

*your*  
**KITCHEN**



Work  
Smart  
Wise Up  
On Waste

 **Unilever  
Food  
Solutions**  
*Inspiration every day*

# Wise up on waste!

Reducing food waste is one of the biggest challenges for the hospitality industry world wide. In the UK alone, over 4 million tonnes of organic waste is thrown out every year – and this number is increasing! The food we throw away is a waste of valuable resources; it is expensive to buy and dispose of.

Food has a high carbon 'footprint'. It requires considerable energy to grow, harvest, transport, process, package, retail and prepare and consequently has a serious impact on our planet.

When considering food waste, most think only of the disposal expenses. However, there are a number of costs that need to be considered when estimating the overheads of waste.

We have developed a clear and simple waste audit for you to establish your current waste levels, along with a pragmatic guide to improving your waste management.

We hope once you have made some of our suggested changes you will be able to repeat the audit and see just how much money you have saved by reducing waste.

*So let's Wise up on Waste!*



Proper waste management can save you serious money. It is estimated that every tonne of food waste produced costs a business €2,000!\*

\*Source: Foodwaste.ie - Case Studies of Organisations Managing Food Waste Properly 2010.

# The hidden cost of waste

Waste is a hot topic on today's public and political agenda. There is a huge amount of global waste and the issue has to be addressed.

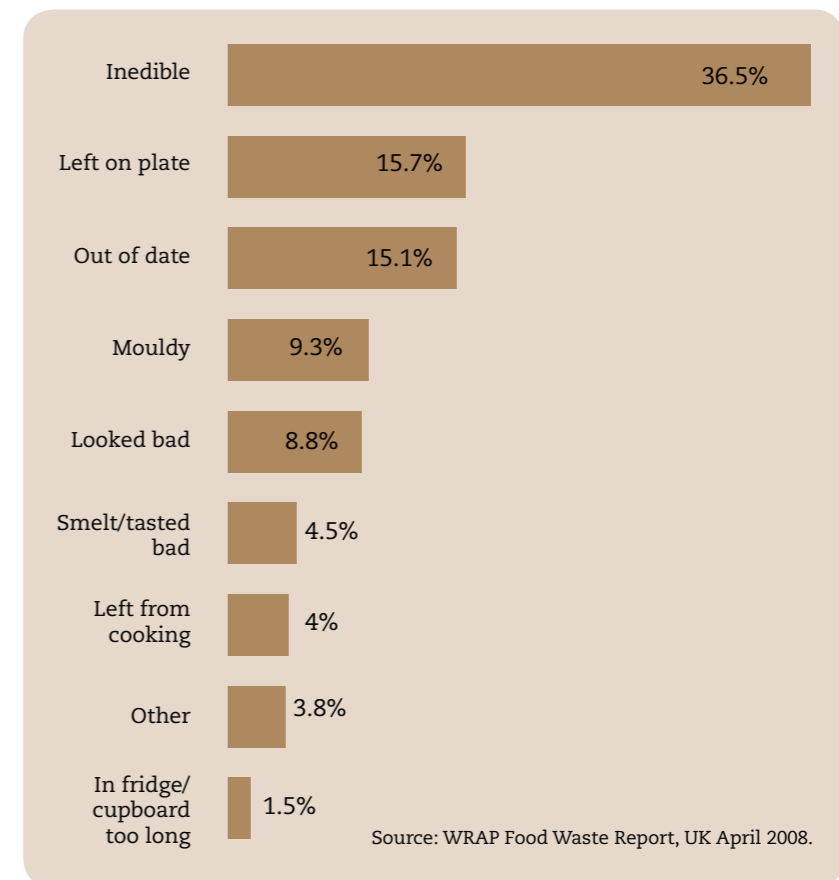
Besides the global aspect of food waste, there are economic implications that can determine the success or a failure of a business.

Disposal costs are the first that come to mind. This is the cost of items that have to be thrown away because they are out of date. However, there's more than just the cost of the food thrown away that needs to be considered:

- *Lost labour involved in preparing items*
- *Wasted energy for the delivery, preservation and preparation*
- *Lost revenues due to lost labour, energy and food cost*
- *Losses due to potential liabilities and other risks*

With the tools and advice presented in this module you can make considerable cost savings by implementing some small but creative changes in your businesses.

Look at the table to see the different reasons why food is wasted in the UK.



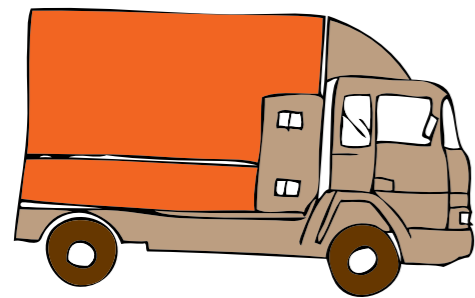
## Why should you wise up on waste?

