

The **Stop Food Waste Challenge**

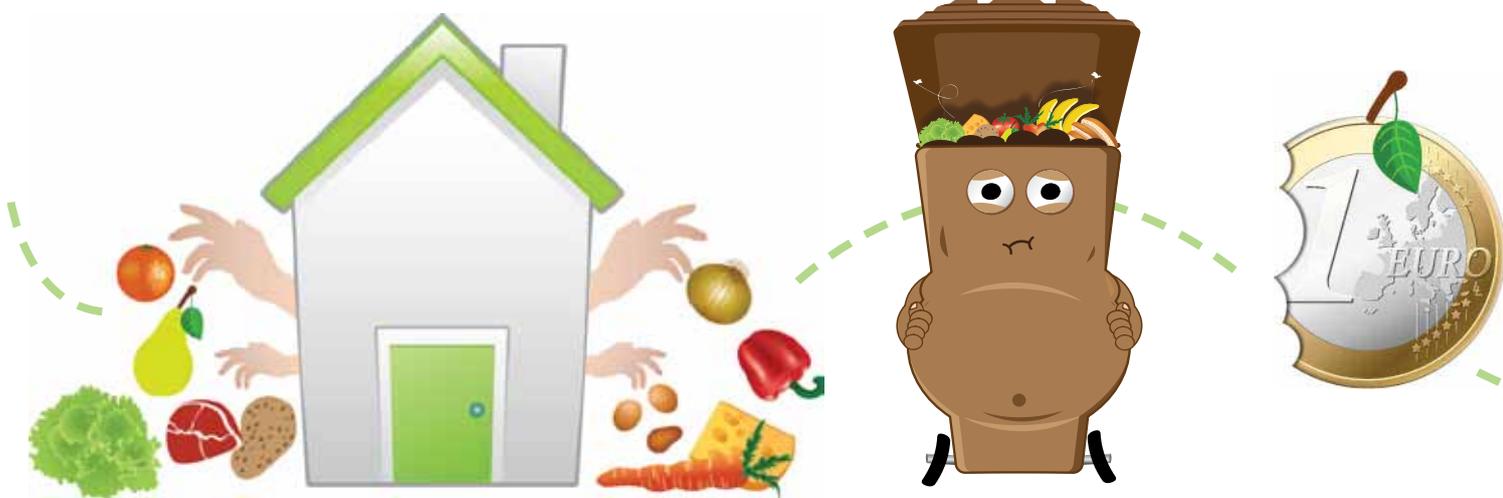
PARTICIPANTS' EDITION



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?

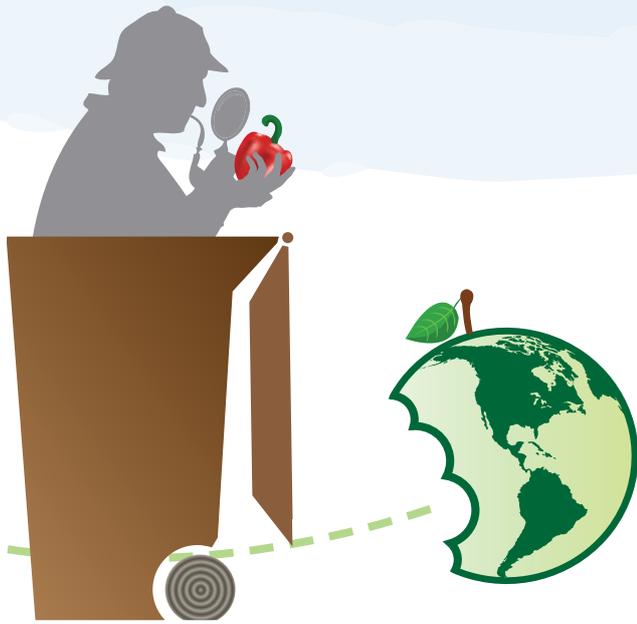
Well, first of all, it is costing us all a lot of money. We waste about 1/4 of the food we buy and this is costing Irish households between €400 to €1,000 a year. A lot of this food waste could be avoided by making some small changes in the way we do things everyday.

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

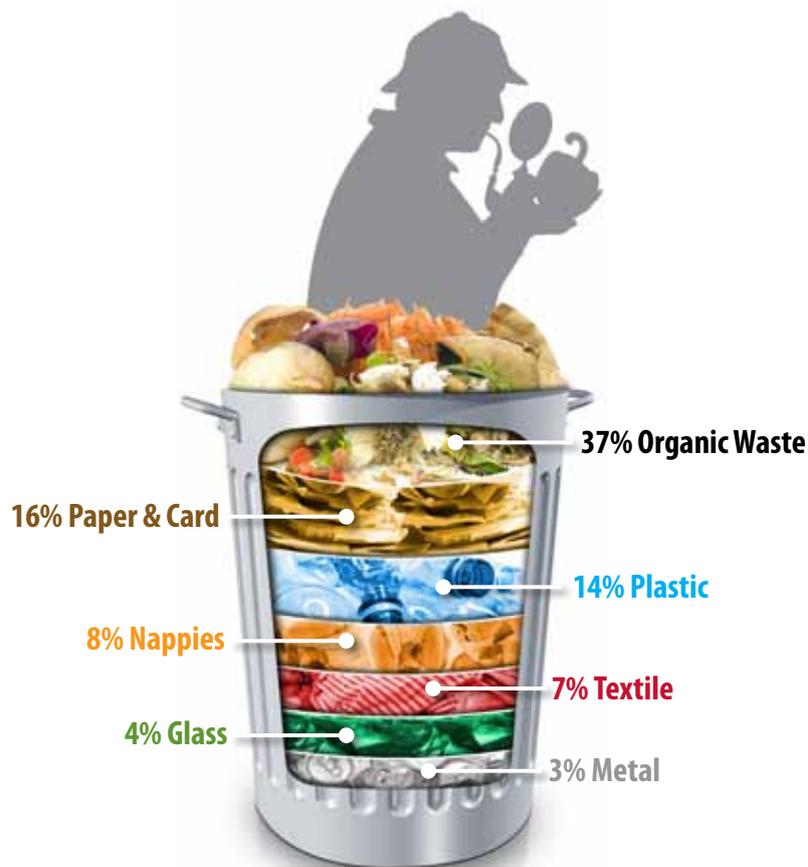
Meeting 1

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

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.



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.



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).

For the next meeting

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			

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.



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

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!



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?



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

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.



For the next meeting

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

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??			

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.



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

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



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 todays 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.



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/

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?			

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.



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

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?



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.





STOP FoodWaste.ie

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. Keep up the good work and remember, targeting a reduction in food waste by $\frac{1}{4}$ is only a start, see how far you can go with lots more information available at www.stopfoodwaste.ie

and remember...

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.



