

Each year New Zealand households throw out the equivalent of three shopping trolleys worth of edible food. Depending on how much your grocery bill comes to, that can be nearly \$600 a year for the average New Zealand family.



Love Food Hate Waste is an exciting new campaign to help Kiwis reduce the amount of food that they waste in order to save money and the environment. The three year campaign, which launched in June 2016, is being run by 59 councils from around New Zealand in conjunction with WasteMINZ and the Ministry for the Environment. The focus for year one is 'love your leftovers', year two will focus on 'storage' and year three is about 'strategies for families' such as meal planning.

Food waste is a major issue worldwide, with one-third of all of the world's food going to waste. In New Zealand, 122,000 tonnes of edible food is sent to landfill on an annual basis. This amount of food could feed the population of Dunedin for two years.

In order to get a clear picture of what Kiwis are throwing away, a bin audit<sup>1</sup> was conducted around the country – or in other words, sorting through people's rubbish.

What was found? Bread is the most wasted food in New Zealand, with 20 million loaves wasted each year. Leftovers – last night's spaghetti bolognese, for example – are the second most wasted food.

Nearly one-third of all of the food wasted in New Zealand is vegetables, with fruit also a high contributor.

## New Zealand's Top 10 Most Wasted Foods

Top 10 avoidable food types	Tonnes	National cost
1. Bread	12,856 T	\$51,270,533
2. Leftovers	9,489 T	\$100,507,602
3. Potatoes	6,365 T	\$10,818,171
4. Apples	4,025 T	\$11,347,084
5. Poultry	3,403 T	\$40,792,129
6. Bananas	3,242 T	\$8,428,428
7. Lettuce	3,136 T	\$10,753,731
8. Citrus	2,867 T	\$9,084,713
9. Pumpkins	2,656 T	\$5,390,634
10. Cabbages	2,211 T	\$3,779,953

To reduce this waste, education is needed around the correct storage of fruit and vegetables – such as keeping bananas separate from other fruits in order to slow down the ripening process. This would hopefully save some of the 18 million bananas are being wasted annually.

Attitudes also need to be challenged regarding what is 'edible' as a large proportion of the vegetables discarded can be eaten, such as broccoli stems and the green parts of leeks. Many of us have been taught that you can only eat the broccoli florets and not the stalk, resulting in us literally throwing away half of our vegetables unnecessarily.

## Unnecessary Vegetable Wastage

What	Amount wasted each year
Broccoli stalks and leaves	2451 tonnes
Cauliflower stalks and leaves	729 tonnes
Silverbeet stalks	598 tonnes
Celery tops	269 tonnes
Dark-green tops of leeks	59 tonnes

Another way to tackle food waste is to reduce it at its source. Meal planning, shopping with a list and cooking the correct portions will ensure that there is less food at risk of going to waste.

While many view food waste as fundamentally an environmental ill, it is also a social and health issue. The Love Food Hate Waste website has resources to help families reduce their food waste. Reducing food waste saves families money, and educating people about storage and cooking practices, especially for fresh produce, can only be beneficial to their health.

For more information or if you would like to collaborate with Love Food Hate Waste contact:

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