

# How to Avoid Food Waste- Customer Plates

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LOVE  
FOOD  
hate waste



AROUND A THIRD<sup>1</sup> OF ALL FOOD WASTED BY HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES IS LEFT ON THE PLATE.

Depending on your business, there could be a potential saving of 34% in operating costs if you reduce the amount of food that is wasted on plates.

## Steps to Reduce Plate Waste

- The first step is to monitor plates as they return to the kitchen. Look at the plates for around a week to really understand your customers or conduct a waste audit to understand this in more detail (see fact sheet 4 for more information on how to conduct a waste audit).
- Encourage your kitchen and front of house staff to communicate so they can identify, how much is left on plates at the end of each meal.
- Use this information to adjust your portions, plates and menu accordingly.
- Encourage your front of house staff to provide information to diners on portion sizes, and sides so they can choose the right dish and reduce the likelihood of left-overs.
- Consider all your garnishes to see if they are necessary, research from the UK suggests that chips, vegetables, salad and carbohydrates are most commonly left on plates<sup>1</sup>.

## Provide Customers with More Choice

- Offering a variety of portion sizes, allows customers to order according to their requirements.
- Let customers choose side dishes. By allowing customisation, the customer can decide what goes on the plate, reducing the cost of waste, while potentially increasing customer satisfaction.
- Offer customers take home containers for any left overs (always comply with food safety standards and offer food standard containers). Research suggests that customers are more likely to accept a take home container if it is offered, as they may feel uncomfortable asking for one.

If your business is ready to commit to reducing food waste, become a Love Food Hate Waste Business Partner by visiting the website [www.lovefoodhate.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lovefoodhate.nsw.gov.au)  
To access other resources and fact sheets on food waste avoidance for the hospitality industry visit Hunter Councils Environment Division [www.hccrems.com.au/waste](http://www.hccrems.com.au/waste)  
[hccrems@huntercouncils.com.au](mailto:hccrems@huntercouncils.com.au)

This fact sheet has been produced as a series that includes;

1. How to conduct a food waste audit
2. How to avoid food waste - food preparation
3. How to avoid food waste - spoilage
4. How to avoid food waste - customer plates
5. How to manage excess or unavoidable food waste.

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<sup>1</sup> Waste & Resources Action Programme (2013). Overview of Waste in the UK Hospitality and Food Service Sector. Online accessed 15th April 2015. <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/overview-waste-hospitality-and-food-service-sector>