

I. Food and drink

Food and drink is at the core of your business. So it's no surprise that making changes to the way you source, prepare, sell and dispose of it can make a huge difference to your business' carbon footprint.



Things you can do to make a difference

Ia. Designing menus

- Reduce your reliance on meat and dairy products in your dishes
- Use a diverse variety of plant based ingredients
- Celebrate plant-based dishes on your menu

Ic. Preparing and serving meals

- Regularly monitor what's going in your bin – understand where your food waste is coming from
- Identify and adopt strategies to reduce food waste
- Use technology to tackle food waste

Ib. Sourcing ingredients

- Buy ingredients that would otherwise go to waste
- Grow your own
- Use organic ingredients wherever possible
- Ensure your meat and dairy products are sustainably sourced

Id. Managing food waste

- Made too much? Don't throw away surplus dishes – redistribute instead
- Bought too much? Don't throw away surplus ingredients – redistribute instead
- Recycle and re-use food waste
- Compost your own food waste

Become one of London's Circular Food Pioneers

We know that creating a more circular food system offers real opportunities to cut damaging greenhouse gas emissions. In London, emissions caused by the production, transportation, consumption and disposal of food equal 15,483 kilotons CO2 equivalent each year.

Reducing food loss and making better use of food waste, as well as shifting towards healthier and more sustainable diets, could reduce these food-related consumption-based emissions by up to 31% a year.

That's where London's [Food Flagship Initiative](#) (FFI) comes in. Led by partners ReLondon, the Greater London Authority and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the FFI aims to accelerate the transition to a low carbon circular economy for food in London.

The FFI is supporting innovative and ambitious circular food projects that:

- ◆ Source food grown using agroecological practices and food grown locally
- ◆ Increase the prevalence of healthy and sustainable food items and menus
- ◆ Eliminate food waste wherever possible, and recycle any unavoidable food waste back into productive uses

It has launched a Circular Food Pioneer Project status to formally recognise good practice low carbon circular food activities in the city.

Circular Food Pioneer Projects are promoted through the FFI partners' networks, can use a special certification stamp, and receive strategic support and targeted introductions to potential partners where needed.

View some of our current [Circular Food Pioneers](#) and learn more about their inspiring work to reduce food emissions in London.



Circular Food Pioneer Project certification stamp



Are you working to make your London food business more circular? Do you have a new, collaborative and potentially transformative circular food project underway or in planning? If so we want to hear from you! **Apply today and tell us about your project** to be recognised as one of London's official Circular Food Pioneer Projects.



Ia. Designing menus

One very effective way of making your food business more circular and reducing your carbon footprint is to make some simple changes to your menu.

Reduce meat and dairy products.

Meat and dairy products have a much larger carbon footprint per calorie than either grain or vegetable products.

Globally 83% of farmland is used to produce meat and dairy products, but these products only provide 37% of the protein we consume and just 18% of the calories. Meanwhile, meat and dairy farming is responsible for 60% of the greenhouse gas emissions from the entire agriculture sector.⁴

So by reducing the amount of meat and dairy products you use in your dishes, you can make a difference and make our food supplies more environmentally sustainable.

Use a wider range of plant-based ingredients.

As a species, us humans are not particularly adventurous when it comes to what we will and won't eat.

Did you know, there are 30,000 edible plant

species on the planet but we only eat 150 of them? In fact, we rely on just three types of crop (wheat, rice and maize) for more than 50% of our plant-derived protein.⁵

This reliance on such a limited plate of ingredients is contributing to a loss of biodiversity (over 60% in the last 40 years), increased vulnerability to diseases and pests and a greater reliance on chemicals to help grow our food.⁶

So try branching out. Use new and interesting plant-based ingredients in your dishes and celebrate all the delicious natural produce our planet has to offer.

