- Tell people that you will be in touch before the next meeting and if they can't make it, no worries. The workbook is there to help and they can catch up easily.
- If people have any queries get in touch

## Composting Essentials

# The Ingredients for Good Composting!

Composting and the organisms involved, like all other life forms, need food, air and water to survive and thrive. The five essential for successful composting are:

GREEN & BROWN MATERIALS



PARTICLE SIZE & SURFACE AREA



MOISTURE



# 5

## Essentials of Composting

AERATION



SIZE OF HEAP



# Meeting 4

## Overview and a bit on home composting

*Aim:*

Now that we have looked at the main ways that people can reduce their food waste the aim of this meeting is to:

1. Find out how you got on and by how much you reduced your food waste
2. Give a brief introduction to home composting, outline what works and what doesn't and a few key things to remember.



## MEETING 4 - PART 1

### Introductions

In this final meeting we want to get feedback on the different things that you have changed since the last meeting, but also since the start of the Stop Food Waste Challenge. We hope that you have reduced your food waste, had some tasty meals and are now spending less money! During this final meeting we will also discuss home composting and how to do it right so you can convert the small amount of food waste you now have into a useful resource.

### How did you fare?

First of all, how did you get on since the last meeting? What is your feedback about the following:

- ✓ How is your storage?
- ✓ Fridge and freezer management – friend or foes?
- ✓ Did serving and proper portions help?
- ✓ Did you manage to use your leftovers?

Now, let's have a look at the improvements or changes that you made over the course of the challenge.

- ✓ What was the most important thing that worked for you?
- ✓ Did you reduce your food waste and if so by how much?
- ✓ More importantly, did you save money?
- ✓ Are there things you'd like to try in the future?

Allow 20 – 30 minutes for this segment



### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

#### • Welcome people as they arrive -

As with previous weeks you should have been in contact with each participant since the last meeting, based on their preferred mode of communication. As before, do this as part of reminding them about the upcoming meeting and where appropriate use it as an opportunity to discuss, one on one, any issues or things that the person maybe too shy to discuss in front of the group.

#### • Open by asking people how they got on with their actions since the last meeting only. Go round the room and ask:

- How did you get on?
- What did you find difficult?
- What was the biggest challenge for you?
- Did you try any one thing that made a difference to your storage and use of food?
- Did this have a direct impact on the amount of food you waste?

#### • Keep a note of people's comments and experiences

Now it is time to talk about the programme as a whole and what worked/didn't work over the past few weeks.

#### Having worked through the 5 steps ask the participants:

- What surprised you most about your food waste?
- Did you manage to do something about it?
- What were the main things you found most useful in dealing with your food waste?
- Are there any things that you now plan to try out to reduce your food waste further?
- Did you save money?
- How did the challenge affect the food you prepared or tried?
- Are there any things that you think we didn't cover?
- Are there areas where people would like more information
- Focus on specific subjects such as using leftovers (with recipes), portion control, shopping tips, cooking demonstrations, proper storage techniques.
- **It is important that this feedback is recorded.**
- Collect the food waste recording sheets for the final week. You should have made a note on your recording sheet what weekly weight(s) each participants recorded. Comparing week 1 with week 4 you can now see how people got on.
- It is important to point out that while the weight of food waste is an indicator that we use it may not always reflect efficient food use. For example, if you make your own juice then you will have more food waste than someone that buys a carton of juice.

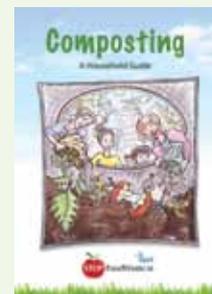
## MEETING 4 - PART 2

### Presentation – Home Composting: A Household Guide

There will always be some food waste generated and these materials, along with garden materials, can be composted. There are many different ways to compost so, depending on the space available and the types of materials you wish to compost, there will be a composting system that can work for you. But remember, to work properly composting requires a bit of work and maintenance. This will all be discussed as well as how to get involved with the Master Composting programme or how to start community composting schemes in your area.

Allow 20 – 30 minutes for this segment

If there are Master Composters in your area, they may be able to assist with this part of the meeting.



### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

Where there is food, there will be food waste. The aim of the Stop Food Waste Challenge is to motivate people, and provide them with the information and tools, to reduce it as much as possible. For the food waste that will be generated home composting, regardless of where you live, is an option. However, the key thing that people need to know when considering composting at home is that it isn't a compost "bin" it is a composting system or composter and unlike a bin, these require a bit of time and effort!

