

LOVE FOOD HATE WASTE – WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Wednesday, 5 June 2013 marked World Environment Day and the theme of this year's celebration was Think.Eat.Save, an anti-food waste and food loss campaign aimed at encouraging all of us to reduce our foodprint.

According to Foodwise, a staggering 4 million tonnes of food (\$8 billion of edible food) gets thrown out each year in Australia. This equates to around 345kg per household; a total of 34,000 tonnes of food waste if we extrapolate this to the homes of all the people employed in the Australian legal sector.



Whilst the majority of people only associate food wastage with purely a financial cost, the sad truth is there is a significantly higher environmental cost involved. When we discard food, we are also wasting the water, energy and resources required to grow it and transport it to us. The discarded food ends up in landfills where it rots amongst other organic matter and creates and releases the greenhouse gas methane. What most people do not know is that methane is 23 times more harmful than the CO₂ pollution from your car exhaust.

Whilst this may all seem trivial, think about it this way (Source: Foodwise & UNEP):

- It takes 2400 litres of water to produce one hamburger
- Australians discard up to 20% of the food they purchase – this equates to 1 out of every 5 bags of groceries you purchase
- Up to 40% of the average food waste in household bins is food
- An estimated 20 – 40% of fruit and vegetables are rejected before they reaches the shops, because they do not match the supermarkets' and consumers' high cosmetic standards
- If you add up all the food Australia wastes each year, it is enough to fill 450,000 garbage trucks. Placed end to end, the convoy would bridge the gap between Australia and New Zealand over three times

You might be thinking, what does this have to do with the price of peanuts? But the scary truth is that if we do not mend our wasteful ways, our children will grow up seeing a very different Australia to the one we know and love. We should each take pride in saving our planet, be wiser with food and try to eradicate food wastage both at work and at home.



HOW YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR FOOD WASTAGE IMPACT

Here's a few easy suggestions:

- Have a meal plan and write down a shopping list of what you need before you go shopping. Remember to take into account what you have in the fridge, freezer and pantry.
- If your fruit is starting to look overripe, why not freeze it – frozen bananas make great smoothies and frozen raspberries are a great little snack when you need a sugar kick.
- If you are cutting carrot tops etc. off your vegetables, why not freeze them and use them to make stock?
- If your vegetables and perishable foods are looking like they have seen better days, why not turn them into pasta sauces, curries, baked goods and other meals you can freeze.
- Freeze bread that you do not think you are going to use and toast it, rather than throwing it out.
- Leftovers are the new recycling! Use leftovers to make new meals.
- Buy local, this saves on the carbon footprint of the food you consume.

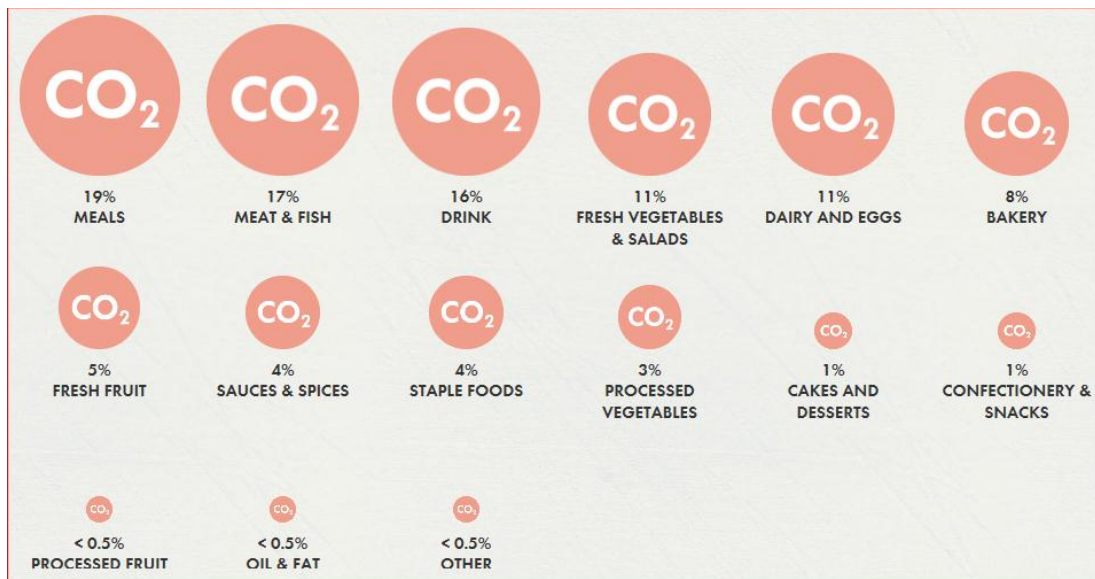


Image: Carbon footprint of food waste

As George Bernard Shaw once said “there is no love sincerer than the love of food.” He was right; let's love food and hate waste!