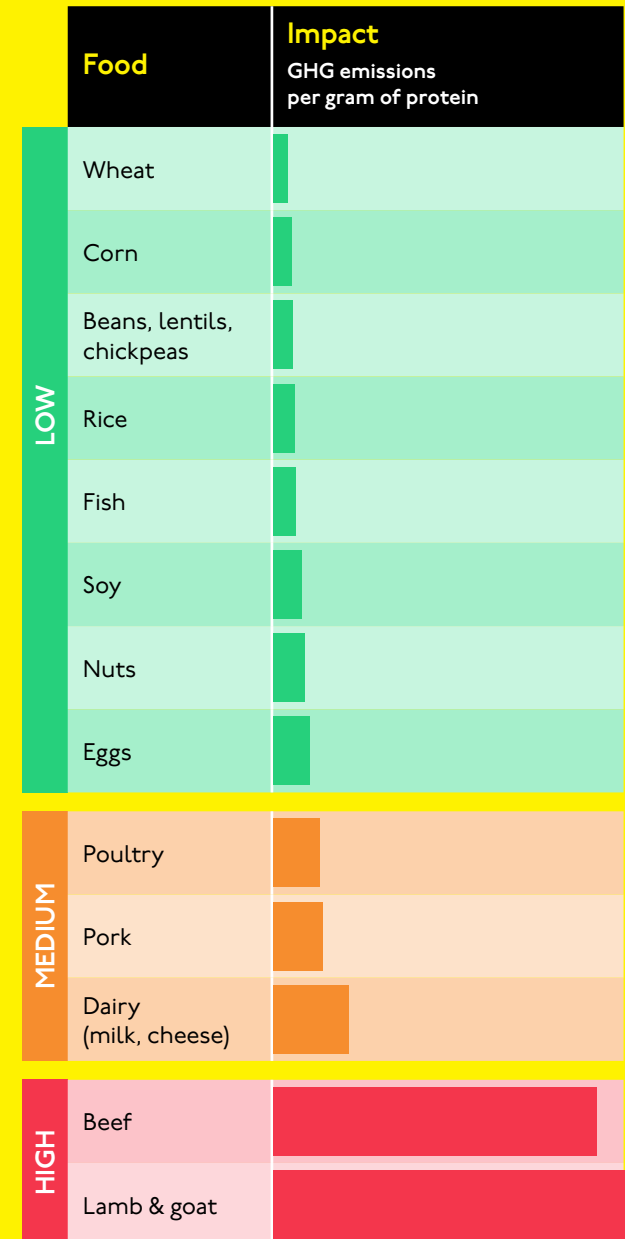
Are your customers ready?

You may be concerned that your customers aren't ready to swap meat and dairy-based dishes for new and interesting plant-based ones. Well, if that's the case, you might well be pleasantly surprised.

A recent poll of 2,000 adults conducted by Waitrose found that over a third are cutting down or cutting out meat from their diets; 21% were flexitarian; 9.5% were vegetarian and 3% were vegan.

Animal welfare, health, and environmental concerns were the top three reasons given for cutting down on meat consumption.

Protein scorecard



Source: WRI data 2016

4. Poore, J. and Nemecek, T. (2018). Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers.

5. Biodiversity International. Mainstreaming agrobiodiversity in sustainable food systems (2017).

6. WWF (Grooten, M., Almond, R.E.A.). Living planet report – 2018: aiming higher (2018)



Celebrate plant-based dishes

You already know that the way you describe dishes on your menu can have a big impact on how likely your customers are to order them. But without realising it, lots of menus celebrate meat-based dishes at the expense of plant-based ones.

Phrases like '28-day matured', 'flame-grilled' and 'barbecue-basted' make the meat-based dishes sound irresistible. Meanwhile, plant-based dishes are often presented as the alternative if, for some reason you are not able or do not want to choose the meat-based ones.

Try changing the language you use to describe your meat-free and plant-based dishes and see what happens.

- ♦ Don't use words like: 'meat-free', 'vegan', 'vegetarian'
- ♦ Do describe the provenance, flavour, look and feel of your ingredients to make your plant-based dishes sound as tempting as your meat-based ones.

Want to learn more about how you can actually measure the greenhouse gas emission reductions you could achieve by making changes to your menu? The World Resources Institute's (WRI) [Cool Food initiative](#) is designed to help larger food business do just that. SMEs can get similar support through the Sustainable Restaurant Association's [Food Print Programme](#). Meanwhile, the WRI has also published a ['playbook'](#) on how to guide diners toward plant-rich dishes.



Take-away

In 2018, one of east London's oldest pubs, **The Spread Eagle**, went vegan. All food, drinks, fixtures and fittings are now plant-based and sourced sustainably wherever possible. One thing that didn't change was this historic pub's focus on offering premium liquor, the finest food and only the best vibes. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?



Case Study

Embracing the creative challenge of plant-based cooking



LOCATED IN THE HEART OF LONDON'S COVENT GARDEN TREDWELLS, FROM WELL-KNOWN CHEF MARCUS WAREING, IS A RELAXED CONTEMPORARY DINING RESTAURANT THAT SERVES 3,000 MEALS PER YEAR.

