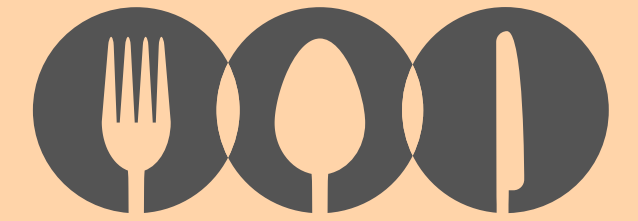




# Hosting a Homely Dinner

---

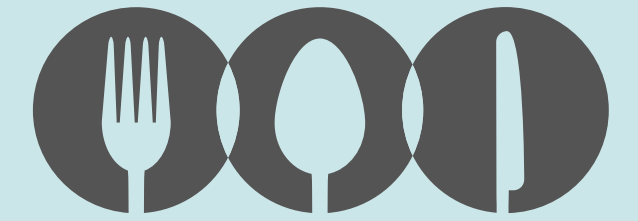
Starting the conversation around Food Waste



# How to host a homely food waste dinner

---

Turning the tide on food waste starts with a conversation – and starting it in our own homes or comfort zones is crucial.



For tips on how to drop this massively complex issue into casual dinnertime conversation, we've put together a toolkit for hosting a 'Homely Food Waste Dinner'. This could be a normal Tuesday night meal with the kids, a romantic night in for two, a special occasion for which you've already got people coming over, or some kind of specially planned Food Waste Gathering of friends.

---

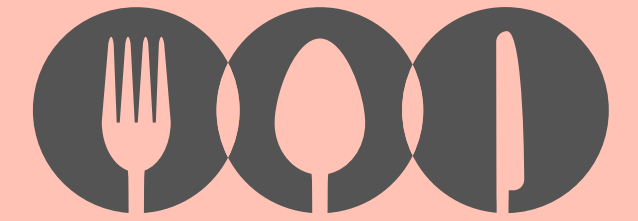
To help guide you, in this toolkit you'll find stats and facts to fuel the conversation, practical tips for rescuing and cooking would-be waste into some impressive creations, and even games to play or things to talk (and think) about after the dinner ends.



# What to do

---

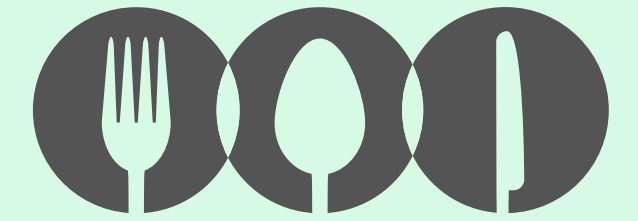
How you can cook with would-be-waste



# Cooking

---

Wondering how to use up old stale bread, how to breathe new life into leftovers, or how to turn broccoli stalks and carrot tops into something sexy?

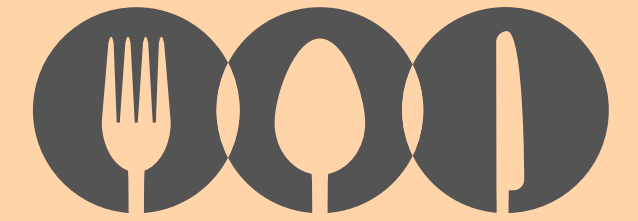


# 01 // Impress your guests at entree time

---

One problem with using expiring or rescued food is that you don't have control over quantities, and there may only be one or two stale scraps or soggy stalks to use – but never fear, the **pre-dinner nibbles** are here! Utilising the snacks, hors-d'oeuvres, nibbles, finger food, entrees, aperitivo, or whatever else you call the preliminary part before the meal, can be a game-changer for planning Homely Food Waste Dinners.

Making **small, bite-sized things** allow you to make a little go a long way. It's also an easy way to get lots of different talking points on one plate at once, right at the start of the evening!



