

# Let's Get Food Smart

## Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group

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Much of the food we buy never makes it to the plate. In fact, on average Victorian Householders estimate they spend over \$2,000 a year on food they don't eat! So, Let's Get Food Smart when buying, using, storing and disposing!

### Buy Smart

Plan to save! Take the stress out of worrying what to cook and when to fit in time to a trip to the shops for missing ingredients. Buy smarter with weekly meal plans, shopping lists and other simple tools to keep your family full – not your bin!

Smart Buying Top Tips:

- Check your fridge and cupboard for meal ideas and items that need using up.
- Make a weekly meal plan, including some days where you might eat food from your freezer or takeaway.
- Use a shopping list. Only buying what you need means you won't end up with extra, uneaten food.
- Check dates. Best Before dates refer to the quality of the product whereas Use By dates refers to when the products are no longer safe to eat.
- Beware of specials on items like soft fruits as these often spoil before you get a chance to use them up.
- Don't forget your reusable bags, especially your cool bags, so frozen items don't melt before you get back from the shops!
- Buy local and in season! The shorter the distance your food travels to your plate the fresher it's likely to be
- Avoid damaged or broken packaging, loose skin, soft spots or limp edges.
- Good fishmongers and butchers will always tell you what's in fresh, just ask!

### Use Smart

Cooking more than we need to is a common cause of food waste. Measuring before you cook is just one of many simple tricks that will help you make the most from your family's meal.

Read the serving sizes on packets and take a few seconds to measure ingredients before you cook.

Kitchen scales, cup measures, spoons or special devices like spaghetti measures are super quick and easy to use.

If you do have any leftovers these can always be used for tomorrow's lunch, stored in the freezer or even used in another meal.

Leftover cooked vegetables are great for adding to meals like frittatas, quiches or casseroles. Some of the tastiest meals can be made by using up bits and bobs from your cupboard so they don't go to waste.

## Store Smart

Stop leftovers from being overlooked and keep your foods fresher longer by making the most of your fridge, freezer and pantry to ensure there's always something tasty to eat at a moment's notice.

There's nothing worse than going to the fridge in search of something special only to find it has got the rot. Banish soft spots and mouldy mush simply by changing the way you store your food.

Here are some essential tips for kitchen storage survival:

- Check your fridge and freezer is operating at the correct temperature. A safe fridge temperature is between 0-5°C and freezers -18 °C.
- Stock up on airtight, reusable containers. Freezer and microwave safe containers are a particularly good choice.
- Use ice-cube trays for freezing sauces, liquids and purées in single portions.
- Label containers to ensure that you don't end up with tomato purée when you wanted blitzed berries!
- Keep small clean paper bags for storing specific foods.

## Dispose Smart

While it's best to try to avoid as much food waste as you can, there are sometimes when this is just not possible. But just because this food waste couldn't be avoided doesn't mean it can't be put to good use.

Get more from your unavoidable food waste by composting, worm farming or using a Bokashi Bin to feed your garden.

So, let's all get Food Smart!

For more Food Smart tips visit the Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group website [www.lmwrrg.vic.gov.au](http://www.lmwrrg.vic.gov.au) and follow us on Social Media.