Sustainability is at the heart of Tredwells' business, with an emphasis on locally sourced produce, plant-based eating and sustainable methods of production.

Chef Patron, Chantelle Nicholson, explains: "Our menu champions seasonal British produce; plants and animals alike. We choose to focus on biodiverse ingredients, such as pulses and grains, and less popular cuts of meat that farmers and butchers find harder to sell."

Plant-based dishes are becoming increasingly important at Tredwells. "We want to show they can be

as delicious as their carnivorous counterparts," says Chantelle. "We recently introduced a five-course plant-based tasting menu as part of a monthly supper club we run. It kept selling out! So we decided to add it to the menu on a permanent basis. Now every menu has at least one plant-based option – we even offer a plant-based Sunday roast!

"It's been good for business, attracting new customers who specifically book to try the tasting menu. As a chef, I've also enjoyed the challenge of creating plant-based dishes that hold their own on the menu – and seeing the reaction of guests who can't believe what they're eating is plant-based is really satisfying.

"As a restaurant, we rely wholly on the supply of food. Given food has one of the biggest impacts on climate change, we feel we have a responsibility to work out how

we can minimise our impact. Our commitment is solid, and whilst each day brings new challenges, we are excited to keep innovating and creating, contributing to a sustainable and delicious future."

At Tredwells, a typical plant-based meal is 18 times less carbon intensive than the meat alternative. If all Tredwells customers were to choose a plant-based meal, the greenhouse gas saving would be the equivalent of 171 return trips from London to New York!



Ib. Sourcing ingredients

Two dishes can contain exactly the same ingredients, and have been prepared in precisely the same way, but one can have a much higher carbon footprint than the other. It all comes down to where those ingredients were sourced from and how they have been grown and produced.

Use food surplus that would otherwise go to waste

In the UK alone, 3.6 million tonnes of food is wasted every year before it even leaves the farm (7.2% of all food harvested) and a further 1.85 million tonnes is wasted at the processing stage⁷.

If this wasted and surplus food had been sold at market values, it would have fetched a staggering £1.8 billion. The vast majority of this food is perfectly edible. It's thrown away either for cosmetic reasons (it looks 'odd') or overproduction (there's too much of it).

It doesn't make sense, does it? You could have used those ingredients to prepare delicious dishes. Well, there's something you can do

