



AWARENESS

WASTE LESS FOOD AND WATER – HERE IS HOW

The International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste on 19 September aims to raise awareness of the global waste of food and water and find means to prevent it for sustainability.

According to the US Department of Agriculture, one-third of all food produced for human consumption is wasted, which amounts to around 1.3 tonnes per year (approximately 1300kg).

Reducing this wastefulness is necessary “...in a world where the number of people affected by hunger has been slowly on the rise since 2014,” says the United Nations (UN).

The unnecessary waste of food and water also impacts our environment and food systems. For example, all resources used to produce our food (such as water, energy, and land) are wasted too.

Moreover, the UN further warns that wasted foods that end up in landfills add to the increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change. It recommends all sectors and individuals find ways to minimise waste and enhance our food systems.

How to reduce your waste

Writing for Medical News Today and Healthline, dietitian Jillian Kubala shares a few ways to reduce food waste:

1. Create a meal plan

Use a shopping list to pre-plan your meals for the week; this encourages you only to purchase what you need and minimises potential food waste.

2. Only buy what you need

Avoid buying food in excess. Make frequent grocery store trips every few days rather than bulk shopping once a week.

3. Store food for longer shelf-life

Storing fresh produce and leftover ingredients can reduce the amount of food wasted. Keep your refrigerators below 5°C (41°F), and store cooked foods in sealed containers above the shelves with fresh produce.

Kubala recommends keeping food with ethylene, such as bananas, avocados, and tomatoes, away from potatoes, apples, and leafy greens to avoid spoilage.

4. Freeze leftovers

Freeze fresh produce to extend its shelf-life if you can't consume it before it spoils. Consider freezing cooked meals such as meat, pies and pasta bakes.

5. Try preserving

Effective methods that help keep food lasting longer, thus reducing waste, include pickling, drying, canning, fermenting, freezing and curing.

6. Compost scraps

Composting food scraps, such as wilted leaves or vegetable peels, helps give nutrients back to the soil. Outside compost containers for gardens or countertop containers for apartments are a beneficial method for spoiled food.