This presentation will give an overview of how to compost at home properly. In addition, the main problems that people encounter when home composting goes wrong will be addressed. These are very informative as they lead to much of the negative feelings that exist towards home composting. More importantly however, they will help identify the main things that people must get right to generate good compost.

- All the pictures of composters that we see show lovely compost being harvested at the end. Most people's experience does not reflect this. Usually it involves flies, smells and possibly rodents. If this is the case then something is not being done properly
- Key thing to remember is that composting is a process that takes time and effort to get right – just throwing food waste into a composter will not work.
- For composting to work correctly you have to have a proper mix of brown and green materials. If you have only browns they will break down over time (if kept moist) but if you have only greens these will tend to smell and cause the problems that we all hear about. Therefore, the problems that people encounter are usually down to not enough brown materials (most people tend to have a predominance of green materials for composting, especially food waste and grass cuttings)

There are 4 key things to get right for composting properly and these are:

- A proper mix of browns and greens – try a 50:50 mix. Probably the most important thing to get right and the thing that is most commonly done incorrectly. Good thing to do during the winter is collect leaves. Put these in a pile (enclosed by wire mesh so they don't blow away) or store them, moist, in refuse bags with a few airholes punched, and they will break down over time to give you leaf mould which can be used as a mulch. You can also add the leaves whenever you add green materials to your composter. Cardboard is also good and we usually have plenty of that at home and at work
- **Regular turning** – Regular turning will improve aeration and speed up the composting process. Can be difficult to do this in the common compost bins but spiral turners make it much easier. However, if the contents have the right brown: green mix, correct moisture level (moist but not wet), and sufficient porosity (space for airflow) then even unturned materials will eventually turn to good compost.
- **Size of materials** – food should always be chopped up before adding as larger items will take much longer to break down. Do this for garden materials as well.
- **Moisture** – water is needed for composting to happen so if the compost is kept in a sunny spot then it may dry out and the compost process will slow down. Food scraps and fresh grass cuttings have a very high moisture content. If these are present in abundance, then no further watering may be necessary. However, all compost piles should be regularly monitored for signs of drying out.
- **Grasscycling** – many people struggle to manage grass clippings – it either ends up in the brown bin or in a pile at the bottom of the garden. In both places it gets hot and smelly quite quickly. On its own it does not compost well but when mixed with a proper amount of brown materials makes great compost. A better way to manage it can be to grasscycle – this involves cutting and leaving the clippings on the grass. This works great when done properly – even in rainy Ireland. The key things to remember for grasscycling are:

## MEETING 4 - PART 2 Continued

### NOTES FOR FACILITATOR:

#### Grasscycling

- You only cut the top 1/3 of the grass – in other words don't cut it too short. By doing this the clippings won't clump and can fall down between the grass onto the ground
- Cut more regularly – this is a tough sell but with grasscycling you save time by not having to manage the clippings so in the long run you actually cut more often but spend less time cutting.
- Use a mulching mower – these make the job of grasscycling much easier. Mulching mowers have double blades so cut the grass into smaller pieces that allows them to break down quicker. However, any mower can be used.
- Beware of wet weather – the wetter the grass the harder it is for the clippings to spread evenly and break down. So, if you have very long grass and/or it is wet then the cut grass will probably clump. If you can wait until the grass is dry then it will work much more effectively – otherwise, if you don't want clumps of grass it may be best to cut, collect and compost.
- **Last point** - When it comes to home composting the important thing is to set it up so that it suits you. Many households now have a brown bin so if you want to compost it might be a good idea to just compost your veggie and fruit wastes and put your meat and fish waste in the brown bin. Just remember - Composting is a process!

#### Before you go...

There is much more information on all aspects of home composting on our website as well as a number of useful video guides on our Youtube channel.



### And finally...

We hope that you have found this Stop Food Waste Community Challenge to be informative, useful and most of all a fun experience. We would love to get your feedback so if you have any tales or tips you'd like to share make sure to get in touch -

**[info@stopfoodwaste.ie](mailto:info@stopfoodwaste.ie)**

Keep up the good work and remember, targeting a reduction in food waste by 1/4 is only a start, see how far you can go with lots more information available at **[www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie)**







FoodWaste.ie