- *You can run a more profitable and efficient business when you reduce the 'hidden costs' of waste*
- *You can reduce the risk of compromising health and safety regulations*
- *You can create waste awareness among staff/management*
- *Your business can make a valuable contribution to the environment*

# The waste reduction value chain

The essence of effective waste management can be found in the three R's: **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**.

The three R's become evident in several stages of the kitchen process. Wise up on Waste focuses on reducing the waste margin across all areas of your business.



## 1. Purchasing

Optimizing these steps means:

**1. Purchasing:** have real-time control over your stock and the sold items

**2. Storage:** maintain an overview of stock using an improved date sticker system

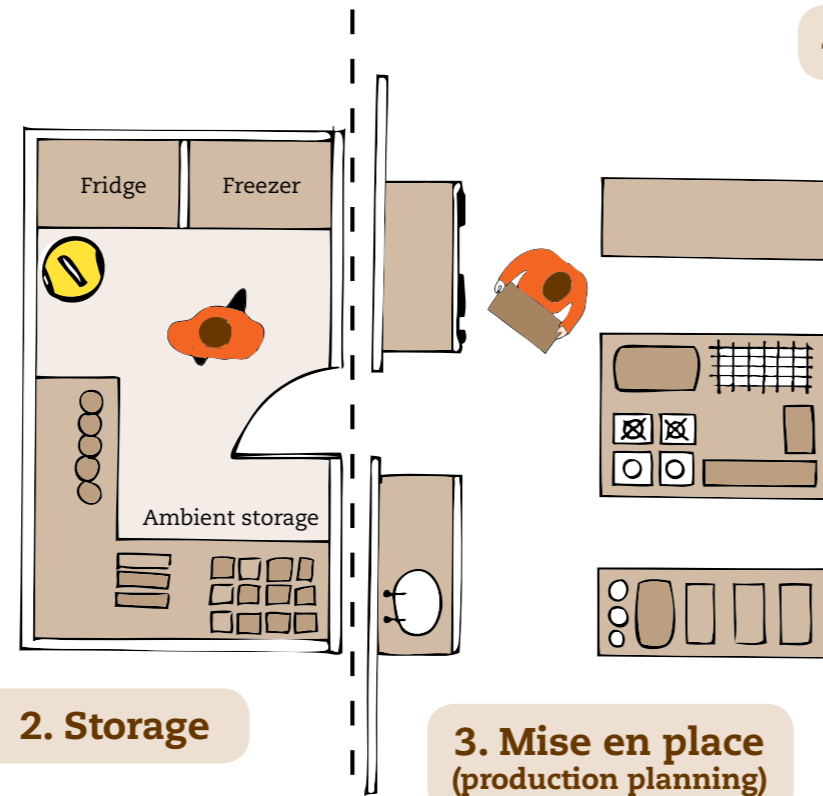
**3. Mise en Place:** produce items once you are sure they will be utilized and hence not over producing

**4. Preparation to Order:** will use your products intelligently and incorporate 'waste' products

**5. Portioning & Plate Waste:** the right portions will prevent your kitchen producing excessive plate waste

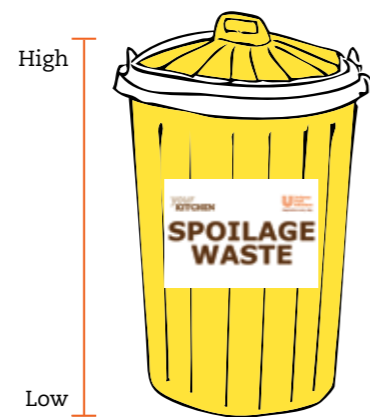
**6. Disposal:** learn from your plate waste and dispose of your organic waste sustainably

As you can see from the diagram the waste generated from the different areas of the kitchen can be segmented into 3 different types of waste; spoilage, preparation and plate waste. By segmenting your waste you will be able to see where your waste occurs.