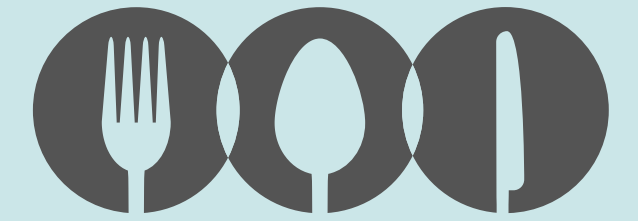
# // Pro-tip: Get bread *ready* to roll

---

Dip or douse any **stale bread** you have lying around in water, then bake it in the oven at 180°C for 5-10 minutes — it should come back to its spongy best!

You can then **slice this into little pieces** (which you can put back in the oven for extra toastiness if you like), onto which you can put **small dollops of anything** from ugly-tomato bruschetta to carrot-top pesto, veggie scrap-stock reduction droplets to morsels of leftover stew from the night before.

# 02 // Get theatrical



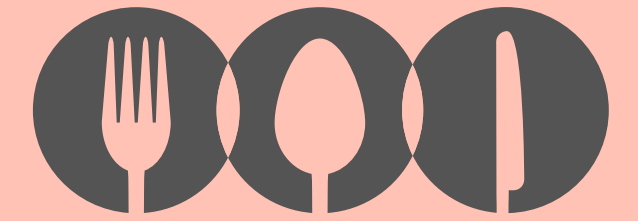
Although changing habits at home can have a big impact on reducing food waste, there's only so much you can achieve in one meal. Therefore, this dinner is really just about **making a symbolic statement** – so ham it up a bit!

You don't need to go as far as slapping an entire hog's head down on the table, to show which parts of the animal we don't eat, or flooding the whole room to indicate the scale of water wastage related to food waste.

Instead, try something a bit more subtle: **garnish** soup with a chunk of chicken cartilage taken from a thigh or drumstick (which usually gets left behind, even though the collagen in chicken cartilage is so nutritious that companies actually extract it and sell it as dietary supplements), or a piece of salmon skin (which, again, is loaded with nutrients but often gets peeled off and chucked away).

Another approach is to serve everything in **thirds or two-thirds** – either dishing up a partly filled bowl of soup, resealing a 12-pack of biscuits from which you've taken four out, or baking a quiche or pie that takes up only 66% of the dish – to represent that, worldwide, roughly **one-third of food fit for human consumption is thrown away**.



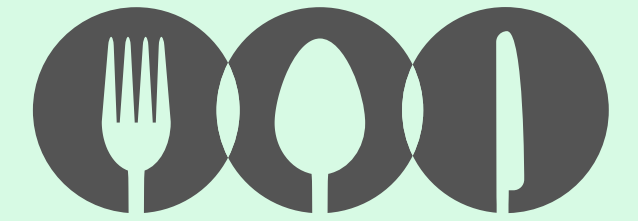


# 03 // Have method to your madness

---

There are a million things you can make with scraps, skins, peels, leftovers, and produce past its prime. Sometimes, you experiment with something new and it totally pays off – and sometimes it doesn't.

To avoid any disasters, it's good to **have a few go-to options** for using any would-be waste you happen to have on the day, such as scraps or offcuts: soups, curries and stews, for example, are great for eliminating risk, as you can often throw lots of different flavours and ingredients together. For this reason, it's good to **have a go-to base** (such as onions, carrot and celery, or perhaps chilli and cumin) and a **go-to soup, stock or curry base** (such as a homemade frozen stock, coconut milk, or just water) that you're comfortable cooking with. Then, even if you haven't given it any prior thought, you can usually throw anything in between and make something delicious out of it.

