

SUSTAINABILITY: CLEAN YOUR PLATE...

Minimizing our individual environmental footprint

“How will we change anything, if we don’t rebel in the everyday?”

Mariana Mazzucato, Economist, Author, “The Entrepreneurial State (2013)”
and “The Value of Everything” (2018)

Mom was right when she said, “Clean your plate, there are starving children in Africa.” Today’s mantra should be: “Clean your plate, there are starving children in Africa and a planet to save”. Globally, one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted. This food loss occurs during production, at retail/restaurant outlets and in the home.

Actions You Can Take

In addition to the environmental impact of avoidable food waste, **the annual cost of avoidable food waste in Canada is \$1,766 per household**. Here are some tips to get us on the right track.

1. **Store food in the right places.** Clean you refrigerator regularly. Meat in the bottom drawer; nuts in the freezer; eggs on the fridge shelf not on the door.
2. **Cook only what you will eat:** When cooking, don’t over-serve food.
3. **Shop smart and realistically.** Plan your meals, make a list and take it with you. Know what you have and avoid purchasing duplicate items.
4. **Buy what you need.** Bulk shopping is only cost-effective and convenient if you use everything you buy.
5. **Treat expiration and sell-by dates as guidelines.** Begin to use your senses - sight, taste, smell - to assess your food. Very few foods have a true expiry date.
6. **Save and actually eat leftovers.** Keep track of what you throw away
7. **Use breathable wraps.** Plastic wrap eventually results in slimy, wet, rotten food .

For more ideas on how to avoid food loss, visit the Academy of Culinary Nutrition website. Click [here](#).

Annual Global Environmental Cost

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations quantified the cost of food waste at: **1 trillion USD economic costs, 700 billion USD environmental costs and 900 billion USD social costs**. Some of the most notable of the environmental and social costs are:

	USD Billion
Greenhouse Gas Emissions of 3.5 Gt CO ₂ . Based on the social cost of carbon.	\$394
Water Scarcity , particularly for dry regions and seasons.	\$164
Soil Erosion due to water causing nutrient loss, lower yields, biological losses and off-site damages. The cost of wind erosion may be of a similar magnitude.	\$35
Biodiversity Risks including the impacts of: pesticide use, nitrate and phosphorus eutrophication, pollinator losses and fisheries overexploitation.	\$32
Political Conflict due to soil erosion. estimated to cost USD \$396 billion.	\$396
Livelihood Loss due to soil erosion.	\$333
Adverse health effects due to pesticide exposure.	\$153

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Full-cost accounting Final Report. Click [here](#).

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HERE AT HOME



The study, The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste: the roadmap focuses on the Canadian record.

- 63% of the food Canadians throw away could have been eaten.
- For the average household generates 140 kilograms of wasted food per year
- Almost 2.2 million tonnes of edible food is wasted each year, costing Canadians in excess of \$17 billion!
- All types of food are wasted, but the most prominently wasted foods by weight are:
 - Vegetables: 30%;
 - Fruit: 15%;
 - Leftovers: 13%;
 - Bread and Bakery: 9%;
 - Dairy and Eggs: 7%
- ***32% of this lost and wasted food could be rescued to support the hungry in our communities***

Daily Canadians waste....

- **470,000** heads of lettuce
- **1,200,000** tomatoes
- **2,400,000** potatoes
- **750,000** loaves of bread
- **1,225,000** apples
- **555,000** bananas
- **1,000,000** cups of milk
- **450,000** eggs

Households are responsible for 14% of this loss.

Some Reading:

If you are looking to better understand the issue, please see the suggestions below. Links to the studies can be found by clicking on the underlined text.

The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Full-cost accounting Final Report.
Agriculture at the Crossroads

Treehugger: The Fight against food waste requires a new mindset.

Submitted by:
Ginny Boelhower, CFUW Oakville