



♪ Happy Christmas (food waste ‘is over?!’) ♪

With Christmas fast approaching, most of us are loosening our belts, clearing space in our fridge, shopping like we’ve got our own supermarkets to stock, and eating like it’s our last opportunity to ever enjoy food again. But all this excess translates to wasting food, money and damaging the environment. Here, the Winning Moves team share their top tips to reducing food waste, without reducing festive fun.

Christmas is a time for loving and giving, comfort and joy, celebration and rejoice, but it has also long since been associated with overindulgence and excess. And that’s ok, isn’t it? I mean, when else is it acceptable to eat a box of Quality Streets before breakfast (full English?), finish off the sherry mid-morning (well, you need to make sure it’s suitable for the gravy), enjoy a ‘can anything else squeeze on my plate’ roast turkey dinner, and still fit in a bit of ‘light’ supper (those turkey sandwiches won’t eat themselves) before bed time. Apparently, the average person who celebrates Christmas day consumes over 5,000 calories (Wren Kitchens) – between 2-3 times our daily recommended allowance.





RESEARCH (BY UNILEVER) ESTIMATES THAT – EVERY YEAR – **FOUR MILLION** CHRISTMAS DINNERS ARE WASTED – THE EQUIVALENT TO:



TWO MILLION TURKEYS



FIVE MILLION XMAS PUDDINGS



74 MILLION MINCE PIES

This translates to throwing away **£64million** of Christmas food each year

And overeating once a year is fine? We can take the stairs instead of the lift in an effort for our swollen bellies to forgive our indulgence. And whilst no longer being able to do up our top button is quite obvious, what is not quite so immediately apparent is the enormous amount of waste – and food waste in particular – that is generated at this time of year. Hand in hand with the over eating comes the over buying and over cooking. Research (by Unilever) estimates that – every year – **four million** Christmas dinners are wasted – the equivalent to **two million** turkeys, **74 million** mince pies and **five million** Christmas puddings. Collectively enough food to fill the Great Pyramid of Giza. And food wasted is money wasted. This translates to throwing away **£64million** of Christmas food each year. This festive food waste impacts on time, effort and money put in to growing, manufacturing, transporting and cooking food, the environment (food and drink accounts for 20% of the UKs CO2 emissions), and our pockets. This is one festive ‘tradition’ that needs attention.

At Winning Moves, our research and evaluation supports organisations such as WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) and Zero Waste Scotland to help others to reduce the amount of waste they produce and to use resources more efficiently. Many of our staff have led projects exploring food waste, and whether and how opportunities to reduce food waste are working. So, who better to ask for their helpful hints and tips to cutting food waste this Christmas? On the next page you will find our top five – but we’d love to hear from you too if you have others to share.



1. Proper planning – “*I love a list*” says Debs, our Director of Operations. And that’s her top tip – to work out what you are going to need ahead of hitting the supermarket, make a list (checking it twice!), and then stick to it – this helps to make sure that food is bought, stored and cooked at the right time. “*My default is to cater for the five thousand*” Debs continues “*so my list helps me to keep focused, stop me overbuying, and to not be seduced by deals and promotions that beckon to me!*”

2. Lavish leftovers – Doros, our Analyst, revealed that he can be creative with the crumbs that don’t get eaten. “*Rather than throwing food away*” he says, “*just a little bit of imagination can turn my leftovers in to my next meal*”. Turkey sandwiches are the obvious choice, but turkey also makes a great centre piece of stews, pies and curries. Others in the team at Winning Moves, love turning bones in to stock, repurposing left over spuds and veg into bubble and squeak, and making a super cheesy macaroni cheese with any cheeseboard surpluses.

3. Fabulous freezing – our freezers really come in to their own at Christmas and can work really hard to help prevent food waste. Michelle, our Director of Research and Evaluation advocates “*freezing food as soon as you buy it helps to add weeks to use by dates. I also parboil and freeze my potatoes ahead of roasting to reduce stress on the day itself*”. In fact, lots of food can be prepared ahead and frozen such as stuffing, cabbage, parsnips and even gravy. Michelle also says “*freezing leftovers is also a great way to reduce food waste. From turkey to Christmas cake. In fact, I’m clearing space in my freezer ready for Christmas leftovers now!*”

4. Recycle food waste – even with all the careful planning, freezing and creative leftover-ing, John, one of our Senior Consultants, concedes that there might be waste. “*Unwanted food waste can be recycled into renewable energy and sustainable bio-fertiliser via anaerobic digestion. So, when surplus food cannot be reused, I make sure that I use a food caddy to avoid it being sent to landfill*”.

5. ‘Don’t panic’ – wise words from Senior Consultant Alicia. “*Remember that you are cooking for friends and family, not a restaurant full of professional chefs – I remind myself not to overcompensate or over cater*”. Also, be mindful that most shops only close for a day or two at most over the Christmas period – so, as Alicia says: “*if I need to top up, I easily can. But I’d rather that than over buying and ending up wasting good food and good money*”.



So, for now, we wish you all a Merry Christmas, and hope that you, like us, will be trying to reduce food waste, save money, and improve your carbon footprint this Season – because, as shown with our top tips, being mindful doesn’t mean you need to compromise on festive fullness. We look forward to welcoming in the New Year and seeing how efforts to reduce food waste develop in 2020.



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