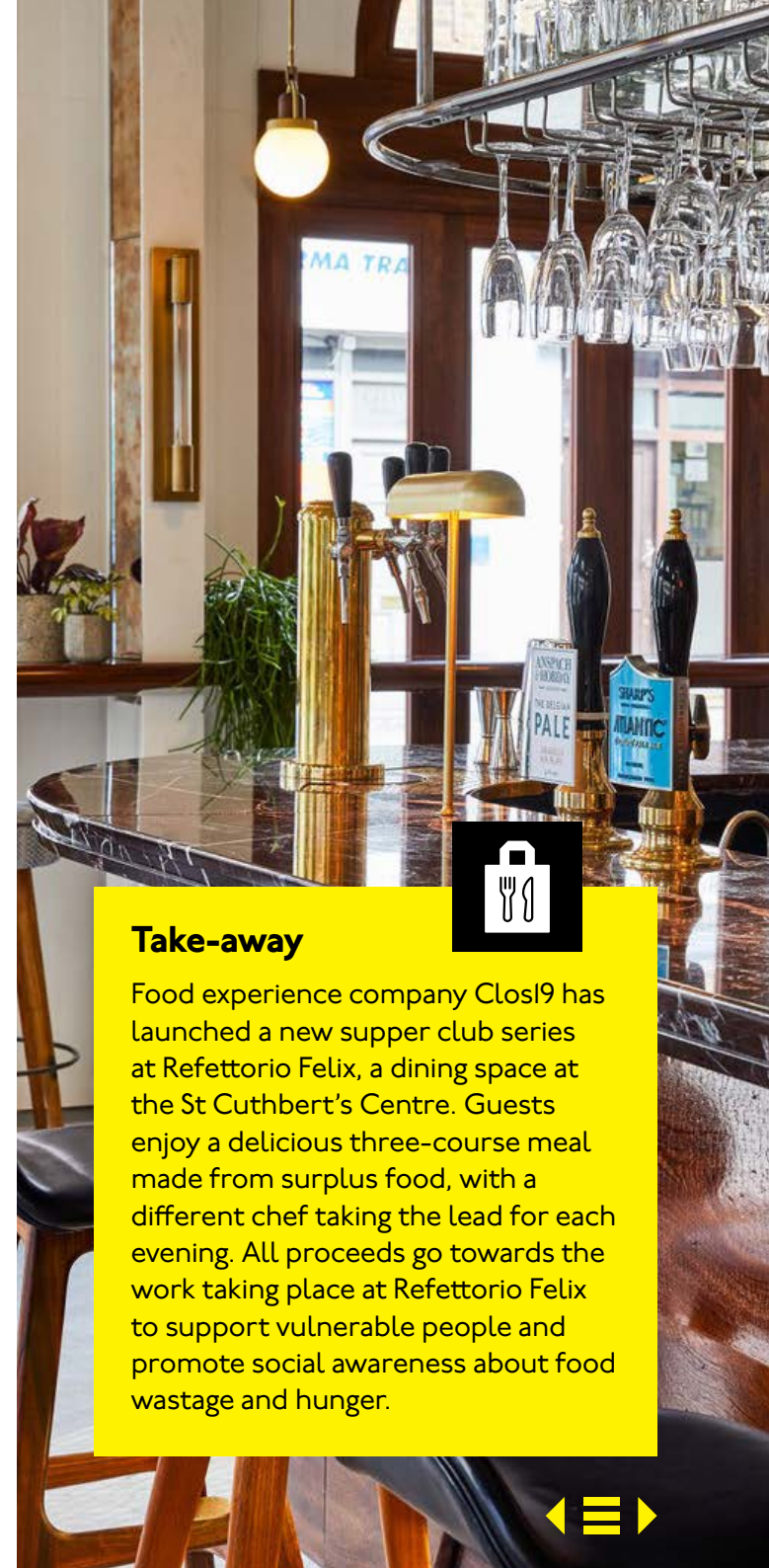
about it. Ask your produce suppliers if they have a second selection scheme or if they have any edible by-products that typically go to waste. These may even be added to your order for free! Even the beer you serve can make a difference. Toast Ale for example, is a delicious craft beer brewed with surplus fresh bread that would otherwise be wasted.

#feastfairly is a new initiative that offers farmers a marketplace for their under-utilised and under-valued fresh produce that would otherwise go to waste: unsold fish, broken asparagus stems, odd-shaped carrots, eggs that are deemed too small for the supermarkets.

A growing list of more than 50 restaurants across London are now serving #feastfairly dishes on their menus, and donating £1 from each dish sold to Refettorio Felix, a not-for-profit organisation that works to ensure Londoners on low incomes don't go hungry. What's not to like? Find out more at: [instagram.com/feastfairly](https://www.instagram.com/feastfairly).

"We need to eliminate the word 'waste' from our dictionary: it gives the impression of worthless ingredients, but our point here is that these ingredients have this incredible value that we are not taking advantage of."

#feastfairly co-founder and CEO of Foodchain, **Richard Murray**



Take-away

Food experience company Clos19 has launched a new supper club series at Refettorio Felix, a dining space at the St Cuthbert's Centre. Guests enjoy a delicious three-course meal made from surplus food, with a different chef taking the lead for each evening. All proceeds go towards the work taking place at Refettorio Felix to support vulnerable people and promote social awareness about food wastage and hunger.

Source local or grow your own

When sourcing ingredients, many food businesses cast their net far and wide. But why not try and get what you need closer to home? It makes good sense on a sort of levels: your ingredients will have travelled less distance to reach your kitchen, which is good for the environment, and means they should be in tip-top condition. Shortening your supply chain and going direct to local farmers and producers also supports your local economy, which ultimately will benefit all local businesses, including yours. There are many food business who have made locally sourced produce a core part of their offering – see the En_Food Cafe case study on this page.

Sourcing produce from local suppliers is great, but even better is to grow your own! This approach eliminates transport all together, gives your chefs access to a supply of ultra-fresh produce and can enhance the dining experience for your customers.

There are several ways to grow your own produce. What's possible for you will depend on your building and the space available.

It could be as simple as growing herbs in pots. Basil, chives, oregano, parsley and rosemary are easy to grow indoors and can be used to brighten up your dining space.

