



How to do a food waste audit at home

Kiwi households throw away 122,547 tonnes of food every year. Do you know how much food *your* household is contributing to that number?

Most people have no idea how much food they're putting in their rubbish bins, because once the bin lid closes, you never see that food again.

Doing a food waste audit is an easy way to find out how much food (and money) you're throwing away.

What is a food waste audit?

A food waste audit requires you to measure all the food you are wasting over a period of time.

Why do a food waste audit?

Everyone throws away different foods for different reasons. To know how we can reduce our food waste, first we need to know what foods we are regularly throwing away and why.

It's important to know that food waste can be categorised into two types of waste – avoidable and non-avoidable.

Avoidable waste is food that could have been eaten, but wasn't e.g. leftovers, sandwich crusts, limp lettuce, brown bananas.

Non-avoidable waste is food that could not have been eaten e.g. bones, eggshells, orange peels.

How do you audit your food?

1. Select a container which you can use to place your food waste in. We recommend an empty 2 litre ice cream container.
2. Over the course of the day, place all the food which you were going to throw into the rubbish into this container. Include in here things that you would usually put into your compost, put down an insinkerator or feed to pets or animals.

3. At the end of the day, write down how full the container is e.g. half full, three quarters full or if you have filled it multiple times? If you have kitchen scales you can record the weight of the waste in your container.
4. Look through your food waste and record all the different avoidable foods in your container (anything that could have been eaten).
5. Dispose of the food waste as you usually would.
6. Repeat each day for a week (or at least a day or two).

Once you have a week's worth of data you should have a clear picture of how much food you are wasting and what the most common foods are that you throw away.

Now I know how much I waste, how can I reduce it?

Think about each item that is being wasted to see if there is a way that it could have been avoided. Maybe it could have been stored better so that it didn't go off as fast? Did you buy or cook too much? Maybe you could have frozen your leftovers?

Give yourself some time to make changes in your kitchen and adopt practices that will help you reduce your food waste. After a month or so, you can complete another food waste audit to see if you have managed to reduce how much food you are throwing away.

For more information on how to do a food waste audit visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz

