



Wasted Food Source Reduction Strategies

Food Purchasing Policies

Create guidelines and goals to reduce spoilage and waste. Specific policies can include:

- Use a system to identify over-purchased food items and avoid excess wasted food;
- Purchase pre-cut food to reduce prep waste; and
- Implement a “just-in-time” purchasing system to only order what is needed when it is needed.

Use the Food and Packaging Waste Prevention Tool to help determine areas of over-purchasing and waste.

Storage Techniques

- Ensure that food products are stored under the proper conditions (for example, temperature); and
- Organize food products so that employees can easily:
 - Use older products first,
 - Find products when needed, and
 - Monitor inventory levels.

Food Reuse/Repurposing

As long as proper food safety and handling practices are followed, reusing leftover food can save money and reduce waste. Creatively repurpose leftovers and trimmings to efficiently use excess food for other meals. Flexibility in menu planning to accommodate the use of excess food from previous meals is key to success.



Vegetable Trimmings
Base for soups, sauces
and stocks

Training Staff

While individual managers can influence the amount of food wasted, the food service staff is ultimately responsible for day-to-day food storage, organization, preparation, and disposal. Continuous training and acknowledgement of staff is crucial to ensure proper training of all employees, especially if there is high turnover.

Employing multiple training strategies will increase the effectiveness (for example, in-person training as well as posted signs). Consider offering recognition or incentives to staff who help to significantly reduce waste or come up with new strategies to reduce waste.

Food service managers should educate their staff on basic steps to minimize food waste, including:

- Proper storage and organization practices to ensure food does not spoil before use;
- Cooking and preparation of food to reduce prep waste and food sent back to kitchen;
 - Refining knife skills to reduce improper preparation
 - Reducing batch sizes when reheating foods like soups or sauces to avoid leftovers
- Plating practices to reduce unnecessary food waste; and
- Waste tracking efforts.



Leftover Fruit
Smoothies or dessert topping



Day-old Bread
Croutons or breadcrumbs

Tray-less Systems

Case studies have shown that trays encourage customers to take more food than they can eat. Discourage customers from wasting food by going tray-less or by switching to smaller trays.

Menu Planning

Wasted food tracking systems can help identify which dishes customers frequently send back to the kitchen or leave uneaten. This information enables managers to modify the menu to both satisfy customers and generate less waste.

Table 2 contains a simplified example of one week of kitchen food waste tracking using the Food and Packaging Waste Prevention Tool.

Table 2: Menu Planning Example in Food and Packaging Waste Prevention Tool (pounds of wasted food)

Kitchen Food Waste	Prep Waste	Improperly Cooked	Stored Food Expired	Arrived Spoiled	Food Sent Back by Customer
Chicken	6	6	0	0	25
Pasta	4	5	0	0	2
Fruit and Vegetables	5	2	0	0	0
Dairy	4	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	19	13	0	0	27

Background: This example shows wasted food type with respect to why the food was discarded. This information would be automatically generated in the Summary Data portion of the tool after data entry.

Tracking Analysis: Dishes containing predominantly chicken products are frequently sent back to the kitchen by the customers.

Solution: This could indicate that menu items need to be modified or is not being properly prepared on a regular basis. Also, if staff tracks plate waste, managers can adjust portion sizes so that less food is left unfinished.

Plating: Serving Sizes and Garnishes

Even small garnishes and improper serving sizes quickly add up to a significant amount of food reaching landfills. Food service managers can reduce food waste by:

- Avoiding use of inedible or rarely eaten garnishes unless requested.
- For serviced food counters, using the “ask first” policy for sides and garnishes (for example, ask if a pickle or side salad is wanted with a sandwich).
- Reducing scoop or serving size to reduce wasted food while still satisfying a customer’s appetite.

Removing Trays Reduces Waste

A 2008 study of 25 college campuses found that removing trays at dining halls results in as much as 25 to 30 percent less wasted food.



(Source: Washington Post – February 17, 2011)

Guest Education

Simply encouraging guests to take only the food they can consume goes a long way in reducing wasted food. Food service managers can post informational signs at buffet-style food service venues that encourage customers to take only enough food to match their appetite.