

5 Things You Can Do About Food Waste Right Now

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In the Western world, we waste three times the amount of food needed to feed the hungriest people. This means that 30% of all food globally produced is lost somewhere in the food chain.

By 2050, the world's population will grow to 9 billion people. If we want to feed everybody without dealing with the food waste issues of today, we will need to produce 70% more food. That's incredibly hard... for no good reason!

Instead, the European Parliament resolved to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. For this to happen, many sensibilization campaigns have been launched making people and organizations aware of the issue, what's at stake and what they can do about it.

The food industry now realizes how inefficient their food waste management has been at every stage of the food chain from farm to fork (40% of food is lost before it reaches the consumer). They've also become aware how, with little improvements here and there, they can have a lot of impact.

Let's take a brief look at the size of the problem, in what ways we are all wasting food and what we can do about it starting today.

Food Waste Statistics You Need to Know

When food that is fit for human consumption isn't eaten, we call it **food waste**. And food waste is expensive. Just think of how much money you are throwing away *just* by not eating all the food you bought!

The EU citizens waste 88 billion tonnes of food per year, or 173 kg per person. To give you an idea: less than a decade ago, 865 kg was produced per person and 20% of it was wasted. The cost associated with bad food waste management was 143 billion euros.

Zooming in on Belgium, it appears that 10,400 tonnes of food is wasted per day... while more than a million people aren't able to eat properly due to low income.

It's About More Than Just Throwing out Food

When we waste, it's not just food that is lost – it's also the water, heat and fertilizers used to grow them, the energy used during transportation and labor costs.

To give you an idea of how much resources are lost when you throw food away: it takes 13 liters of water to grow 1 tomato and 50 liters of water to grow one orange. 25-30% never make it to the grocery stores just because of aesthetic or physical irregularities. All the resources used to grow those tomatoes and oranges are lost before the products even reach the supermarkets.

The responsibility is not only with the supermarkets, though. They mainly react to how their customers buy. It's perfectly normal to naturally prefer things that don't have blemishes and the right color, but know that beauty is also on the inside. An apple with a spot still has all the same nutrients as the perfectly round, red one does. And it would taste equally as good!

Why and How We Waste Food

Food is lost throughout the food chain. **Food loss** occurs during harvest, production and processing of food.

Hundreds of millions of tonnes are lost *before* harvest. One of the causes is labor shortage among farmers who don't have the manpower to harvest their fields. Another is the lack of knowledge, skills and resources to store and transport food the right way (to avoid spoilage for example).

53%

FOOD WASTED BY HOUSEHOLDS

19%

FOOD WASTE DURING PROCESSING

12%

FOOD WASTED BY FOOD SERVICES

10%

FOOD WASTED DURING PRODUCTION

5%

FOOD WASTED BY WHOLESALERS & RETAILERS

Some common types of food waste are:

- Restaurants serving us too big meals and having to deal with canceled orders.
- Supermarkets having high aesthetic standards
- Consumers having dubious buying habits and cooking practices and often not knowing how to interpret "best-before" dates

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Organizations are trying to find ways to increase food production to tackle hunger. But they forget that we already grow enough food to feed ten billion people! By tackling the food waste issue first, we could already feed three billion people.

While initiatives such as [Too Good To Go](#) save meals from sellers such as restaurants (users saved 250,000 meals in the last year in Belgium alone), there are more things you can do.

1. **Embrace wonky fruits and veggies!** They have all the same nutrients aesthetically approved fresh produce has. Use them in soups, sauces or... smoothies. At Alberts, we don't distinguish fruit and veggies based on their looks. As long as your smoothie tastes good and gives you the nutrients you need, we use all fruit and veggies that come our way.
2. **Freeze foods before they go bad.** Freezing food means you freeze them in time. At Alberts, we use [frozen fruit and veggies](#) so we can serve your favorite ingredients throughout the year without loss of nutrients or flavor.
3. **Change the way you buy!** If you intend to eat fruit the same day, choose the ones that are ripe. If you don't take it, it will probably end up in the garbage anyway.
4. **Learn to read food labels.** To learn the difference between "best-before" and "use-by" dates, read our short guide [here](#).
5. **Store fresh products at the back of your fridge** so you use up the older ones first. Otherwise, your strawberries might end up like [these](#).

Alberts wants to help people consume more fruit and veggies. We developed the Alberts Smoothie Station as an easy innovative solution. Ingredients are stored frozen inside the machine to reduce food loss and ensure nutrient retention. We use a blend-in-cup technique to reduce food and water wastage even more. Moreover, we don't have any aesthetic standards for our ingredients. As long as your smoothie is healthy and tasty, we embrace all wonky fruits and veggies!

Sources used in this article:

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