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How to avoid
food waste

- By Servicegrossistene

Content

Common sense and income (intro)	p. 4
Chap. 1 A smart plan	p. 5
Chap. 2 Take a grip of your kitchen	p. 8
A month's salary for a carrot	
Informative waste	
Thoughtful knife work	
Storage	
Engaged food saviors	
Chap. 3 The chef is THE Chef	p. 14
Chap. 4 ... Boost your storytelling	p. 17
Chap. 5 ... Shared responsibility	p. 20



Current status:
One third of the food produced by the
hospitality industry never gets eaten!

It weighs on your conscience: a portion of the carefully prepared soup that took you hours to make has to be thrown away. The delicious bread, fresh and crispy out of the oven yesterday, now teeters on the edge of the trash bin. How did the food waste pile up this quickly?

Most of your kitchen routine revolves around the never-ending cycle of planning, ordering, purchasing, cooking, and selling food. And the food industry demands a lot: you need to be innovative and creative, keep an eye on the bottom line, make and follow good purchasing agreements, and adhere to strict hygiene and internal control requirements.

We can't do the job for you, but here in the following are some helpful tips to give you better control over food waste:

Chapter 1: A smart plan



Keeping food waste under control has always been a key part of a cook's daily routine. This is where the large-scale kitchen industry has a big advantage: there are far more measurable factors here than for the average consumer!

Key success factors:

- Proper inventory management
- Tight control over purchases
- Employee engagement

Of course, every business is different, so you need to figure out where the waste is happening in your specific operation. Is it due to incorrect purchases or quantities? Is too much left in storage, only to be thrown away? Are you preparing too much food?

A solid plan – one that's followed – can take you a long way in the right direction.

Tips for the kitchen staff

- Calculate precisely for actual use, and have a plan for any surplus ingredients.
- Have a strategy for using up leftovers.
Storing 3 liters of sauce in the fridge won't help if it just sits there untouched!
- Make use of leftover recipes from sources like matprat.no (The Norwegian Information Office for Eggs and Poultry), which can offer valuable ideas even for large-scale kitchens.

Chapter 2: Take a grip of your kitchen



There are rules, and there's always a chef or purchaser who keeps an overview. But to truly tackle waste, everyone needs to pull in the same direction. Here are some simple steps that most kitchen staff can easily keep track of.

A month's salary for a carrot

Food waste is fairly easy to monitor and control. Take a look in the food bin and critically assess what could have been eaten. Then, dig deeper and calculate what this could amount to over a year. Many will be surprised! In a large kitchen, this can quickly add up to tens of kilos. If you throw away one carrot a day, that's 7 carrots a week. Over a year, that's 365 carrots, enough to make 70 portions of carrot soup. Put it into perspective: if you sell that carrot soup with croutons for 50 NOK a bowl instead of throwing the ingredients away, those 1,000 bowls could potentially cover a month's salary for an employee. And besides, it's delicious!

Informative waste

In recent years, the restaurant industry has gotten much better at creating smaller, more thoughtfully curated menus. It's also important to look at the food that comes back from customers. If there's always a small piece of chicken left on the plate, maybe you can reduce the amount of meat served. If too many potatoes are left uneaten, you might need to adjust the flavor or portion size. Chefs know that food must constantly be analyzed, portioned, and adapted to market needs. With a focus on reducing food waste, this expertise can also be elevated to a broader, socio-economic level.

Thoughtful knife work

5 grams of pepper scraps might not seem like much, but it adds up when you're handling 100 peppers. If you clean a pepper properly, every part can be eaten – nothing needs to be wasted. When thousands of peppers are trimmed incorrectly, with good portions discarded, it accumulates significantly. Most chefs make stock anyway and often buy specific ingredients for it. But if you consciously use vegetable scraps you already have, you save both the environment

and money – and you create something unique, a bit of magic out of nothing, which feels great!

The green tops on root vegetables are perfect for soups and stews, especially parsley and celery root. You can also use broccoli and cauliflower stems, and roast potatoes with their skins on. Use vegetable scraps to make stock: onion skins, carrot tops, garlic peels, washed potato skins, celery peels, leek tops, and tomato and cucumber ends can all be used. Even a slightly wilted salad can become fresh and crispy again after a quick dip in ice-cold water – it deserves a second chance.

Storage

Throwing away food is costly and bad for the environment. Proper storage of fruits and vegetables extends their shelf life, reducing the amount that needs to be discarded or trimmed. Get to know how to store the ingredients you use. Maybe someone on the team could be appointed as a storage expert?

Engaged food saviors

A good tip is to incorporate food waste reduction into your company's guidelines and risk assessments: make it a requirement for all staff to think about minimizing waste. Those who tackle this challenge will see great benefits, easing both the economic and social conscience of the business. Lack of expertise and time pressure often hinder change. The key here is engagement. It doesn't help if one person is passionate and doing their best while others are still throwing away food. Everyone needs to pull in the same direction. Often, the head chef is overwhelmed with demands.

Can others in the business help increase engagement and focus on reducing food waste? Is there someone who can be freed up for a few hours to sit down and find solutions? You need to look at the business as a whole.

Do you have the necessary skills, or do you need to acquire them?

