

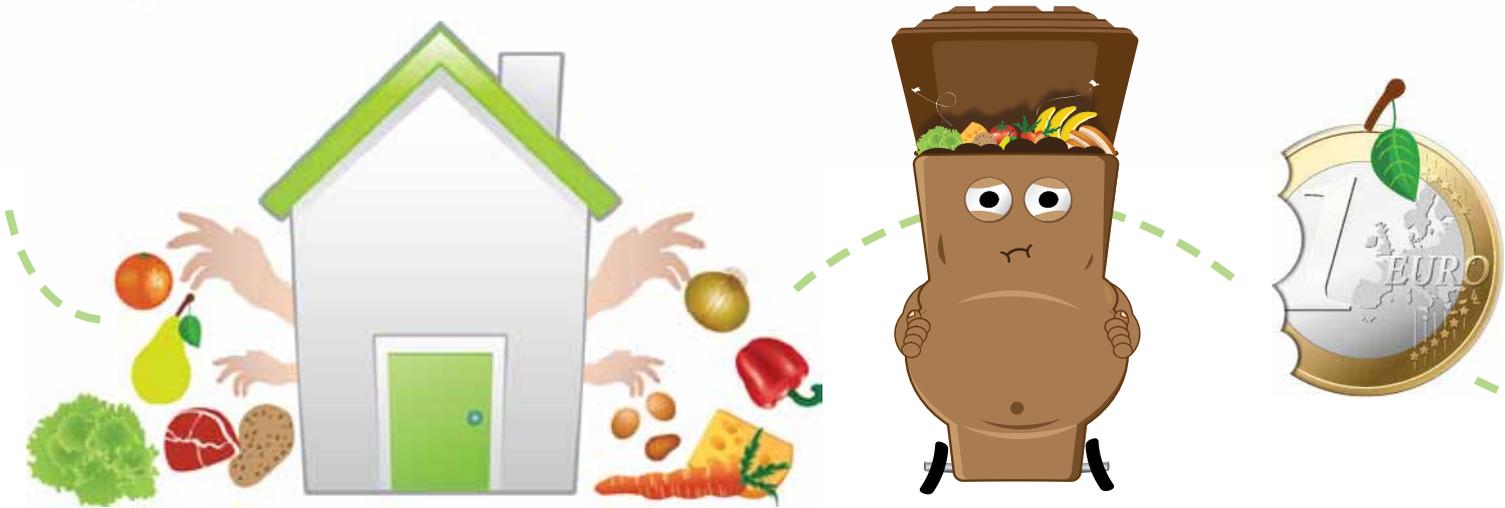
# The **Stop Food Waste** Challenge

PARTICIPANTS' EDITION



**STOP** 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?

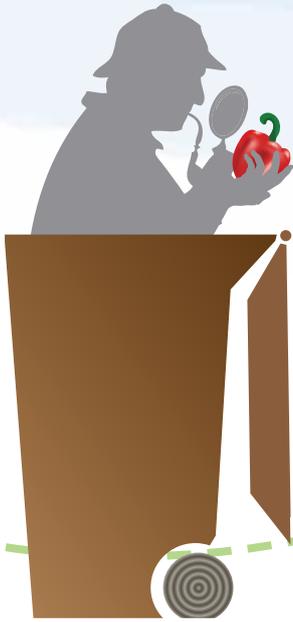
Well, first of all, it is costing us all a lot of money. We waste about 1/4 of the food we buy and this is costing Irish households between €400 and €1,000 a year. A lot of this food waste could be avoided by making some small changes in the way we do things every day.

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

Though this may not sound like much, when you calculate this at the national level, it means that Irish households produce 300,000 tonnes of food waste each year. Much of this food waste ends up going into landfills where it rots and causes all sorts of problems for the local environment.

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 9 people in the world do not get enough to eat.
- 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 **€550 billion a year globally**. This is at a time when the global population is getting ever bigger and putting a huge strain on existing food supplies.



## HOW THIS WORKS...

The Stop Food Waste Challenge involves small groups of people coming together four times over a couple of weeks 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:

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



### 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

**Ireland's**

# **Food Waste Charter**

Reducing food waste has been recognised as one of the most important global challenges of our time.