Case Study

Embracing the creative challenge of plant-based cooking



THE EN_FOOD CAFE IS A CIVIC CENTRE RESTAURANT, SERVING ENFIELD COUNCIL STAFF AND THE PUBLIC WITH DISHES THAT ARE SEASONAL, AFFORDABLE AND THAT SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

Salads feature organic fruit and vegetables with traditional, hand-made cheeses. Coffee is ethically-sourced and fair-trade. Milk is locally produced and hand delivered in re-usable glass milk bottles. Sustainability is a theme that runs through the appetising menu.

Ben Murphy, Head Chef, explains: "The restaurant is a hub of the community serving food that's seasonal, affordable, nutritious, delicious and which showcases local suppliers and their produce."

If space is scarce but you have lofty ambitions, why not try a vertical garden? Off-the-shelf options are available to suit all budgets, from high-tech, high productivity hydroponic systems (like Evogro's Plant Growing System) to lower-tech but cheaper options (like Garden Tower). There are companies out there (like Rootlabs and Aponic) that can create stunning bespoke vertical gardens suited to almost any environment.

Rooftops are ideal places to grow vegetables, herbs and even fruit trees. They are also great for the urban environment as they improve air quality and provide a haven for wildlife. Just make sure you find out how much weight your rooftop can support and plan accordingly.

Last but not least, you could consider a greenhouse garden. Mini greenhouses are great for growing certain vegetables, salad greens and micro-herbs in small spaces. Lean-to greenhouses are especially good for an organic garden and can be placed right outside your kitchen. Be sure to opt for good old-fashioned glass greenhouses instead of plastic and polycarbonate ones.

Case Study

Grow your own

THE ROOFTOP OF THE CULPEPER PUB AND RESTAURANT IS AN OASIS IN THE HEART OF EAST LONDON.

It is here, in a stunning rooftop garden, that a wide variety of produce is grown, for use in their wonderful dishes. What's more, the plants and crops are fertilised using compost made from their own food waste.

Any fruit and vegetables that can't be grown on the roof are bought seasonally, with the menus adapting to what's available and at its freshest. They only buy British-sourced fish and seafood and all meat is free-range. Their 'nose to tail' policy ensures every part of the animal is used and waste is minimised.

Sandy Jarvis (Operations Director), said: "At the Culpeper we try our best to reduce all waste. We really celebrate the vegetables we grow, encouraging our customers to try them. Recently we've been focusing on preserving; we even renamed the rooftop garden 'Piculpeper'! We want to see if we could preserve enough of our home-grown cucumbers to make it through the winter before the garden starts producing again."



Support regenerative farming

Conventional, intensive methods of growing food, involving the use of mineral synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, has the potential to cause great damage to our environment.

It reduces soil fertility (39 million hectares of soil are degraded each year globally – an area the size of Zimbabwe⁸), releases toxic chemicals into the air and waterways, emits nitrous oxide (a greenhouse gas 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide) and places demand on approximately 70% of global freshwater⁹.

Thankfully, there is a solution. Agroecology and regenerative farming principles are becoming more and more important in shaping our food future. They have the potential to:

- ◆ Improve soil health – through minimising disturbances
- ◆ Protect biodiversity – by farming with nature firmly in mind
- ◆ Ensure a closed loop approach to the entire farming system.

There are numerous certification and assurance schemes that can help you identify and support producers who follow regenerative farming principles. These include Organic, LEAF Marque, Pasture for Life and Biodynamic.

Source sustainable meat and dairy products

In the previous section, we explained why it's important that food businesses start offering more plant-based dishes on their menus. But we're not suggesting that every food business in London goes vegan.

Whenever you do buy meat, dairy or egg-based products, make sure you choose carefully. There are many fantastic farmers out there who are working hard to cut their emissions, restore their soils and protect their local ecosystems. By making a conscious decision to source your ingredients from them, you are making an important step in the right direction.

Throughout history, the balanced breeding of animals has played a fundamental role in maintaining soil fertility and ecosystem health. Farming of livestock helps reduce food waste: natural fodder or by-products that are inedible to humans, can be eaten by animals. These non-food resources are transformed into useful and valuable protein in the form of meat, milk, eggs, and even blood.

The animal manure produced can then be applied as a prime source of nutrients for the cultivation of new grains and vegetables.

So choose your suppliers carefully, make sure you're supporting sustainable farmers and you can continue to offer meat and dairy-based dishes on your menu whilst also lowering your carbon footprint.



Take-away

Elysia is an event catering company with a focus on sustainability. They specialise in making canapés from artisan surplus ingredients. They have reduced their food waste by 11 tonnes per year since 2017 by finding suppliers who provide them with their 'naturally imperfect' surplus food such as organic granola, bread or cheese. Elysia has published a guide to becoming a sustainable catering business which is available to download [from their website](#).



8. CEMF Cities and Circular Economy for Food analysis

9. AQUASTAT – FAO's global water information system, 2014



Ic. Preparing and serving meals

The ingredients that make it to your kitchen have already had to run the gauntlet.

In the previous section, we highlighted the fact that millions of tonnes of food are thrown away before they even leave the farm. Your ingredients have had a difficult journey getting to your kitchen. Now they've arrived, they deserve to be treated with love and care.

Unfortunately, far too many food businesses in London do not take good enough care of their ingredients and are responsible for further avoidable food waste.

It is estimated that each small food business throws £10,000 worth of food in the bin each year¹⁰. For restaurants the cost of avoidable food waste on every plate averages 14p.

Food waste is a really serious problem – 1.1 million tonnes of food is wasted at outlets each year, of which a staggering 75% is avoidable and could have been eaten¹¹.

Any food waste that ends up in landfill lets off a powerful greenhouse gas (methane) as it decomposes, which in turn makes a significant contribution to climate change. In fact, if food waste was a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world!



Keep an eye on your bin

Understanding where your food waste is coming from is a vital first step to reducing it in the future.

Food waste in food businesses tends to come from one of four sources:

- ◆ **Food preparation** – peelings and trimmings
- ◆ **Spoilage** – food that has gone off
- ◆ **Customer plates** – leftovers
- ◆ **Over-production** – buffets and platters

Estimate how much of the food waste your business produces falls into each of these four categories. Then see if you're right: use four separate bins (one each for preparation, spoilage, customer plates and over-production) for one typical week. Weigh each bin every day – this will help you understand where your food waste is coming from. You are then in a much better position to do something about it.

10. WRAP, The True Cost of Food Waste within Hospitality and Food Service, 2013

11. WRAP, 2018 – tiny.cc/jy37pz



Strategies to reduce food waste

There are lots of things you can do to reduce food waste within your business. Six ideas are shown in the table to the right – the results of your bin monitoring will help you decide which ones are likely to be most effective.

Want to know more?

The charity WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Plan) has lots of ideas and tips on ways to reduce food waste. Their **'Guardians of Grub'** campaign is aimed specifically at food businesses like yours. It shows how everyone in your business – from the boss, to the chef, to the waiter – has a role to play in reducing food waste. It issues a rallying call to all food businesses to come together and rise up against food waste.

There's an excellent short introduction video on the campaign website (Guardiansofgrub.com), where you will also find a toolkit of practical 'operational resources' to help you track, reduce and learn about food waste.

These include:

- **7 day tracking sheet** – helps you monitor and measure food thrown away over a 7 day period
- **Food tracking calculator** – automatically calculates how much your food waste is costing you and shows what savings your business could make
- **Summary checklist** – a handy way to tick off your progress on the necessary actions to prevent food from being thrown away.

Strategies for tackling food waste

Tackles food waste from the following sources:

Action	Food preparation	Spoilage	Customer plates	Over-production
Zero waste recipes	✓			
Food procurement and menu planning	✓	✓		
Food portion optimisation			✓	✓
Provide 'doggy bags' to all customers			✓	✓
Redistribute				✓
Staff training	✓	✓	✓	



If you need that extra help to get you started on your food waste reduction journey, the Sustainable Restaurant Association runs a 4-6 week programme called [Food Waste Bad Taste](#). This delivers practical, hands on approach to food waste and gives you a personal action plan to build confidence within your business.

Case Study

Recipes that tackle food waste

EXECUTIVE CHEFS AT VACHERIN – ONE OF LONDON'S LEADING INDEPENDENT CATERING COMPANIES – HAVE GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND TO CREATE A WIDE RANGE OF RECIPES THAT TACKLE AVOIDABLE FOOD WASTE.

For example, leftover pulp from their popular made-to-order juices is now used in baked goods and veggie burgers. Genius!