Tips for your team

- Use precise recipes. This not only helps you control waste but also ensures the quality of what's being made stays consistent and high. Plus, it makes it easier to manage your internal control system when you know exactly what's in everything.
- Organize a workshop at your workplace to build collective engagement!
- Practice thinking before throwing **anything** away.
- Make it a requirement for staff to minimize waste as much as possible.
- Is there someone who could use your day-old bread or other leftovers? Besides: it doesn't count as waste if you give away the food you don't use yourself, does it?

Chapter 3: The chef is THE Chef



It's important that all employees are well-informed about food waste, but often it's the purchasing manager or the chef who needs to have the most comprehensive overview in the business.

It's crucial to map out and understand the entire production line in the kitchen, from purchasing to the final sale to the customer.

Get to know the strengths and weaknesses of your operation:

- Smart purchasing and correct quantities?
- Storage control?
- Is food being prepared in reasonable amounts?
- Could small adjustments, like plate size, portioning, and display in the counter/ buffet, make a difference?

If you're a head chef who wants to take food waste seriously, these critical control points should be your focus.

Tips for the chef

- To young, innovative chefs: Make sure you get 100% out of all your ingredients. This is how you demonstrate the knowledge needed to run a cost-effective kitchen!
- When peeling carrots and other vegetables; don't cut off too much of the ends and avoid using thick-cut peelers.
- Make stock from trimmings and bones.
- Think about all the delicious things you can create with old bread: breadcrumbs, croutons, or other items that fit into your menu.
- A smart chef takes responsibility for using every ingredient, benefiting both the environment and the business.

Chapter 4: Boost your storytelling




The focus on sustainability is growing rapidly – even in the past five years, we’ve seen significant changes among everyday consumers. It always resonates well to tell a good story about what your customers are eating.

With this increasing emphasis on social responsibility, maybe it’s time to tell a different story than the one we told five years ago.

And if there isn’t yet a market for this mindset where you operate, create that market yourself!

Tips for the storyteller

- Put up a small information sign for guests that says something like this: “These croutons are made from yesterday’s bread – Good for you, and great for the environment!”
- Encourage guests to think before they take; ask if they would like bread on the side.
 - This small step might be enough to reduce bread waste!



«This vegetable soup has been seasoned with cumin and crispy garlic croutons. It is served with apple juice that I made myself.

Everything you are eating now, I would have thrown away six months ago, but due to a shift in mindset, a new focus, and more sustainable choices, we now use the food that used to go to waste to create new and exciting dishes.»

Chef's notes

Imagine if a chef could turn criticism into a great story for the customer!

Chapter 5: Shared responsibility

KUTT
MATSVINN

You may have heard of KuttMatsvinn 2020? It was an industry initiative aimed at reducing food waste by 20% by 2020.

The goal was nearly achieved, and the project has been continued with the **Industry Agreement on Reducing Food Waste**. The new goal is to achieve a 50% reduction in waste by 2030. The initiative is organized by Matvett AS. They have dedicated resources working with the industry to develop a toolbox tailored to different businesses.

What are these food waste projects about?

- Common tools for measurement and reporting
- Measurement of food waste at the individual operator.
- Contribution to establishing statistics on food waste from the catering industry.
- Tool for training employees.
- Joint graphic profile and communication activities towards guests.

GOAL:

50% reduction
of food waste
by 2030



UN has marked specific targets for food cuts. «Is the industry supposed to save the world now?», you might be thinking.

– Well, that's the plan, isn't it?

Servicegrossistene's customers are also warmly welcome to participate in the project.

As a common industry measurement unit (KPI) for food waste, grams of food waste per guest are used, and there are various scales and registration solutions available.

1. The simplest solution consists of a **weight** and **manual recording**.
2. There are also solutions with a **smart weight** and **automatic recording**, which also measures where the waste occurs, as well as category and cost. Participants in the project commit to weighing total food waste per day and keeping track of the number of guests.

If you are a customer of Servicegrossistene, you can contact your local wholesaler to find the right solution for measuring and reporting food waste, and to identify an optimal training program for your business.

From measurement to action

After the business has measured food waste over a period of time, it will most likely be revealed that food waste should be reduced.

A number of action proposals and tips have been developed to help reduce food waste easily.

Did you know that approx. 1/3 of food waste in hotels occurs on the guest's plate?

In other words; 2/3 of all food that is thrown away is fully usable resources that find their way to the bin due to wrong purchases or other poor planning.



More about the Industry Agreement for Food Waste Reduction:

An industry agreement focusing on food waste, led by DMF, DLF, NHO Mat og Drikke, Reiseliv and Virke (project leader), signed June 14, 2017:

- A voluntary agreement between authorities and the entire food value chain.
- Objective aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goal of halving food waste by 2030.
- Focus on establishing statistics, reporting routines, and a common forum for monitoring the work.
- Recommended measures at both industry and governmental levels.
- Companies can align with the goals of the agreement through a declaration of commitment.



Servicegrossistenes rolle:

- Participates in industry-wide efforts.
- Responsible for reputation management within the value chain.
- Strengthens relationships with suppliers and customers.
- Enhances the competence of the sales team.
- Aims to reduce food waste within their own wholesaler operations over time.

Business benefits for Servicegrossistene:

- Improved profitability.
- Reduced climate footprint.
- Satisfied guests and employees.

Read more about the project here:

<http://matvett.no/bransje/>

Are you wondering what
you should think about
when ordering goods?

- Have a chat with us!

sg.no

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