



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO USING FOOD

**Simple hacks
to waste less,
eat well, save money,
and do your bit
for the planet.**



This booklet was created by local people involved in the **Food Use Places Project** in Sussex.

Each year, we put over 1,000 tonnes of food to good use instead of throwing it in the bin.



THE FOOD USE MINDSET

Think Food USE, not Food WASTE

We're flipping the way we think about food waste, focusing on what we can do to make a difference.

The guide is built around seven themes to help you grow your confidence one step at a time. Inside, you will find simple tips, tasty recipes, and inspiring stories from local people, showing that small changes can make a big impact.

Get involved:
small changes
add up to
something big.



**THE BASICS:
USING FOOD
& REDUCING
WASTE**



**STORING &
PRESERVING**



**SMART
SHOPPING &
PLANNING**



**COOKING &
CREATIVITY**



**PACKAGING:
MINIMISING &
RECYCLING**



COMPOSTING



**FOOD'S IMPACT
ON CLIMATE
CHANGE**

THE BASICS: USING FOOD & REDUCING WASTE



We all waste food. That's why we asked local people from teens to grandparents, to share their food-waste confessions and tips. By making these small changes, they've saved money, reduced waste, and made mealtimes easier.

Confession Time

- “ I threw away food past it's best as I was worried about getting ill. **- JAMAL. MOULSECOOMB**
- “ I often cooked too much pasta and threw the rest in the bin. **- ALI. PORTSLADE**
- “ Composting scared me. I worried about bad smells. **- NIA. NEWHAVEN**
- “ I was so confused about what to put in the recycling bin. **- CHLOE. WHITEHAWK**
- “ I used to buy too much and find mouldy food in the back of my fridge. **- MEI. HOLLINGBURY**

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

BEST BEFORE refers to the quality of food. Use your senses to see, smell, and taste whether food is okay to eat after this date.

USE BY refers to the safety of food. Eat or freeze food right up to the date, but not after.



ANY VEG, POTATO & CHICKPEA CURRY

PREP TIME

25 mins

COOK TIME

45 mins

SERVES

4

This is a simple, adaptable curry created by The Community Kitchen. It's perfect for using up leftover veg. Mix and match whatever you've got.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion – diced
- 3 cloves of garlic – chopped
- Thumb sized piece of ginger – peeled/chopped
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 medium potatoes (or leftover cooked potato) or any other root veg of your choice cut into 1 inch chunks
- **Soft vegetables of your choice:** Courgettes, peppers, cauliflower, aubergine – chopped
- **Leafy vegetables:** spinach, kale, spring greens – sliced
- 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1 tin of chickpeas (drained) or a handful of red lentils
- 1 lemon (juiced)
- 500ml vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp of olive (or vegetable) oil
- Salt and pepper

EQUIPMENT

- Large pan

METHOD

- 1 Boil potatoes/root veg in salted water until just cooked. About 5 minutes.
- 2 Fry the onion in the oil with a pinch of salt over a low heat, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes until soft (not brown).
- 3 Add the ginger and garlic. Fry for 1 minute.
- 4 Stir in the curry powder, tomato paste and a splash of water.
- 5 Add the tinned tomatoes, chickpeas, and vegetable stock.
- 6 Add the soft veg to the pan. Cook for five minutes before adding the sliced leafy green vegetables and cooking for a further three minutes.
- 7 Gradually add the lemon juice to taste, starting with around half of the juice.
- 8 Add salt and pepper

SERVING SUGGESTION:

rice, flatbread or jacket potato topper, with coriander and/or yoghurt.

You can replace curry powder with a mix of 2 tsp each of turmeric, ground cumin and ground coriander and ½ tsp of chilli powder.



STORING & PRESERVING



Storing food correctly helps it last longer and saves money.

Tips

- If you have a freezer, portion leftovers for quick lunches.
- Use clear containers in the fridge and label food with the date to see what you have to use.