## 2. Storage

## 3. Mise en place (production planning)

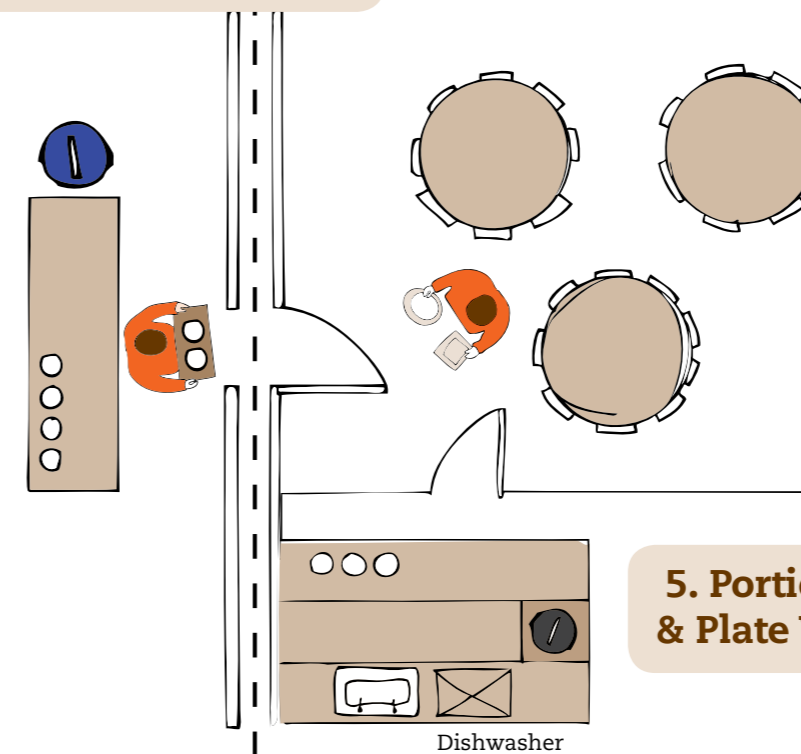


**The spoilage bin** covers waste from over purchasing and the stock room, fridges & freezers.



**The preparation bin** covers waste in mise en place and preparation to order.

## 4. Preparation to order



## 5. Portioning & Plate Waste



**The plate waste bin** covers portioning and plate waste.

## 6. Disposal



With the waste value chain in mind, we have partnered up with the Sustainable Restaurant Association to create a complete waste audit by placing specific bins in your kitchen. This will allow you to accurately measure your current waste and identify where you could save money. The next sections of this brochure give you practical advice and tools to address waste across the different areas of your business. Once you have implemented specific changes we urge you to carry out a second audit so you can quantify the results and see just how much you have reduced waste.



Food waste reduction of around 20% is a potentially achievable target for most restaurants\*

# Waste Audit

So what you need to do?

**Step 1** – Use our waste audit to measure your current waste levels.

**Step 2** – Identify where most of your waste occurs – i.e. from over purchasing or store room spoilage, from mise en place and preparation or from plate waste.

**Step 3** – Take action! Use our advice and tools to make improvements and involve your staff.

**Step 4** – Repeat the waste audit and see how much you have saved.

The waste audit has been developed with the Sustainable Restaurant Association as a clear and simple method of measuring food waste. It will give you visibility of the waste you are producing in each area. It will help you track waste information in a way that is informative for you and your staff and can highlight areas where food waste can be reduced. It will also show you how much is actually food waste. If you already know where your waste issues lie you can simply implement the practical changes we suggest and use the audit in the final stages to see your improvements.

\*Source: Sustainable Restaurant Association, Restaurant Food Waste Survey Report (2010). Based on study of 10 UK Restaurants.

We recommend conducting the food waste audit for at least 3 days – to get more accurate data of your operations across quieter and busier days. There is an Excel template provided to record data over 3 days or 5 days, depending on what suits your plans and operations.

Try and do the audit over a ‘typical’ period that includes busy times such as weekends. This will give you a more realistic snap shot of your waste. Also keep in mind waste may change over seasons so it is an idea to repeat the audit over regular intervals.

There is a full instruction guide to carrying out the audit process within the pack but it’s designed to be straightforward and practical so that it can be integrated into the operations of a busy restaurant and all staff – managers, chefs, kitchen porters and waiters – can all easily participate.

Did you know if a restaurant reduced its food waste by just 20% it could:

- Reduce food waste collection costs by €180-€2040\*
- Prevent 2-3% of their total food spend being thrown away\*

\*Source: Sustainable Restaurant Association, Restaurant Food Waste Survey Report (2010) Based on study of 10 UK Restaurants.



Before we consider waste across the six areas of the value chain, there are several steps that must be taken in order to reduce the waste in general.

Employ efficient forecasting

Making sure you use a well-balanced menu

Ensuring that staff are committed and willing to make the effort to reduce the waste



## Tool Kit

*Briefing sheet* for managers and staff at each site that will be coordinating the food waste audit, which includes some FAQs

*Template food waste chart/summary chart* for your staff to record food waste data throughout the audit

*Information signs* for staff awareness, to be placed in easy view of staff in all food preparation and disposal areas

*Case Studies document*, which explains in more detail the results from, and benefits to, restaurants who have undertaken this food waste audit

*Signage* for food waste bins (i.e. prep/spoilage/plate) if you wish to use these

*Food waste data tracking sheet* for recording data and linking food waste to KPIs

# Forecasting

Proper forecasting helps you to tailor your purchasing, stock and Mise en Place quantities based on the demand of your guests, thus reducing your waste. No one can predict the future.

However, you can make an educated guess on how much you are going to sell of the items on your menu and your specials. We can see how the impact of a well balanced menu helps to assess what items are sold more than others and if the items on your menu are worth holding on to. Forecasting goes one step further, as it also takes into account external factors:

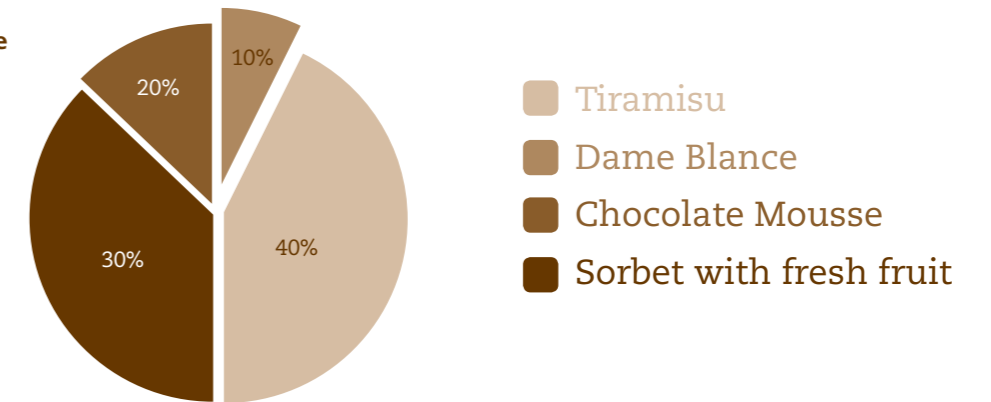


## Menu assessment

Every menu has its own distribution of demand. When you look at your dessert menu for instance, you can probably rank the items based on demand effortlessly. It goes without saying that this distribution should also be taken into account in your forecasting, purchasing, stock and Mise en Place. Outside your menu, you often sell specials – seasonal favourites, or dishes you have created with yesterdays leftovers. By assessing the nature of these specials, you can adjust the basic distribution of your menu accordingly as the specials have an impact on your sales.

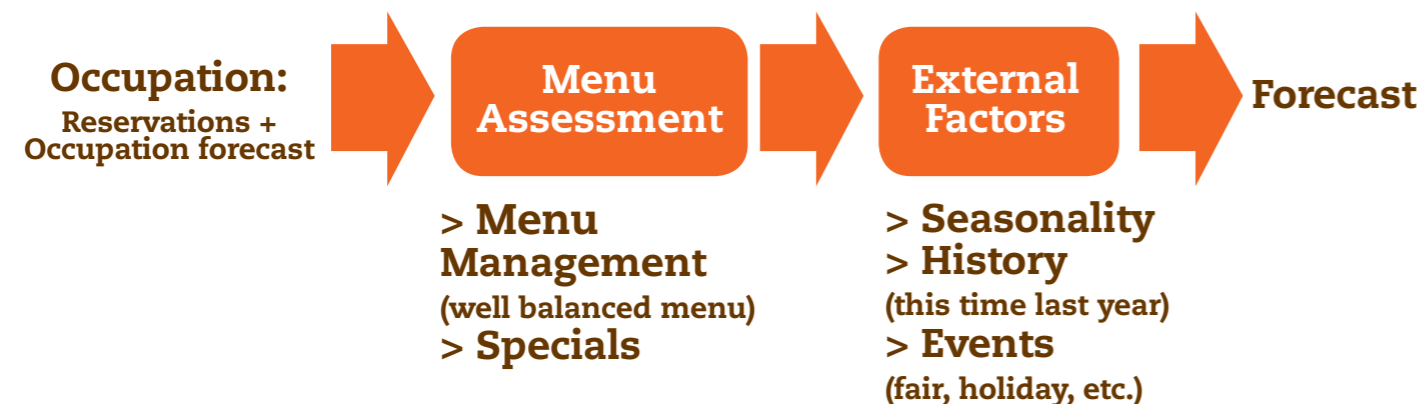


## Desserts example



Strawberries are in season, so you decide to create a special with strawberries. The distribution of your dessert sales normally looks like the example above during summer. Normally, 30% of the demand for desserts is for Sorbet with fresh fruit. Compared to the other items on the menu, the strawberry dessert

is most likely to be sold at the expense of the sorbet as they are most alike. So in your purchasing and prepping you can forecast to demise the quantities of this menu item. Seasonality in most countries is an important factor when it comes to forecasting.



