

AVOIDING FOOD WASTE



In Australia, the average household throws away \$3800 worth of food every year! That's a third of the average red-lid general waste bin.

IMPACTS OF DISPOSING ORGANIC WASTE IN LANDFILL

The process of burying unwanted waste in the ground, known as landfilling, is currently the only method of disposing of our general waste. Sending waste to landfill means that any potential resources and subsequent value is unable to be recovered, thereby wasting the precious resources involved in the production of the original items. Excessive waste generation reduces the life of landfills, necessitating the creation of new sites and minimising the land space available for economic, environmental or social purposes that benefit the local community.

Organic material, such as food and garden waste, has a detrimental impact on the environment when sent to landfill. When this waste is compacted and buried in landfill, it breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen) and produces large quantities of methane, a greenhouse gas 24 times more potent than carbon dioxide. By diverting food waste from landfill, we help avoid excessive methane production, conserve landfill space and save money.

HOW DOES MEAL PLANNING HELP?

Planning your meals saves your household time, money and stress.

- Check what is already in the fridge, freezer and pantry and investigate what needs to be used up first
- Consider ingredients that can be used in more than one meal (e.g. Mince in spaghetti bolognese one night, and tacos for another)
- Consider using a recipe or serving size calculator to measure how much food you will need to buy/cook. This prevents excessive leftovers, which could end up in the bin
- Aim to incorporate seasonal fruit and vegetables, as they stay fresher for longer and are cheaper
- Plan your meals for the week ahead, with the aim of using leftover ingredients as the basis for new meals
- Write a shopping list
- When it's time to shop, avoid going on an empty stomach!
- Don't forget your reusable shopping bags!

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STORING FOOD

Storing food correctly maintains freshness and preserves nutrients.

- In the fridge, keep vegetables crisp by wrapping them in paper towels to absorb moisture, or store in 'veggie saver' reusable containers that can keep produce fresh for well over a week!
- Freeze food in sealed containers or reusable zip-lock bags to avoid freezer burn
- Label containers with the date and description of contents, and store in single or family-sized portions, so you only defrost what you need
- For bulk meals like soups and stews, consider freezing the extra portions for an easy reheated meal another time
- If you are unlikely to finish fresh bread before it goes stale, pop it in the freezer for later
- Use airtight containers for pantry items like rice, flour, nuts, sugar and pasta



LOVE YOUR LEFTOVERS!

Leftovers can make a quick and delicious meal, and reduce both cooking time and your shopping bill.

- Store leftovers in an airtight container and place in fridge once cool
- If you don't expect to eat leftovers within 3 days, put them in the freezer for another time
- Make sure that your leftovers are piping hot before tucking in
- Chop up leftover fresh herbs and put these in ice trays, cover in oil and freeze – toss the frozen cubes into a hot saucepan or pot to add flavour to meals!
- Use over-ripe fruit and vegetables to make soups, smoothies, cakes or sweets (e.g. banana bread!)
- Ever wanted to try making jams, chutneys or pesto? Now is your chance!



VEGGIES THAT GO AND GO AGAIN!

Buy vegetables like shallots, lettuce, leeks and celery (to name a few) for the last time! Leafy greens like these can be easily re-grown from the cut-off base, saving you a packet over time!

1. Cut off the base, leaving about 1-2 inches
2. Place in water with half of the piece submerged (you can insert toothpicks to keep it balanced)
3. Place it somewhere it will get good natural light for a few hours a day (avoid the harsh afternoon summer sun!)
4. Change the water every couple of days
5. New growth will emerge in a few days
6. Plant once roots have grown to about an inch in length and leaves and/or stems have established



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO WITH MY FOOD SCRAPS?

To reduce the amount of food scraps and leftovers heading for the rubbish bin, why not start up a home compost or worm farm? See the 'Composting' and 'Worm Farming' factsheets for how to get started and useful tips!