They love 'wonky' fruit, using over 9,000kg of the stuff in their dishes each year. And they're working with partners like Olio and Food Donation Connection to redistribute any surplus. They've done an excellent job of telling existing and prospective customers about all the food waste reduction initiatives in place – including a dedicated 'Vacherin Cares' section on their website.



Zero waste recipe books

- Bread is Gold, *Massimo Bottura*
- The Whole Fish Cookbook: New ways to cook, eat and think, *Josh Niland*
- Scraps, Wilt & Weeds: Turning Wasted Food into Plenty, *Mads Refslund*
- The Zero Waste Cookbook: 100 Recipes for Cooking Without Waste, *Amelia Wasiliev and Giovanna Torrico*
- 30 Easy Ways to Join the Food Revolution: A sustainable cookbook, *Ollie Hunter*
- The Natural Cook: Eating the Seasons from Root to Fruit, *Tom Hunt*
- Love Food Hate Waste Recipes
- The Whole Beast: Nose to Tail, *Fergus Henderson*
- Eat Green, *Melissa Hemsley*
- Jellied Eel's sustainable and zero waste recipes



Using technology to tackle food waste

Whilst regular audit processes are quick and easy for smaller sites, technology is a good solution to keep on top of your waste for larger sites, with multiple kitchens.

For example, Winnow uses digital scales and artificial intelligence to help chefs run more profitable, sustainable kitchens by cutting food waste.

Kitchens using Winnow are able to cut food waste by a reported 40-70% and reduce costs by 3%-8%, improving margins whilst helping the environment.

More details at winnowsolutions.com



Case Study

Monitoring food waste

HOW DOES SAVING £2,324 PER YEAR SOUND? HOW ABOUT CUTTING FOOD WASTE BY 1.8 TONNES AND ASSOCIATED PACKAGING BY 3 TONNES?

Well, that's what the **Roebuck Pub in Southwark** was able to achieve. And it all started with them looking carefully at what was ending up in their bins.

Staff at the pub took part in the Food Save initiative and monitored what they were throwing away over a four-week period. The Roebuck's chef, Jareth Mills, was already a 'food waste warrior' in the kitchen – he was proud to have 'never peeled a potato' and had even found a use for cheese rind (battered and deep fried, it makes a perfect bar snack!). So it was no great surprise when the bin monitoring revealed that 80% of food waste was coming from customer plates.

Staff set about putting that right, evaluating portion sizes and reviewing key sources of left-overs. Reducing food waste became everyone's responsibility – not just Jareth's!

As a result, food waste from customer plates reduced by 16%. This has been good news all round, as the Roebuck Management Team confirm: "We also have happier customers. By offering more thoughtful portion sizes we are not only reducing our waste, but allowing healthier options for our customers along with more choice."



Id. Managing food waste

Reducing food waste should be your aim, not eliminating it completely; that's an unrealistic goal for the vast majority of food businesses.

Some food waste is inevitable. But there are still things you can do to minimise the impact unavoidable food waste has on the environment and your business' bottom line.

Redistribute surplus

Made too much of something? The best thing to do with surplus food is to redistribute it. . Redistributing that food will:

- ♦ Save you money through reduced waste disposal costs
- ♦ Encourage new customers to try your products
- ♦ Help the environment
- ♦ Mean that you're supporting vulnerable people in your local community

Many solutions are springing up all over the place that help food businesses redistribute surplus food that would otherwise have gone to waste. 'City Harvest', 'Plan Zheroes', 'Felix Project', 'FareShare', 'Olio' and 'Too Good to Go' are just some examples. These food redistribution organisations can put you in touch with local people who hate food waste as much as you do.

Liability – should you be worried?

We often hear from food businesses who say they like the idea of redistributing surplus food via apps and other methods, but are worried about being liable for any health implications to the people that consume it.

You don't need to worry. Follow these rules and you'll be fine:

- ♦ Make sure you don't redistribute any food that's past its 'Use By' date (it's fine to redistribute food – including fruit and vegetables – that is past its 'Best Before' date)
- ♦ Choose a reputable and recognised food redistribution partner to work with – they should take on any liability for the quality and safety of the redistributed food, but make sure you've got a formal agreement in place with them that makes that clear. For more information, download and read [WRAP's Framework for Effective Redistribution Partnerships guide](#)
- ♦ Keep a record of the redistributed food
- ♦ Educate and engage with your customers and staff



Take-away

Via its [Food Waste Heroes Programme](#) – where volunteers collect and redistribute unsold food from local businesses via the app – Olio has had over 2 million portions of food shared. This has saved over 300 million litres of water, and has had an environmental impact that is equivalent to taking 6 million car miles off the road. Businesses Olio is working with include Pret a Manger, Selfridges, Planet Organic, Compass and Virgin Trains.