## External factors

External factors are very important to take into account when attending to your forecast. The three major factors are seasonality, history and events. Seasonality has a two way impact on forecasting. On the one hand, seasonality has a large impact on the appetite of your guests, so adjust your menu accordingly. On the other hand, many businesses that have both inside and outside seating will find their occupation to differ significantly throughout

the year. Your history can be a valuable tool for your forecast. Last year's numbers often reveal trends in occupation that are very valuable. However, keep in mind that holidays sometimes shift or that a peak or decline of your business can be an incidental phenomenon with no repetitive cause. Finally, keep an eye out for local events. A large seminar or fair in the neighbourhood can unexpectedly turn a usually slow service well around.

# The impact of a well-balanced menu

As it is with most improvements in the kitchen, it all starts with a proper menu. A comprehensive menu with many different dishes means you'll need to have a lot of ingredients in stock.

More ingredients in your kitchen or stock means a greater risk of things going out of date and more labour in mise en place tasks. Once you start with a lean menu with fewer items, you'll be able to purchase much more precisely, keep a tighter control on stock and gain more control of your kitchen. This is a good first step towards reducing food and money waste.

The first step towards a lean menu with profitable dishes that are high in demand is proper menu management. Try and strip out slow moving dishes from your menu that take up valuable ingredients and labour time.



## Menu Management Tips

- Make sure that perishable ingredients are used for diverse menu items. This decreases the likelihood of a batch going out of date
- Don't be afraid of changing course; always keep a close eye on sales reports, even if your personal favourite dish is not selling, be ruthless and cut it. It is better to admit failure; react by changing things quickly before waste and losses kick in
- Wherever possible, replicate use of core ingredients throughout the menu; for example cucumber is used in salad, soup, chutney and as a vegetable. This vastly reduces the risk of raw ingredients going out of condition



Chris Barber – chef and food consultant shares his thoughts on waste.

### Chris says...

Menu planning is an essential part of kitchen management, especially nowadays when margins are getting squeezed from all angles. So I suggest pairing common sense with creativity; absorb our tips and tricks into your everyday routine, and make sure that your recipes and dishes deliver financially as well as creatively.

Think, Think, Think... part of cooking may be manual labour, but the cerebral side cannot be underestimated or neglected. So start every day with a bit of analysis and strategic planning; share your thoughts with your senior team and bounce ideas off each other... and don't forget, you are business people as well as chefs!

You should review what to make in house, and what to buy; remembering that the best business decision is the one that enables you to continue with a sustainable, profitable operation. Never lose your heart and passion for food, but allow your business head to lead the way!



## Smart Staff

Proper food stock management (ordering minimum stock, rotating stock), menu planning and portion control are important areas for minimizing food waste. Your staff will play a key role in implementing guidelines to minimize waste so their training and motivation is vital.

All staff must be made aware of the procedures and steps that should be taken:

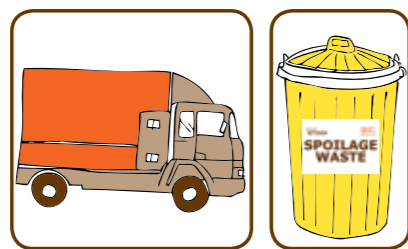
- Kitchen and waiting staff should be aware of the benefits of waste management. Take time to show your staff how to optimize waste procedures; it's your challenge to keep them motivated and updated!
- Where possible, a *green team* of staff members from all sections of the company (chef, purchasing staff, preparation staff, and waiting staff) should be set up to champion reducing waste
- Staff should be encouraged to provide suggestions on possible improvements
- Make employees aware of improvements and savings; this will motivate and encourage them to improve
- Use our set of kitchen posters to help you communicate the importance of waste in your kitchen



### Tool Kit

6x waste awareness posters





# 1. Effective purchasing

The easiest way to reduce waste is to not to purchase excess food in the first place. You can only uphold a tight purchasing policy when you have a proper system of insights into your past, present and future.



A menu must be integrated with thorough purchasing and production procedures to be effective. The menu will fail if these two areas have not been integrated. Purchasing must correctly interpret what ingredients are required and ensure availability in time for production. Kitchen staff must prepare the food on time, keeping food costs, quality, safety and quantity in mind. Purchasing and production are part of a complete system that revolves around the menu.

For larger companies, kitchen management software can save large sums of money, but for smaller or independent operators it's often not necessary and very expensive.

Purchasing software programs provide valuable information about the planning, purchasing and ordering process. They use powerful formulas, analyse historical and forecasted usage for each item: seasonal trends, market demand, and reservation lead times to provide suggested purchase orders.



## The following tips will help you to optimize the purchasing process:

*Use a small but simple purchasing list*

The process preceding an order is extensive but actually quite easy. A purchase list is as simple as it is effective. Once you know your stock level and how much you have sold, you can calculate the number of products you need.

