

# Love Food, Hate Waste

I hate wasting food, but today I threw away 2 yogurts which were about to explode at the back of my fridge! When I think about it, last week I threw away some biscuits which I bought to try and no-one liked. We all do it, but don't realise the amount of food we throw away over a year individually and as a nation. Being really keen on recycling and composting, I thought I'd look into it further and this is what I found...

6.7 million tonnes of food is thrown away by households in the UK every year, or, to put it another way, around a third of all the food we buy ends up being thrown away, and most of it could have been eaten.

If we stopped wasting food which could have been eaten, it would have the same impact on carbon emissions as taking 1 in 5 cars off UK roads.

The food we waste ends up in landfill where it rots and releases methane, a damaging greenhouse gas which contributes to climate change.

It's not just environmental damage that is caused. By reducing your food waste you can also save yourself time and money. In the UK we buy and then waste around £10 billion on food every year. The average family wastes around £420 per year on food which is thrown away - just think, we could probably pay for a holiday or other family treat if we didn't waste all that money - sounds good to me!!

The good news is that there are a few quick and easy things we can all do to reduce the amount of food we throw away:

- Combine leftovers from previous meals with fresh ingredients to create delicious meals.
- Cook a large dish and then divide into portions to freeze for another day, great for days when you will be busy or home late.
- Check what's at the back of your fridge and cupboards before shopping and keep an eye on 'Use by' and 'Best before' dates.
- Buy your fruit and vegetables loose so you can buy exactly how much you need. This will reduce packaging also.
- Invest in storage containers and bag clips for resealing bags. After opening packets of dried foods such as cereals, rice, flour and pasta, reseal them tightly or transfer them into storage boxes or jars.
- Take time to plan your meals for the week ahead. You'll find it much easier when you are food shopping if you have your meals in mind.
- Packs of meat and fish can be separated into smaller pieces for the freezer so you can take out the right amount you need.

Some food waste is inevitable, but items like peelings, egg shells and tea bags can be composted to create valuable home compost for your garden (see last month's issue).

If you are interested in becoming involved in Cheshire County Council's campaign, or just want to learn more you can visit the website [www.recycleforcheshire.org.uk](http://www.recycleforcheshire.org.uk). Or you can contact me at The A41. Contact details on inside front cover. Julie