“I used to buy fresh veg, then end up going out after work and not eating it. Then I found out that frozen is as nutritious as fresh, so now I use that instead.”

– MEI

Activity: Organise your fridge to use what you've got

Food that needs using asap (eg meat, salad, leftovers)
– put at front of shelf

Food that keeps longer (eg jams, chutneys, tomato paste)
– put at back of shelf



Separate food by type so it's easier to find (eg one shelf for veg, one for cooked or ready to eat food, one for dairy products and meat/fish)

The door is the warmest area of the fridge, so perfect for food with natural preservatives such as juice, sauces, jams, condiments



TIPS FOR FOOD STORAGE

Learn where to store different food to keep it fresher for longer.

Onions and potatoes: Out of plastic in a cool & dark place, e.g. a paper bag

Tomatoes, whole fruits, bananas: at room temperature. Keep bananas away from other fruit as they ripen faster.

Berries and grapes: 'in a glass container, reduces moisture build-up and prevents crushing.

Salad: If in a bag, don't open until needed. Once opened, put kitchen paper inside to soak up moisture. Wash only when you're ready to eat.

Most fruit & veg: in the bottom drawer of the fridge.

Bread: in a sealed bag in a cupboard or breadbin, not the fridge. Freeze extra bread and take out slices as needed.

Meat, fish & proteins: Separate raw and cooked. Can be frozen once when raw and again after proper cooking. Never refreeze in the same state. Keep raw meat & fish in clean, dry, sealed containers on the bottom shelf of the fridge.

Herbs: Potted herbs go on the windowsill. Packaged herbs should be removed from plastic, wrapped in kitchen paper, and stored in the fridge. Basil should always stay out of the fridge.

Cheese: wrapped or in a tub with a lid in the fridge. Cheese can be frozen whole, in portions, or grated.

Milk: in the fridge or freeze if needed.

Dry goods: (cereal, pulses, grains) in airtight containers, such as jars or tubs. Or use pegs, clips or elastic bands on the bag to keep closed tight.

PESTO PASTA RECIPE

Young people from Hangleton & Knoll youth project created this recipe as a quick way to use up green vegetables and to save on energy and washing up. It's adaptable to whatever veg you have in the fridge.

PREP TIME

10 mins

COOK TIME

20 mins

SERVES


4

INGREDIENTS

- 250g of broccoli (or your favourite veg)
- 400g of your favourite pasta
- 2 tablespoons of nuts (optional)
- Pine nuts, almonds and cashews all work
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 70g fresh basil leaves (can substitute for spinach)
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- Half a lemon, juiced
- Salt
- Pepper
- 2 tbsp of parmesan cheese
- 70g fresh basil leaves (can substitute for spinach)
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- Half a lemon, juiced
- Salt
- Pepper
- 2 tbsp of parmesan cheese
- Additional parmesan cheese for topping

METHOD

- 1** Cut broccoli into smaller pieces (or veg of your choice) whilst you wait for a pan of water to come to the boil. Boil the pasta according to the time set on packet instructions. When you have 3-4 minutes left on the timer add the broccoli/veg to cook with the pasta. Drain pasta and broccoli, then place it back into the pan.
- 2** Dry toast (no oil) the nuts in a frying pan until lightly brown - to save on washing up, you could do this in the saucepan first, then transfer to the processor to cool down whilst you cook your pasta. Peel the garlic cloves.
- 3** Put basil, nuts, oil, garlic and lemon juice into a food processor and whiz up. Scraping down the sides to ensure everything is finely mixed. Add a pinch of salt, pepper and cheese and whiz it until you get the desired consistency - some like it smooth, others prefer a chunkier consistency.
- 4** Add pesto to the pasta and veg, stir through until mixed. Grate additional cheese on top



Add salad leaves that are past their best into the blender.

Swap broccoli for peas, courgette, green beans, peppers or thinly.

SMART SHOPPING & PLANNING



Free apps like ShoppingUK and Any list help you with shopping lists & planing meals around ingredients.