Ireland, along with 193 countries in UN, has signed up to tackle this problem by 2030.

This can only be done if all of us – individuals, organisations and businesses – take action.

The Food Waste Charter is a public expression of commitment to achieve an Ireland where food is consumed, not wasted. By signing up, you pledge to take at least one action that will help reduce food waste. This action, regardless of how big or small, should be concrete and achievable.

Participating in this Stop Food Waste Challenge is such an action.

So, join people, businesses and communities from across the country working together to reduce food waste and sign up to the Food Waste Charter today.

[www.stopfoodwaste.ie/FoodWasteCharter](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie/FoodWasteCharter)

*Sign up and  
stop food waste.*



# Meeting 1

## Know your waste

There are three simple aims for this first meeting:

1. *To meet the other participants*
2. *To understand what's involved in the Stop Food Waste Challenge*
3. *Get started by having a look at the amount of food we 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 them 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 be discussed, as well as the new household food waste regulations and how they may impact you.

## For the next meeting

### Challenge for next meeting

Before the next meeting, separate out and weigh the food you waste at home. From this information, target a reduction 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 you 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 and 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** – Certain products are located specifically at kids eye level to appeal to them. In order to reduce the stress levels, if possible, leave the children at home when shopping. Otherwise, give them their own list-this helps you and keeps them (somewhat!) distracted.



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

How often do you buy things when waiting in line? This is 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

Now that we know the main types of food waste our households produce, it is time to start trying to figure out how to stop it. The aim of this meeting is to learn about the benefits of:

- 1. Planning meals and using a shopping list*
- 2. Checking the fridge, freezer and store cupboards before going shopping*
- 3. Smarter shopping and only buying what you really need*



## MEETING 2

### Introductions

Welcome back. Hope you had fun investigating your food waste! This meeting is about reducing food waste before you bring it home. To do this, we'll look at how you plan and how you shop. 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 do they equate to in Euros? What are easy ways to overcome the main wastes?

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

Creating a meal plan 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 the planning and shopping section of [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie)

#### Resources for you:

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

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 food 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?			

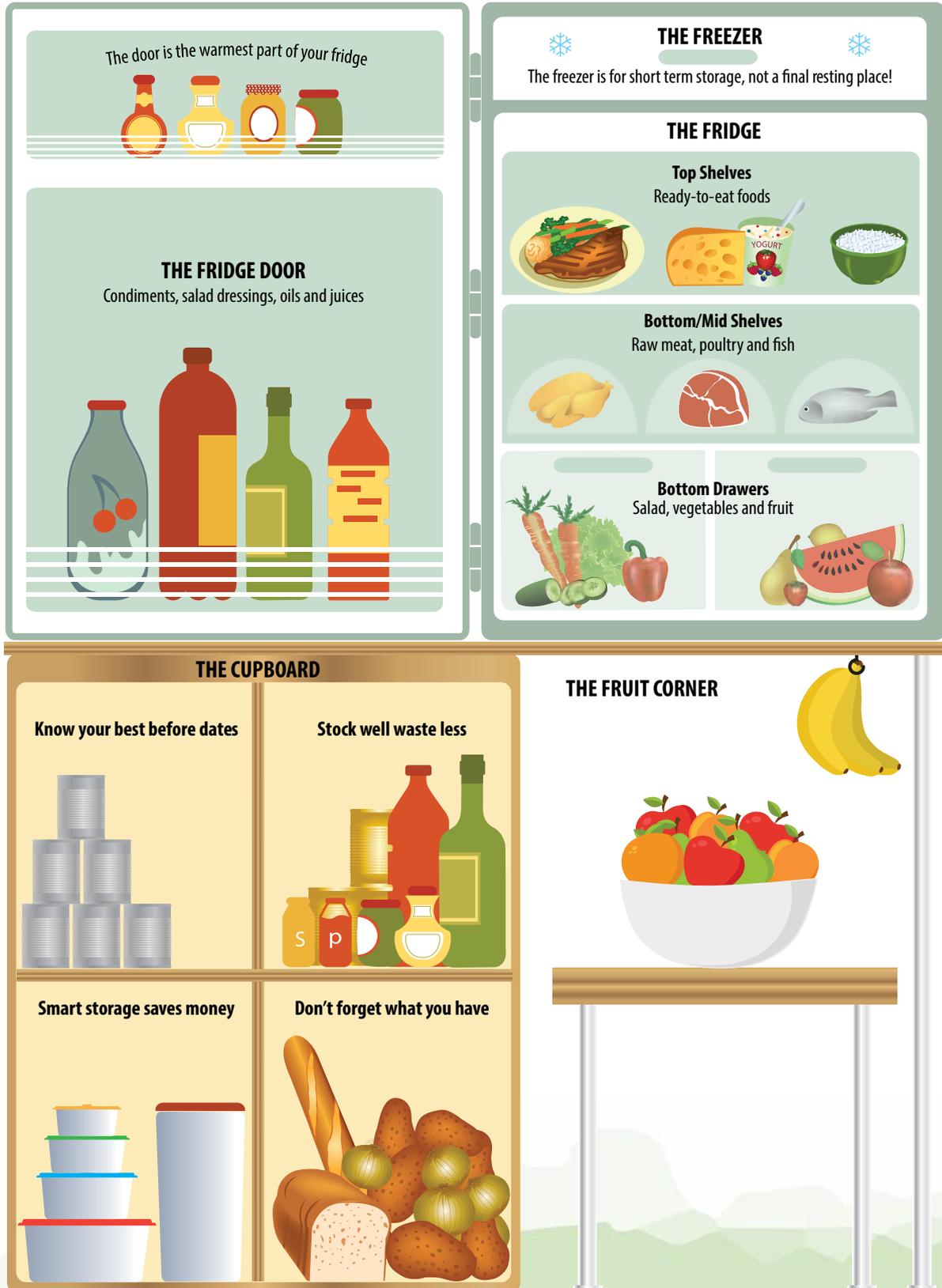
### Before you go...