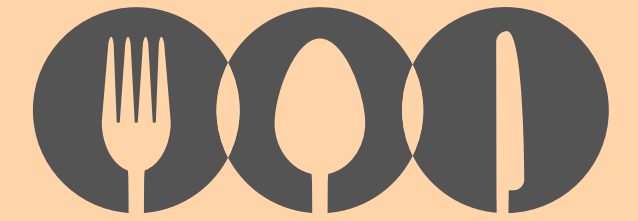


# // Pro-tip: Get a friend who blends

You don't actually need to befriend new people for this one – just appliances. Having a **blender, food processor, spice/coffee grinder**, or even a **pestle and mortar and/or a sieve**, can go a long way to turning something unappealing into something that seriously impresses.

By blending **soups and stews**, you can hide things in there that people may not wish to see (such as fish heads and frames), but love to eat in a blitzed or blended form (such as a rich seafood chowder). You can make a ridiculously healthy, tasty veggie soup from floppy green leaves or leftover roast vege, served with a simple swirl of sour cream and a crack of pepper for restaurant-quality wows. Even some leftover baked beans can become an ambiguous, rustic 'Tuscan bean stew'.

The ability to blend also means you can make impressive **pastes, sauces and dips** from less-than-impressive ingredients: beetroot-leaf pesto, cabbage-stalk puree, chicken liver paté or lemon-peel sorbet, for example.



# Getting a helping hand for waste-avoiding recipes

---

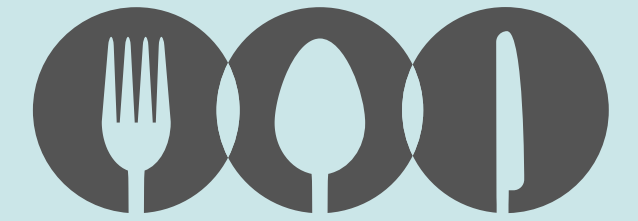
For more ideas and specific recipes using commonly wasted ingredients:



Visit Love Food Hate Waste's recipe page



Check out the Slow Food Youth Network's World Disco Soup Day Recipe Book for inspiration.



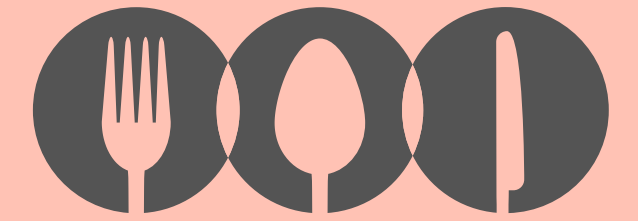
# Rescuing

---

You may have heard of dumpster-diving and seen the work of food rescue charities, but intercepting food from ending up in landfill doesn't have to be too much effort.

Here are some tips:

# Rescuing food: tips for finding tasty would be food waste



## 01

---

Look in your fridge, at the back of the cupboard, or at the bottom of the fruit bowl. Household food waste is only one part of the process – but it's the first place we can make a difference.

## 02

---

Buy ugly fruit and veggies, or offal and off-cuts of meat and fish. Our consumer habits have a trickle-on effect down the line, from how food is grown to how it is sold, priced, packaged and presented to us.

## 03

---

Contact your local supermarket, farmers market, shop or restaurant and ask what they do with any food they can't use or sell. You might get it for free.

## 04

---

Use technology – in some New Zealand cities, [Foodprint](#) lets you know if any local bakeries, cafes, restaurants or shops have some expiring food looking for a good home. [Olio](#), an international app operating on neighbourhood levels, lets people post anything they have too much of or to give away, whether it be an overload of feijoas from the tree, last night's leftovers, or a misplaced delivery of cheese.

## 05

---

Go door-knocking – it's amazing what you can find by asking your next-door neighbours, colleagues, or the lady in the flat across the road if they have any food they need to get rid of. It's also a prime opportunity to invite them over for a Homely Food Waste Dinner, to show them what can be done with it all!



# Why host a dinner

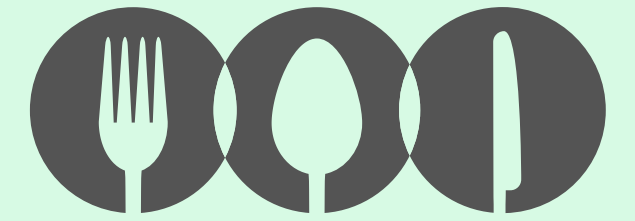
---

What difference does it make



# Rebuilding values and respect

---



Reducing food waste doesn't just mean stopping the leftovers from getting thrown into the bin after dinner. Food waste is a massive, multi-faceted issue, and the complexities and consequences surrounding it are far too many to even begin understanding over one meal time. However, that one meal time is a prime opportunity to plant a seed that might start people thinking more closely and critically about it.

A lot of what causes food waste derives from the fact that people often don't value or respect food as much as they did previously. Reinforcing the enjoyment of a good meal, shared among friends and loved ones, can go a long way towards rebuilding that value and respect.

Here are some ideas to start the ball rolling on planning your dinner:

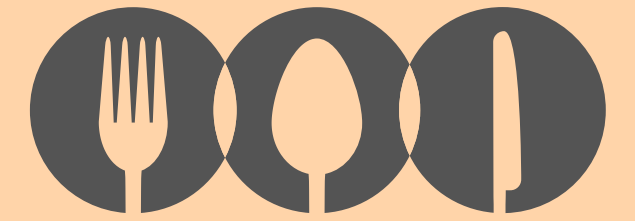


# What to do

---

How to entertain your guests or engage  
your family





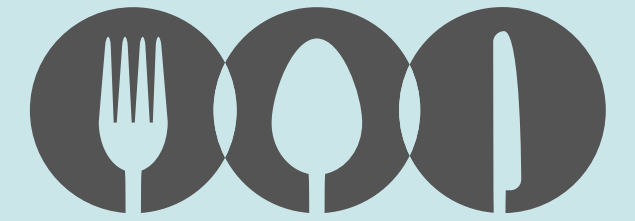
There are many different approaches you can take to starting the conversation at a Homely Food Waste Dinner. Usually, pontificating and sermonising about how terrible food waste is, and blaming people, doesn't get very far.

---

Instead, you can try to make it fun – or make it a challenge.

# 01 // Entertain

---



Why not go all-in on hosting and plan some party games? Here are some ideas:

**01**

---

Create a “food waste quiz”, or play food-related pictionary and charades

**02**

---

Get some cardboard and string to make a set of “ice-breaker” cards, containing food waste stats or conversation topics, which you can tie around people’s glasses at the start of the night

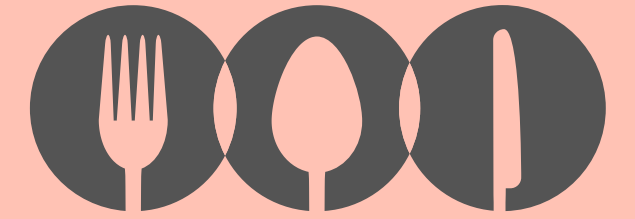
**03**

---

Make (by hand or printed out) a game with some cards containing different questions or challenges: for example, “Can you name 10 people who directly make any food you regularly eat?”, “Who makes your bread?”, “Which countries have committed to Sustainable Development Goal 12.3, to halve food waste by 2030?”, “Which parts of a beetroot can you eat or not eat?” etc.

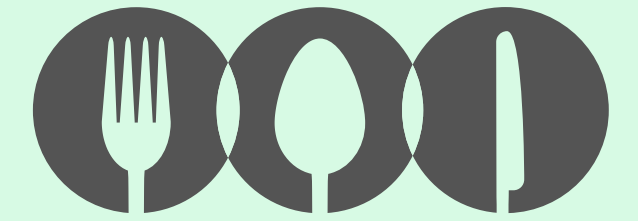
# 01 // Encourage or Inspire

---



A lot of factors leading to food waste stem from people having lost touch with how their food is produced. Most people in developed countries today lack the time, access, or ability to produce their own food as cheaply or easily as they could buy it, and so they usually have little emotional attachment to it. However, if you've herded sheep in the driving rain, lost an entire crop to the birds in a single day, or caught and gutted the fish yourself, chances are you're more likely to think twice before throwing away any of that food.