Lists, lists, lists! – Go armed with a shopping list to the supermarket. They want to sell you things you don't need. You will save money, waste less, and eat more nutritious meals by planning.

Activity

Prepare for your next shop:

- ✓ Before going to the supermarket, check your cupboards and fridge to see what you can use up.
- ✓ Plan meals around what you already have in, and then write a list of what else you need.
- ✓ Use free apps on your phone or paper and pen to organise your list into groups to make it easier in the supermarket – eg fruit & veg, dairy, meat & fish, frozen.
- ✓ Remind yourself of what you have planned by sticking a post-it on your fridge, noting the meals and the ingredients for each. Tick them off when you've used them.

“ Planning meals for the week ahead saves my family time, money and helps me avoid buying things we don't need.

NIA



COOKING & CREATIVITY



Ready, Steady, Cook! Get more confident in the kitchen by trying new cooking techniques, swapping veggies in recipes and experimenting with spices.

Tips from the Community Kitchen:

- Cook once, eat twice – Make double portions to make money and food go further
- Use store-cupboard staples, such as tinned tomatoes, to bulk out meals. Or if you eat meat, add lentils or pulses to casseroles / bolognese to make it go further.
- Cook better by understanding your hob – low heat (simmering) is good for sauces, medium heat is good for frying, and high heat is good for searing steaks or boiling water.

- Portion your spaghetti by using the width of a 1p coin for a single uncooked portion

➤ Check out [bhfood.org.uk/recipes](https://www.bhfood.org.uk/recipes) for adaptable ideas

“ The day before I do the shopping, I make a ‘throw it together’ meal – soup, casserole, curry or frittata to use up all the bits in my fridge and cupboard. **- JAMAL** ”

“ Salad goes off so quick, so when I’ve got some left, I toss into a stir-fry. **- ALI** ”



SAVOURY BREAD & BUTTER PUDDING

Older people who attend Hop 50+ cafe in Hove created this recipe to save bread from going to the bin and give their customers a tasty hot lunch.

PREP TIME

15 mins

COOK TIME

20 mins

SERVES

4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- ½ onion – diced
- 2 rashers lean back bacon chopped (take out for veggie option)
- 1 red pepper – diced
- 50g butter
- 6 slices bread
- 3 eggs
- 400ml (3/4 pint) milk
- 25g cheese, grated

EQUIPMENT

- Frying pan
- Oven proof dish
- Jug

METHOD

- 1** Preheat oven to gas 5, 190°C, fan 170°C.
- 2** Spread some butter around the oven proof dish.
- 3** Thickly butter one side of the bread slices, cut into triangles. Arrange in the buttered dish.
- 4** Beat the eggs and milk together.
- 5** Heat oil in pan, fry onion on low heat until soft.
- 6** Turn up heat, add bacon and pepper. Fry until bacon has browned.
- 7** Spoon onion, bacon, peper mixture over the bread.
- 8** Pour over the egg and milk mixture.
- 9** Top with cheese. Bake for 20 mins (until golden).

Save stale bread from the bin.

In the UK, bread is the most wasted food: 1 million loaves of bread are wasted every day!



PACKAGING: MINIMISING & RECYCLING



Reduce Single-Use Plastic
& Recycle Right.

Everywhere is different. Learn what
you can recycle locally.

Tips:

- 1 Refuse, reuse, refill, rethink.
- 2 Recycle: clean, dry & loose – rinse to stop contamination and no bin bags.
- 3 Keep a bag near your bins to collect soft plastics. These can be recycled at big supermarkets.

In Brighton, 50% of food
thrown away at home
is still in packaging.

“ Me and my housemates started separating soft plastics, and it made us notice how much food, like carrots, comes wrapped up. Now we try to buy less packaged stuff. - **CHLOE**

Activity: Note your nearest soft plastic recycling points here:

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Soft plastic = packaging
you can squash and it
doesn't go back to its
original form (bread
bags, crisp packets,
foil-like wrapping,
food/pet pouches, fruit
& veg packaging).