Recycle and re-use – seeing food waste as a valuable resource

One person's trash is another person's treasure. That is certainly the case with food waste. Many food businesses are starting to recognise that their food waste is a valuable resource that can be re-used.

For example, the company Bio-Bean has partnered with waste management companies to collect coffee grounds from cafés and restaurants. Each year, their factory in Cambridgeshire re-processes 50,000 tonnes of this waste into low-carbon 'coffee logs' for use in domestic wood-burners.



Take away

Over 1,000 litres of waste cooking oil is being collected every month from 18 stallholders at Mercato Metropolitano, London's first sustainable community food market. Collections are made by Proper Oils who recycle and refine the waste oil into biodiesel. This initiative alone is cutting the food market's carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 12 tonnes per year.

Capture fats, oils and greases

What better way to embed circularity than capturing all the fats, oils and greases (FOGs) used in your kitchen to be re-processed into something else.

FOGs generate major issues within sewer management; £80m is spent each year in the UK on clearing blockages and 70% of these are down to FOGs. A high proportion of this comes from what food businesses throw down their sinks, toilets and drains. When you consider that FOGs can be captured and turned into a valuable bio-fuel, it is literally throwing money down the drain.

Want to learn more about how you can capture your FOGs? Check out the Sustainable Restaurant Association and Kingspan's [FOG toolkit](#), [Grease is the Word](#).

Composting and anaerobic digestion

If you were to empty out the rubbish bin of an average UK food business, you would find that 40% of that rubbish is food waste. After it's been collected, all of this food waste will either be buried in a landfill site or burned in an incinerator. All those nutrients going up in smoke – what a waste!

More and more food businesses are now keeping their food waste separate from other waste streams. If it's stored and collected separately, food waste can be taken to an anaerobic digestion plant, where it is turned into high quality soil conditioner that farmers can use to help grow their crops. Gases released during the digestion process are captured and turned into green electricity.

The environmental benefits are significant – an average food business can cut its CO₂e by 2.26 tonnes per year. And it's possible to save money. Yes, you may need to pay for an extra collection, but recycling food waste is much cheaper (by weight) than throwing it away. So you may be surprised how cost-effective separate food waste collections can be.



Take away

“As soon as I started separating food waste for recycling I was saving an average of £100 per month.”

**Charlie Searl, Head Chef,
Red Lion Hotel**

“As soon as chefs started to separate out the food waste, they were physically more able to see what was being thrown away and this made them instantly less wasteful which helps to improve gross profit margins”

**Shaun Alpine-Crabtree,
Proprietor, The Table Cafe**

Source: WRAP, [Why recycle food? SME food waste recycling guidance](#).



I. Food and drink

WRAP has developed a tool to help food businesses assess the environmental and economic impact of recycling food waste. The [Business Waste Performance and Cost Calculator Tool](#) takes less than 15 minutes to work through and could save you thousands of pounds.

Once you've convinced yourself that separate food waste collections make good environmental and business sense, the next step is to get in touch with your waste management supplier. Ask them how much food waste collection will cost. Compare the price they give with other waste management companies – your local authority may be able to provide advice on operators that work in your area.

Getting the collection set up will be quick and easy. Your waste management company will provide you with all the bins you need. Then it's just a case of reminding your staff to start using them through regular staff training, clear and interactive bin signs. Before long, it will be second nature to them.

Case Study

Reducing costs by 44%

PETERSHAM NURSERIES GOES TO GREAT LENGTHS AT ITS CAFÉS AND RESTAURANTS IN RICHMOND AND COVENT GARDEN TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE.

Coffee waste is separated and sent to Bio-Bean, where it is turned into 'coffee logs' which are sold in the Petersham Nurseries Shop. Preserving

workshops have been introduced for the kitchen team and new recipes have been created and uses found for previously binned items. Leftover oil from customers' plates is even used to polish the tables!

Any food waste that is produced is managed as sustainably as possible. All

food preparation waste is composted on-site in anaerobic digesters and used in the nursery.

Working with consultants Petersham Nurseries has reduced waste costs from over £45,000 per annum to around £20,000 representing a saving of over 44%, or £2,000 per month.

