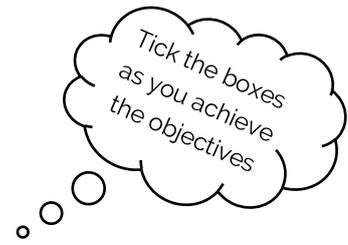


BIN BAG CHALLENGE

Section: Food

Weeks: 3 & 4



These two weeks our challenges are to:

- stop wasting food,
- reduce the packaging,
- reduce red meat consumption, and
- go organic as much as we can.

Ideally, no food should end up in a household bin. Composting is required to go fully zero waste, and might not be possible for everyone – but you can still reduce the rest of the waste, and advocate for your local council to organise composting solutions.

Where does the food you buy end up?



Objective 1 Be informed

- We can be led to think that overconsuming food helps farmers, as it drives volumes up, but it is not the case; buy better, organic, fair trade, encourage farmers but just don't buy more than what you need. If food waste was a country, it would be the world's third biggest contributor to greenhouse emissions. Start [here](#) and do more research if you need to be convinced, as there might be a lot to work on for the next two weeks: you need to be motivated!

Objective 2 No more food wasted before it is used

- Audit - Be true to yourself:** have you binned food recently because it passed the "best before" date, smelled or looked weird? If you have, get to the bottom of the problem and understand why you ended up in such a stalemate, having to throw away food.
- Find solutions to never ever be in this situation again.**
 - Bought too much? Improve your buying habits, [by planning what you need](#) and taking 'shelfies'.
 - Forgot it on a shelf, in the fridge? [Improve your storing habits](#), follow the "first in first out" rule.
 - Did not know how to cook it? Challenge yourself with [new recipes](#) or find neighbours who will use it.
- Get to know date labels.** Did you know that you can eat most products well after their best before date? More [here](#). Consider this now before binning items.
- Be a food saviour.** [Revive wilted veggies](#) with water. Eat the skin and scraps of fruits and veggies ([eat as the rest or make crisps or stock](#)). Cook mature fruits in cakes or jams. Make a soup out of older veggies. Hide difficult vegs in gratins. Don't know how to do that? We are here to help: try all our [save-them-all recipes!](#) There is always a good way to use bread, [whether it is too soft, too hard, it should never end up in the bin](#).
- Use your freezer.** Freeze anything that won't last until you can use them – did you know [you could freeze wine, butter, yogurt, herbs... well pretty much everything?](#) Just remember to use what's in your freezer! You can also check out [the Full Freezer](#) for ideas to use your freeze for lunchboxes, and even Christmas diners!

Objective 3 No more wasted leftovers

- Another moment of honesty needed. **Do you often bin leftovers?** Some extra soup or macaroni that nobody wanted, or food that remained on the plates? No? Even on the kids' plates?
- Can you **create a rule** in the household that members should always finish what they have on their plates? Make sure your housemates understand why it is important.
- If part of your meals ends up in the bin, find solutions to **always eat what you cook**. Avoid leftovers altogether by cooking just what you need (try [this tool](#) to know how much you need). Serve smaller portions, and go back for seconds if needed.
- Don't throw away leftovers – save them in containers/jars in the fridge/freezer** to use them later, on their own, or as a building block for other meals (curries into sandwich, salad in a pita, cooked vegs in a soup, ...). You can also organise a leftover buffet to empty your fridge – an easy Sunday night diner.

Objective 4 Consume less meat and go organic

- Switching to a plant-based diet is the [single biggest way we can reduce our impact on the planet](#). Is everyone in your household convinced and ready to reduce their meat consumption? If not, find how to advocate and convince them - to get at least to less than 70gr of red or processed meat a day per adult ([NHS recommendation](#)).
- Read more [here on ways to reduce your meat consumption](#).
- Set your own goals this week and start working towards it.** If there are big meat eaters among you, could you for instance commit to eating red meat only on weekends, and eating more organic chickens instead? If you are already low on meat, can you switch to meat only on the weekends? Make sure you have balanced diets, with [enough proteins though](#). Write down your goals and pin them on the fridge.
- Try to **go organic as much as you can**.

Objective 5 Avoid food packaging

- Identify the issue.** Go back to your waste audit, and check if you have a food waste packaging issue. Where is this packaging coming from? Ready-made food from supermarkets? Take-away food? Food wrappers, cookies boxes and crisps packets? Plastic bags, including carriers, bread, vegs and fruits bags?
- Find solutions.** The solution will vary depending on the issue. If take away and ready-made food are the issue, find out why you use them (is it that you do not know or like to cook? have the time to cook?) and try to find alternative solutions. Some ideas:
 - To avoid meal delivery/take away: stock up your pantry (check our cupboard pasta/houmous/risotto recipes); and commit to cook one more meal every week from scratch.
 - To avoid ready-made lunch at work: find a store where you can bring your own containers; eat in rather than take away; always have a napkin and cutlery in your bag to avoid single use items.
 - To avoid bags and wrappers: [buy in bulk](#); bring your own containers to the fish monger, butcher, and even delis; make your own [salad dressing](#).
 - Ask for a cooking class as a Christmas present, or a cooking book.[More info here](#).
- Commit to only **buy sustainable cookware**, towels, napkins, wraps (but don't get rid of what you have now before they are out of order!)
- If you haven't done so yet, check the kitchen cleaning section, with lots of ideas to swap sponges, scrubbers and other waste-producing items.

Objective 6 Find ways to compost what is left

Organic matter rotting in a landfill releases methane. But if you compost your leftovers in a well-maintained bin that lets in oxygen, you'll significantly reduce the amount of methane released into the atmosphere. However, composting is not such an easy task given how our cities are organised.

- [Learn more about composting](#) –impact, risk of attracting animals, type of compost bin best suited to your use
- Consider how you could compost your food waste: council? neighbour? your own bin? You can [find a compost bin that match your needs here](#).
- Compost bin owners, check this [to know what you can compost](#). Clear guidance, item by item.
- If there are no easy solutions for you, become a compost advocate: help develop solutions in your neighbourhood, contact your council. [Lambeth council](#) has been running a food waste program since 2014.

If you are short on time these weeks, concentrate on these four things:

- 1. Reduce your meat consumption, especially red meat. Go step by step but do it.*
- 2. Avoid take-away or delivery with non-recyclable/home compostable packaging, and look for items with less packaging when doing grocery shopping.*
- 3. Ensure you never waste food that you bought: buy less, store well, cook before the food goes off.*
- 4. Advocate for composting solutions – write to your council.*

And find time in the weeks to come to work on the other challenges. You can do it!