



FOOD WASTE MENU

Bite-sized ideas for tackling food
waste in the hospitality sector



Tourism



FIXIT

Impact
Revolution



Did you know that one third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted every year, amounting to 1.3 billion tons?

The tourism sector is a strategic industry to fight this problem, as the environmental and economic costs of food waste are highest at the consumption end of the food value chain.

The **Food Waste Menu** lays out actions that hotels, cruises or catering services can take to prevent and reduce food waste. It is part of the broader IDB Invest study, [Fighting Food Waste in the Tourism Sector: Challenges and Opportunities for Latin America, the Caribbean, and Beyond](#), published in September 2020.

GUIDE

The menu is tagged with these symbols for quick digestion:

- 💰 More costly than other actions from the menu.
- 🕒 Needs longer implementation times.
- 🤝 Needs other actors' involvement.
- 👤 Nudge for customers.
- ♻️ Allows reuse for human consumption.
- 🌱 Does not reduce food waste (but reduces the environmental footprint).



STARTERS

THE “MUST HAVES” WHEN STARTING A FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

If the program is not explicitly supported by the senior management, it is very difficult to motivate staff and ensure the necessary resources for implementation.

MEASUREMENT

Estimates of food waste quantities and composition are key to set targets and prioritize actions. You don't need a sophisticated system, just organization!

STEPS:

1. Segregate food waste into separate trash bins.
2. Weigh food waste bins and record data using a tracking sheet.
3. Monitor buffet and plate leftovers.

COMMITTED AND MOTIVATED STAFF

They are the ones who make a difference. Think of incentives for their involvement, communicate concrete results, let them know how crucial they are.

CONSIDER:

- **Build a cross-functional** team to implement the food waste management program and ensure resource allocation.
- **Designate** a champion to lead execution.
- **Empower** chefs to get better results.

SMALL BITES

SIMPLE AND EASY ACTIONS

FIFO METHODOLOGY

Adopt a “First In, First Out” approach to keep food storage organized and use food before it goes bad.

OFFER HALF PORTIONS

This avoids leftovers and offers customers who do not want a full portion a lower cost option.

DOGGY BAGS

Some people are ashamed to ask for one. Be proactive, offer doggy bags when you see leftovers on diners’ plates!

BE CLEAR ABOUT DISHES AND THEIR INGREDIENTS

Either in the menu or orally, tell customers what dishes contain, helping avoid confusion and the likelihood that they will be sent back to the kitchen.



MAIN COURSE

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR IMPACT

SMART REDUCTION TARGETS 🕒

Setting targets is crucial to establishing strategic objectives, prioritizing actions, and evaluating progress.

STANDARDIZED PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES 🕒

Better procedures can reduce food waste. Revise procedures with people involved and look for improvement opportunities!

SMART PLANNING

Look at the trash! Past records can be a useful tool to adjust future actions.

WELL-TRAINED STAFF

Employees must be well-trained in food safety procedures and best practices to prevent and reduce food waste.



CHEF'S FAVORITES

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

UGLY BUT SEXY

Use 100% of raw materials, including aesthetically imperfect foods, by having production alternatives.

SOME ALTERNATIVES:

- **Fruits:** Jams, chips, dehydrated fruits, smoothies
- **Vegetables:** Purees, soups, sauces, dressings
- **Cheeses:** Cookies, canapés
- **Bread:** Pudding, croutons
- **Meat:** Minced meat
- **Fish:** Soups, broths

THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE MENU

Plan menus carefully to ensure that you can adapt production and service to your inventory and repurpose overproduction.

TIPS TO OPTIMIZE MENU PLANNING:

- **Plan consecutive menus.** A sequence of menus that follows the logic of the useful life of each ingredient available in stock.
- **Introduce daily dishes.** This helps use up inventory about to expire or repurpose edible food scraps and overproduction.
- **Offer the right amount of choice.** The more options available, the more ingredients used and the more waste generated.

BUFFET BUT...

A BUFFET OF OPTIONS FOR REDUCING FOOD WASTE

HYBRID SERVICE MODE

Offer some products in the buffet and other “extras” on menus, especially the most expensive options.

RETHINK SELF-SERVICE

Reduce the number of food stations or control portions by having hotel staff serve guests at the buffet.

FOOD DISPENSERS

Especially useful for fruit, cereal and juice, in order to avoid direct customer contact.

CHAFERS WITH ADJUSTABLE TRAY HEIGHTS

This makes them fully visible, giving the customer a sense of abundance.

DISPLAY TRAYS IN HORIZONTAL ROWS

Instead of stacking trays or placing food in bowls, you can cover the same surface area while displaying fewer products.





DESSERT

IF YOU CAN'T PREVENT FOOD WASTE, YOU CAN STILL REDUCE IT BY REUSING FOOD FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR DONATIONS

Make food donation easy by partnering with food banks or companies with matchmaking apps to connect your surplus food with beneficiaries.

GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

To facilitate food donation, revise your internal food safety requirements. Hotels often have stricter requirements than local food donation legislation, so you may need to adjust procedures and train staff accordingly.

Remember that surplus food can only be donated if it has not yet expired and has not been exposed. Food products designated for donation should be stored in the refrigerator at $<5\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ (for up to 2 days after packaging) or in the freezer at $<-18\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ (for up to 90 days after packaging).

DRINK MENU

HOW TO INFLUENCE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

RAISE FOOD WASTE AWARENESS AMONG CUSTOMERS

Posters near buffets, notes on tables, and other materials can help raise awareness about the importance of not wasting food. These messages can highlight data on environmental or social impact of food waste, or make it personal by focusing on the behavior of an average tourist (e.g., “On average, tourists do not eat 20% of the food they serve themselves from the buffet.”)

MESSAGES ABOUT HEALTHY EATING

Including messages about healthy eating in your communication materials can help influence the type and amount of food customers consume without being invasive.





COCKTAILS

NOT A MUST, BUT NICE TO HAVE

SMART SCALES

You can't manage what you don't measure.

Smart scales provide a complete and data-driven view of food service operations. This allows you to identify weak points and opportunities for improving food waste prevention.

DEMAND FORECASTING SOFTWARE

This allows you to predict how much customers will eat, helping you to more accurately estimate the amount of food to produce.

MOBILE APP OR PRE-ORDER MENU

This allows customers to pre-order what they will consume the next day.

ELECTRONIC ORDERING SYSTEM

This simple tool can improve communication among waiters and kitchen staff, helping reduce mistakes in food preparation.

BEFORE YOU GO

LET'S AVOID THE LANDFILL!

ANIMAL FEED

When handled properly, food scraps can be used for animal feed. Given the high cost of feed and grains for animal nutrition and fattening, food waste is a cost-effective alternative for livestock producers.

BIOCHEMICAL PROCESSING

This converts the organic material into industrial products, such as bioplastics, recycled leather, soaps, cosmetics and biodiesel.

COMPOSTING/AEROBIC DIGESTION

Food waste is decomposed by bacteria in oxygen-rich environments, creating organic matter to be used as soil fertilizer.

CO-DIGESTION/ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

Food waste is decomposed by bacteria in the absence of oxygen, including through fermentation. This generates biofuels such as biogas and bioethanol.