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.



# Meeting 3

## Storage, Serving & Reuse

The aim of this meeting is to make sure we make the most of the food that we have bought. In this meeting we will look at:

- 1. The good, the bad and the ugly of storage*
- 2. Date labels and how to store food to make it last*
- 3. Proper portions and serving for reuse*



## 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 the 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 one third of the food we buy. So if you have three bags of groceries, one is likely to 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.



## 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 the storage and cooking section of [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie)

### Resources for you:

- Stay fresh bags, rice and spaghetti measures

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 clear-out 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			
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 essentials of successful composting are:

GREEN & BROWN MATERIALS



PARTICLE SIZE & SURFACE AREA



MOISTURE



# 5

## Essentials of Composting

AERATION



TYPE OF COMPOSTER



# Meeting 4

## Overview and a bit on home composting

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

- 1. Find out how you got on and if you reduced your food waste*
- 2. Get a brief introduction to home composting*



## 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 be discussed as well as how to get involved with the Master Composting programme or how to start community composting schemes in your area.





## Follow On Events

A number of Stop Food Waste Challenge groups have run follow on events to highlight the achievements of the group and to celebrate food. These events have proved successful at getting the food waste prevention message out into the wider community.

While the nature of any follow on event is completely up to the group, here are a number of examples of what others have done.

### **Preserving Workshop**

Preservation of food has been taking place since ancient times. By slowing down the rate that food spoils, preservation reduces food waste and allows locally produced food to be enjoyed year-round. This event will demonstrate canning, freezing, drying and vacuum sealing techniques for vegetables, herbs, fruits, meats and grains.

### **Food Rescue Event**

A food rescue event involves a community meal prepared using surplus food from local business that, otherwise, would have ended up being discarded. This type of event is a great way to bring people within the community together to enjoy themselves while also highlighting the issue of food waste.

### **Zero Food Waste Cookery Demo.**

As most of us are very busy, we often don't have time to try new things and end up with a small number of go-to meals that we cook regularly. This event will introduce people to a number of tasty, nutritious meals to cook at home while producing little or no food waste. By thinking about the food we like to cook and preparing food with similar or overlapping ingredients we can reduce the food we waste regularly.

Regardless of what type of event you would like to run, we would encourage you to invite other members of your community and help spread the Stop Food Waste message.



**STOP**FoodWaste.ie

We hope that you have found this Stop Food Waste 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)**