Encouraging people to connect more closely with what they eat doesn't have to mean growing it, foraging it, or catching it themselves – it simply means being curious, and encouraging a deeper respect for the food they eat.



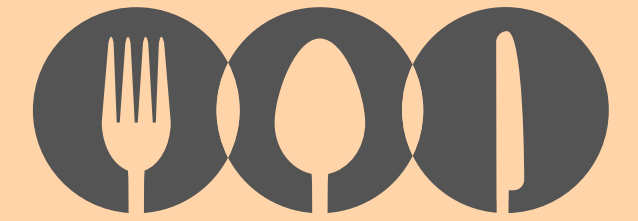
# // Practical suggestions to Encourage or Inspire

You could casually mention to your guests where the food you're eating comes from, ask questions about what your guests usually cook or eat themselves, or start trying to **trace back the trail of what you're eating**: Who made that cheese? Where's the factory located? Where did the milk that factory uses come from? Who runs the farm it came from? How many cows do they have? What are the cows' names?

Get people to think about their relationship with food – how did we get here? How is our relationship with food different from our parents'? From our grandparents'? From our neighbours or siblings? If you had to feed yourself, how many things could you obtain: eg. can you catch a fish? Successfully grow anything bigger than a herb? Bake a loaf of bread or make yoghurt?

Another option is to start making lists. For example: "Rank the following in order of importance for you in terms of food: taste, nutrition, providence, quality, quantity, fairness, affordability, organic, etc."

You might find something interesting, you might not. But it's amazing where these discussions can end up! It might turn out that somebody in the party grew up down the road from that farm...



## // Or try something different: Lay down a stare-down challenge

---

If you fancy taking the confrontational rather than casual route, or have a penchant for the theatrical, here's something you can try on your guests: get them to take a pledge that, the next time they open the bin and think about throwing away a piece of food, they first have to try their hardest to get in contact with whoever grew, raised, or at least sold that food to them, and personally apologise for throwing away their produce.

You could find some photos of producers, print out posters for your guests to take home, and coin a phrase like: "Look Ben in the eye before you throw that broccoli away". The options are endless.

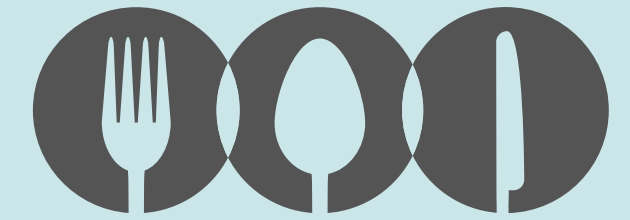


# What to talk about

---

Facts, stats, and things to ponder about  
food waste

From food waste being the world's third-biggest greenhouse gas polluter after China and the United States, to 1.3 billion tonnes of edible food being thrown away each year, there are plenty of surface-level, attention-grabbing food waste stats that can really get people's attention.



For more of these stats – plus a whole lot of information on how to dig deeper into understanding the issues, to inform both yourself and your guests during dinnertime conversation (plus for help with creating any party games) – visit one of many fantastic websites, online resources and organisations dedicated to raising awareness about curbing food waste.

**01** | [The New Zealand Food Network](#)

**02** | The United Nations' "[Food Wastage Footprint: Impact on Natural Resources](#)" 2013 report

**03** | [Love Food Hate Waste New Zealand](#)

**04** | The European Commission's programme on [measuring and reducing food waste](#)

**05** | Some staggering food waste facts summarised by food-rescue platform [Olio](#)

**06** | [Project Drawdown](#), the leading global platform for climate research and action plans for curbing greenhouse gases.