

FOOD WITHOUT WASTE



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The Problem of Food Waste

1/3 of the food produced worldwide ends up in the bin.

That's about 1.3 billion tons every year.

In Poland, each of us throws away an average of 247 kg of food per year.





Why is it important?

Economic losses



- Huge scale – it is estimated that globally every year food worth hundreds of billions of euros is wasted. That equals the GDP of many developing countries.
- Hidden costs – waste means not only discarded products, but also wasted labor of farmers, transport, storage, packaging, and sales.
- Impact on households – the average family in Europe throws away food worth several hundred euros per year, which puts real pressure on the household budget.

Hunger and social inequalities



- Stark contrast – while almost one-third of all food produced ends up in the bin, more than 800 million people around the world suffer from hunger.
- Children and youth – malnutrition during childhood and adolescence leads to health problems, worse school performance, and fewer life opportunities.
- Global inequalities – in wealthy countries food is wasted mostly at the consumption stage, while in poorer countries it is lost earlier – during production and distribution (due to lack of refrigeration, logistics, or access to markets).

Environmental impact



- CO₂ emissions – if food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the USA.
- Wasted natural resources – producing wasted food consumes enormous amounts of water, energy, and farmland. Example: throwing away 1 kg of beef = about 15,000 liters of water lost.
- Environmental degradation – food waste in landfills emits methane – a greenhouse gas many times more potent than CO₂.

Ethical and cultural dimension



- Moral responsibility – in the face of global hunger and climate change, wasting food is not just an economic issue but also an ethical one.
- Respect for food – in many cultures, food is treated as a common good and something sacred that deserves respect.
- Future generations – responsible food management is part of sustainable development and caring for the next generations.

Opportunities for change



- Education and awareness – changing consumer habits (meal planning, proper storage, making use of leftovers).
- Systemic solutions – better logistics, refrigeration technologies, food-sharing apps, cooperation between NGOs and businesses.
- Public policies – regulations on food labeling, bans on discarding unsold food (for example, in France).



Food waste is not only a kitchen problem – it's an issue of economy, environment, and social justice.



Where do we waste food?



Households – over 50% of losses



- Main cause of waste – poor planning, buying too much, cooking in excess, not using leftovers.
- Misunderstanding labels – confusion between “best before” and “use by” dates leads to throwing away still edible food.
- Lifestyle factors – busy schedules, irregular meals, and changing preferences make it harder to manage food properly.
- Impact – wasting food at home is particularly damaging because it is at the end of the chain, meaning all the resources used in production are already spent.

Shops and supermarkets



- Aesthetic standards – fruits and vegetables are discarded if they are the “wrong” shape, size, or color, even if perfectly edible.
- Overstocking shelves – shops prefer to display abundance to attract customers, which leads to unsold products expiring.
- Short shelf life – products close to their expiration date often end up in the bin instead of being discounted or donated.
- Positive trend – more supermarkets are starting donation programs, but the problem is still huge.

Restaurants and canteens



- Large portions – oversized meals often cannot be finished by customers.
- Buffet culture – in “all you can eat” systems a lot of food is taken but not eaten.
- Menu planning issues – difficulty predicting demand leads to unsold meals.
- Institutional catering – schools, hospitals, and workplaces generate waste when food is cooked in bulk but not consumed.

Production and transport



- Harvest losses – crops left in the field because they don't meet market standards or because it is cheaper to waste than to harvest.
- Storage problems – lack of refrigeration and poor infrastructure cause food to spoil before reaching the market (especially in developing countries).
- Transport challenges – delays, damage during shipping, and improper handling all contribute to waste.
- Global inequality – in wealthier regions, most waste happens at the consumption stage, while in poorer regions, it happens much earlier in the chain.



Food waste happens at every stage – but most of it starts at home. That means every one of us can make a difference.



How to prevent it?

3 simple Food Zero Waste rules:

Plan



Shop with a list, check expiration dates, avoid overstocking.

Use



Cook with leftovers, freeze, share food.

Compost



If food can't be eaten, turn it into natural fertilizer.

Planning is essential

- Make a shopping list.
- Buy only what you really need.
- Choose local and seasonal products.



Storing food

- The fridge and freezer are your zero waste allies.
- Proper containers keep food fresh for longer.
- Label products with dates at home.



Creative cooking



Cream soup from vegetables losing freshness.



Smoothie from ripe fruits.



Casserole from yesterday's dinner.

Share food!



Sharing food is an important part of zero waste that helps reduce waste and support others.

Community fridges and food-sharing points allow people to leave surplus food and for others to take what they need. Apps like **Too Good To Go** and **Foodsi** are becoming more popular, making it easy to rescue unsold meals from shops and restaurants. Surplus products can also be donated to **food banks and community kitchens**, supporting people in need. In this way, we protect resources, reduce waste, and build solidarity within our communities.

COMPOSTING

- Good for compost: fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, eggshells.
- Not for compost: meat, dairy, fats.
- Benefit: free fertilizer and less waste.



Benefits of Food Zero Waste





Cleaner environment

- Less CO₂ – reducing wasted food lowers greenhouse gas emissions.
- Saving resources – every saved product means less water, energy, and farmland used.
- Less waste – fewer discarded products mean less pollution of soil, air, and water.

More social solidarity



- Food donations – instead of throwing food away, it can be given to charities, supporting those in need.
- Community initiatives – food-sharing apps and community fridges strengthen social ties and shared responsibility.
- Global impact – by reducing waste in wealthy countries, we show solidarity with those facing food shortages.



Healthier lifestyle

- Responsible shopping and cooking often mean choosing fresh, local food instead of highly processed products.
- Meal planning supports a healthier diet and reduces the stress of last-minute cooking.



JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

Cook more, waste less!
Your daily choices matter.





**Think responsibly, act
today.**

Food Zero Waste is a lifestyle that
starts in your kitchen.

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