The table should be filled in accurately by one person. They must state clearly the unit quantity to avoid confusion. Try and use the same unit configuration as your supplier i.e. If one case or one crate as featured in the price list.

This list can either be part of an expensive software package or a simple Excel sheet that calculates your order with a couple of clicks. Be warned! This system requires discipline and should be controlled centrally to avoid ordering errors that could disrupt the whole system.

Here is an example of a simple purchasing list that will help you get the process started:

Product	Unit	In Stock	Date	Standard stock	Order
<b>Fruit</b>					
Lemons	Crate (2.5 kg)	¼ crate	07/12	1	1
Golden Rennet	Crate (5 kg)	0	07/12	1	1
Jonagold	Crate (5 kg)	¾ crate	07/12	1	0
White grapes	Crate (1 kg)	0	07/12	2	2
<b>Vegetables</b>					
Lollo Rosso	Box (8 heads of lettuce)	0 (2 heads of lettuce)	07/12	1	1





### Chris says...

It is one thing to create a draft menu – but another to actually deliver to the margins required. Much of this depends on efficient ordering; otherwise most of your hard work to make profits can be undone with the stroke of a pen or the tap of a key.

In most cases, the days of going to market and personally choosing ingredients is reserved for TV chefs or insomniacs. Though a less glamorous part of the job, it is absolutely critical to get buying right.

I have met many chefs who rather cook than do paperwork. That's fine; recruit a senior guy in your team with the skill, aptitude and desire to look after purchasing on your behalf; just make sure they report in to you.

Part of the skill of a chef and a kitchen team is to know your own strengths and weaknesses; don't bluff your way through, and remember that it takes a strong and confident person to ask for help.

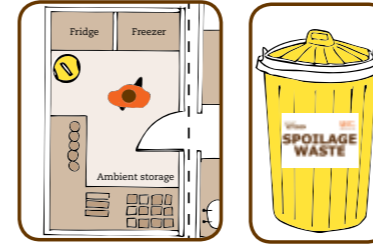
## Purchasing Tips

- Do not over-order food: Only order the minimum amount required for a period to avoid unnecessary spoilage
- Cook seasonal: A properly managed menu includes seasonal cooking. Ingredients that are out of season have made a longer journey to your kitchen and have a higher risk of spoilage.
- Only buy bulk if it fits with your demand/are non-perishable: Economies of scale can be a real opportunity, however, you'll be surprised at the costs of throwing away the excess stock
- Establish clear agreements between yourself and suppliers: Both have to be happy with the quality and agree a set standard
- Primary purchaser: Ensure there is one person who places orders. This will avoid duplication of orders or the wrong quantity being ordered. It will also leverage purchasing relationships
- Build a relationship with your suppliers: Treat them well and they will alert you to good deals, bring second daily deliveries if you get a run on certain items (meaning you can be generally leaner on stock as you know they will deliver again in the day)
- Consider frozen, dried, bottled or tinned goods as opposed to fresh where a comparable quality can be achieved: This way you do not compromise the integrity of your product, but reduce the amount of potentially perishable items and associated waste



### Tool Kit

Purchasing poster  
Purchasing List template



## 2. Storage

Stock control is focused on minimizing cost and holding space while ensuring enough product availability to meet demand. Hospitality operators work with high stock levels so they can react to peaks. However maintaining excess stock can actually cost money. The cost of stock can be divided into three areas:

- Cost of storage
- Cash flow and interest considerations
- Cost of spoilage



### Cost of Storage

Holding large quantities of stock can reduce your turn over. If you are using a space that could be commercially exploited by having guest tables you are reducing your potential to make money.

### Cash flow and interest considerations

Without stock there is no revenue. However, there are costs related with holding stock. A common misunderstanding concerning economies of scale is that the discount generated due to buying bulk is direct profit. However, capital tied up in stock is no longer liquid, and cannot be used for cash flow or to earn interest.

### Cost of spoilage

Excess stock is locked-up capital that often has an expiry date and is high risk. There is always a chance that products will not make it to the plate, damage can occur, dates expire or products stolen. Also consider the cost of ordering/storing the same stock twice.

It will cost you money when you...

Don't use the FiFo and LiFo system. This system amplifies the first in, first out method. This is useful when you are working with perishable goods. When you don't have a good overview of your stock you may end up using fresh produce that arrived that day, while overlooking stock from yesterday that has now spoilt. When using the FiFo and LiFo method, you always put the freshest products behind the old ones to keep the system working.