SAVOURY VEGETABLE CRUMBLE

PREP TIME

10 mins

COOK TIME

40 mins

SERVES

4

The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership created this warm, comforting savoury crumble recipe for a quick and filling dinner to use up any veggies or leftovers in your fridge.

INGREDIENTS

For the filling

- 1 small onion or leek
- 2 sticks of celery
- 2 tbsp of oil
- 1 stock cube in dissolved in 300ml of hot water
- 1 tbsp of gravy granules or of plain flour
- 1 tbsp of mixed herbs (fresh or dry)
- Salt & pepper
- **Mix of root vegetables.** For example 1 carrot, 1 parsnip or turnip, ½ swede, 2 potatoes/sweet potatoes – or any combination. Washed (peeled if necessary) and cut into 1-2 cm chunks.
- **Approx 400g of soft vegetables cut into pieces:** cabbage, courgette, frozen peas, cauliflower, broccoli florets, mushrooms – whatever is available.

For the topping

- 100g plain flour
- 70g oats
- 110g butter/vegan butter cut into cubes
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs
- Optional extra topping 2 tbsp of mixed seeds and/ or 110g grated cheese
- Pinch of salt and pepper

EQUIPMENT

- Large pan with lid, jug, ovenproof dish (roasting tin/casserole dish)

METHOD

- 1** In large pan, warm the oil. Add the onion/leek, celery and root vegetables. Fry over low heat for a few minutes. Stir regularly. Cook for a few minutes, until they start to soften up, but not brown.
- 2** Take off the heat. Add the soft vegetables and herbs. Stir in the gravy granules or flour so the vegetables are coated.
- 3** Pour the stock into the pan, stir well. Put on heat and bring back to boil.
- 4** Cover the pan with a lid, turn down the heat and simmer until all the vegetables are cooked. Approx. 15 minutes. Add more hot water if getting dry.
- 5** When veg are cooked. Taste and add salt/pepper. Place to one side whilst making the crumble topping.
- 6** Set the oven to gas 6/200°C/400°F.
- 7** Mix flour, oats, herbs, salt and pepper in a bowl. Add the butter cubes. Rub it into the flour with your fingertips until it looks like breadcrumbs.
- 8** Pour the vegetable mix into an oven dish. Cover with the crumble mixture (plus optional seeds or grated cheese).
- 9** Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until the top is slightly browned.

Try scrubbing veg instead of peeling to waste less plus there are more vitamins in the skin.

COMPOSTING



Composting is an easy way to make use of food that can no longer be eaten.

Transform your banana skins and veg peelings into soil that grows new food.

Everyone can compost

The best option depends on where you live and your personal circumstances.

Home composting for small spaces

Good option for patios or balconies. You don't need a big garden.

Green plastic bin ("dalek"):

- ✓ Cheap and easy to set up
- ⓘ Can be difficult to turn the compost

Wormery:

- ✓ Involves living beings (worms!) that turn scraps to soil
- ⓘ Needs a bit of care to stop smells

Community composting

- Good option if you have no outdoor space.
- Bring your food waste to a shared compost site to create soil for local gardens, schools, and community growers.

➔ Get composting: bhfp.org.uk/compost

Composting at home and in the community supports local wildlife.

“We live in a big block, but having worms on our tiny balcony gives the kids their own bit of nature, they love feeding the worms our leftovers. – DAN

Use your council food waste kitchen caddy

- Good option if you can't compost locally
- Add all cooked and uncooked scraps
- Search your local scheme online “food waste + [your local council]” (e.g.: Brighton & Hove, Lewes & Eastbourne, Adur & Worthing)

You can use local or home composting for uncooked scraps and your council caddy for cooked food.

Proper composting shouldn't smell – add cardboard or untreated sawdust.



FOOD & ITS IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE



One quarter of food produced in the UK ends up in the bin.