### Stock control

Proper stock control comprises minimizing both the risk of going out of stock as well as having excess stock. The theory of 'just in time delivery' is all about optimal delivery arrangements with suppliers. Control of your stock starts with a comprehensive system that tells you what you have in stock and what stock (prepared and unprepared) is nearing expiry. Monitoring demand based on seasonal influences further perfects stock control.

### Shelf plan

The perfect shelf plan for store cupboards and refrigerators does not exist, but here's some guidelines that will help you minimize cross contamination and reduce the risk of excessive food waste:-

Try vacuum packing your products. It extends shelf life and reduces odour so it reduces the risk of them spoiling other products.

**Whole fish**  
should be stored separately

**Whole cuts of beef and pork**  
should be stored separately

**Ground meats and fish**  
should be stored separately

**Ground poultry**  
should be stored separately

**Dairy products**  
will absorb flavours, so make sure you store them below other goods.

### Fast stock control:

Dry stock is neither perishable nor sensitive to cross contamination, hence, there are no strict standard guidelines on how to organise your dry stock. However it's worth remembering packaged foods kept at room temperatures should always be stored about 6 inches from the ground and away from the walls. One useful time saving tip is to organize your stock according to the purchasing list of your supplier or wholesaler. This saves you precious time when controlling your stock for ordering.

**Prepared food and food that is already mise en placed**  
can be stocked in cooling drawers in the kitchen instead of the big refrigerator



### Organize your storage room and fridge

Although every restaurant is different, there are some useful guidelines that will help. Firstly, decide what activities will be executed in your fridges, what the pick frequencies of the products will be and how you can utilize the space as efficiently as possible.

### Determine your activities

A fridge can have multiple purposes, are you intending to pack your products in the kitchen or in the fridge? Maybe you want to execute HACCP audits in your fridge? It is important to get a good overview of the activities that will take place in the fridge. It's a good idea to check products before you pack them, take this into account when you arrange your shelf plan. A well planned refrigerator can save your team valuable time.

### Determine your pick frequencies

It is smart to put products with a high pick frequency at the beginning of your route. In that way, the person who assembles the products needs less time to get the products he needs. Using 'roll-through' shelves are also a good idea. Products placed on these shelves will roll down as soon as a product is picked. This type of shelving keeps your fridge tidy, gives you a good overview of stock and guarantees the first in, first out principle.

### Utilize your space

To optimize your fridge think about every square metre available. Use trolleys that can be moved easily so you don't need to allocate as much space for movement as the trolleys can be pushed out of the way. You can also use an entresol to make an extra level which you can use to store products with a low pick frequency.





**Use the ABC-strategy to optimize the space of your storage**

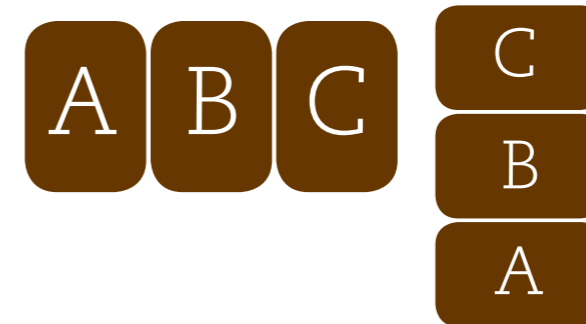
How do you bring all these tips into practice? To make sure you use your space in the right way you can use the ABC-strategy. This idea uses the theory that you have 3 types of products in your kitchen. The differences between the products are based on both their nature and their size.

**Category A:** products that have a high turnover but relatively little pick locations.

**Category C:** products that will be stored a lot longer than products in group A. They have a low turnover and take lots of space in the store room.

**Category B:** products in between A and C according to turnover and pick frequencies.

When you use these categories to classify your products you can group your storage room and fridge into three zones. Zone A will always be closest to the door, then B, then C. Below you will find two examples of a storage plan:



Improved storage using this model can **save you up to 60%** of your time! Be sure to revise your shelf plan frequently according to your menu management. Slow movers can turn into fast movers and the other way around so it's important you keep checking all the products are in the right spot.

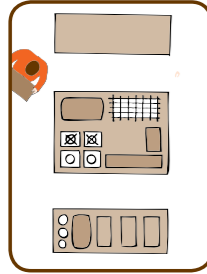


**Chris says...**

Commercial pressures exerted by owners often leads to a compromise seeing storage space the likely victim in the fight for room.

Only careful planning and logical systems can overcome the squeeze on space, but don't despair, sometimes less space can lead to greater efficiency. Physical restrictions can mean that you are forced to concentrate on stock levels, and this is no bad thing. Even so, there is no excuse for having to throw out past date items or out of condition fresh goods. Electronic stock control systems are great, but don't rely just on that. Any system needs manual checking – our tips and tricks will help, but the key to success is giving this area your undivided attention.