By throwing food away, we waste energy and water, and create greenhouse gases that are changing the climate.

Here in Sussex, this leads to hotter summers, more floods, and the loss of local wildlife.

How food waste harms climate & nature

- Food needs water and energy to grow, cook, and transport.
- When food is thrown away, it rots and gives off methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas.
- Collecting and processing waste uses trucks and energy.

Our most wasted foods: bread, potatoes, bananas, milk, salad.

Small changes in your kitchen can make a big difference for the planet and local wildlife.

Think about how long the leftovers on your plate take to go from your bin to a disposal site. Every step uses energy and creates gases.

Food waste in our homes

Over half of all food waste in the UK comes from households. This means most food thrown away starts in our kitchens. The rest comes from farms, factories, shops, and restaurants.



GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

It starts with
community – small
steps make a
big difference.

There are many ways to get involved and support community organisations.

Food Use Places is a group of over 15 organisations working together across Sussex to reduce food waste. The project focuses on neighbourhoods often left out of climate action. Through activities like composting, cooking, and sharing extra food, we help everyone learn new skills and build food use confidence.

Volunteer

Roles include:

- Youth cookery clubs, community cafés.
- Gleaning excess crops from farms.
- Preserving, processing, and sharing food.
- Composting food scraps.
- Recycling, sorting, and sharing surplus.

➤ Find the organisation that suits you: bhfp.org.uk/food-use-places

Events

Attend a community event, such as cooking class at the Community Kitchen, grab lunch at the Fitzherbert Community hub, or attend Love Your Living Soil in February.

➤ Find out what's on via the BHFP newsletter: bhfood.org.uk/sign-up

Access surplus food

You can pick-up and give away surplus food at foodbanks, community pantries, cafes and restaurants and high street stores, either directly or through apps on your phone.

➤ Find your nearest: bhfood.org.uk/surplus-food-network

➤ Download apps **Olio** and **Too Good to Go**

Social media

- Follow a Food Use Places project on social media and share with friends and family.
- Follow B&H Food Partnership on social media for more food waste tips. [@btnhovefood](https://www.instagram.com/btnhovefood)



LOCAL COMMUNITY MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

In 2024, our local Surplus Food Network saved enough food to feed over 5,000 people a week.

This significantly lowered the greenhouse gases warming the planet!

Every day, over 10 local organisations collect food from farms, wholesalers, and shops. Some use it to cook community meals. Others share it with more than 50 community food projects, including food banks, affordable shops, and community cafes.

The Real Junk Food Project make creative community meals from what's left over.

Visit your local community food pantry or surplus cafe to get inspired and access surplus.

Dan, a local Kemptown resident, goes to the Real Junk Food Project's community café every week. He told us:



I get a cheap meal and a chance to chat with my neighbours. It's pay-as-you-feel, which really helps. I used to just sit at home and feel really lonely. Now it's part of my weekly routine, and it's lovely to know we're saving food from the bin.



NOTES & PLANNING

Every small action adds up.

This is a space to plan meals, shopping lists, and note actions to reduce waste.

MY TOP 3 SWAPS THIS WEEK:

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MEALS TO BATCH COOK:

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ITEMS TO FREEZE OR SHARE:

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IT STARTS WITH COMMUNITY

By reading this, you are already helping reduce food waste and doing your bit for the planet. Together, small steps make a big difference.



Thanks to National Lottery players, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership has received more than £1.2 million over three years from The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest community funder in the UK. Food Use Places intends to minimise food's impact on our climate through the creation of a new norm – a food use mindset.

Food Use Places is a network of projects and people engaging communities that are often left out of climate action. Through activities like composting, cooking, and sharing food, projects help people learn new skills and take simple steps to waste less and reuse more.



Tel: **01273 234 810**
 Visit: www.bhfood.org.uk/food-use-places
 Follow: [@btnhovefood](https://twitter.com/btnhovefood)