It is worth persevering with... just think about tossing cash into the bin when you throw out items to focus the mind; use this and other fitting analogies to inspire your team.



### 3. Mise en Place (production planning)

A significant part of waste resides in labour and ingredients. During the production phase, waste occurs when ingredients are not prepared carefully (e.g. excess trimming of meat, veg, or fish) or ingredients that can actually be used are discarded (e.g. trimmings to enrich stocks and sauces). As a result, a lot of costly waste can be reduced and reused during the production stage in most kitchens.

In the mise en place preparation stage, waste can be avoided in two ways:

1. By reducing the amount of waste that is unnecessary
2. By reusing the waste that inevitably occurs

#### Double jeopardy – throwing away prepared food

When batches of prepped ingredients are binned, serious money is lost. Operators often forget it's not just the cost of goods that are being thrown away; the labour cost is wasted too. So what can you do? Again, the numbers tell the tale. Smart planning will help you reduce waste costs in this phase.

#### Don't over produce!

Of course you don't want to disappoint your guests by having to tell them that certain items on the menu are sold out. However, there are smart ways to tune your mise en place to the demand of your guests.

Modern scratch ingredients are a good solution to prevent you running out of mise en place. They can be prepared instantly by any member of your kitchen team. Many kitchens have a back up of convenience ingredients that can be kept in store as an emergency.

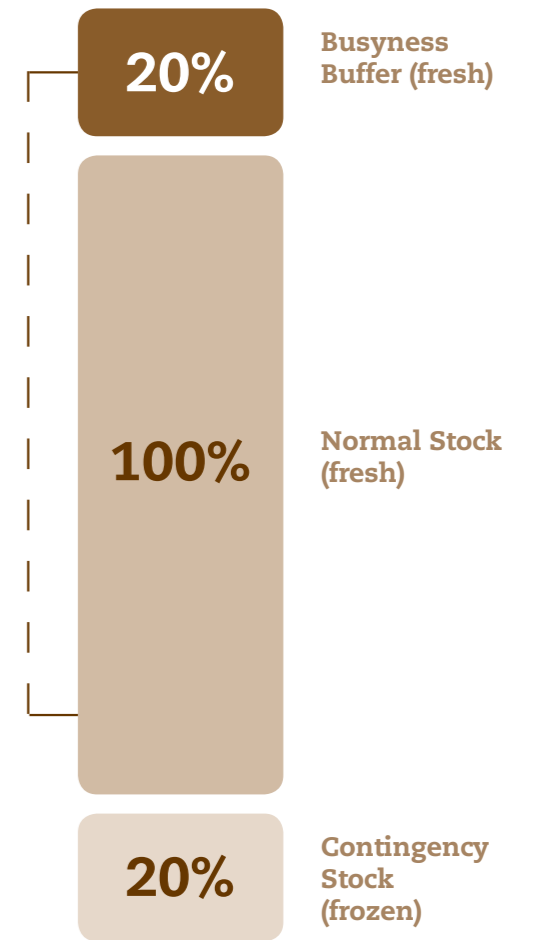
In the 'forecast' section, we saw that every product has a certain demand, simply multiply the demand of a prepped ingredient by the number of days the ingredient is safe to consume to find out what batches you need to prepare:

**Forecast \* Tenability (in days) = quantity to prep**

#### Proper planning

In many businesses, each chef has his or her own speciality. Not every member of your kitchen staff can prep every item on your menu, and it would be a shame to sell out. So make sure that you take into account who's working on what day so the right people prep the right amount of mise en place on the right day! As soon as you have gathered all your necessary data, it could come in handy to make a mise en place roster for your kitchen staff. This gives you and your staff members shared responsibility of the quantities prepped.

Unused Business Buffer is added to the Normal Stock the next day



This chart shows a strategy against over-producing. As you can see, in this model 100% of the stock is the amount of stock that you use on average during each day. To this 100% normal stock, a 20% business buffer is added. So, in total there is 120% fresh stock. Additionally, a lot of restaurants use a contingency stock which is frozen and only used in case of emergency on the highest demand days. The 20% business stock, if unsold, is used as the starting point for the normal stock the next day. This keeps your working stock fresh, and prevents selling out or binning precious prepped ingredients.

#### Specials

Reducing waste also means creatively 'selling' prepped items that otherwise would go out of date. Imagine a pre-ordered group cancellation for which you have prepared 10 main courses in advance.

Use the 'specials' board to help you sell these dishes. Get your waiting staff together prior to service and tell them about the specials they need to sell; you can add a competitive element for extra fun. The above of course also applies for batches that are about to go out of date or that simply moved slowly the day before.

Some of the items on your menu move faster than others, and some items will be more perishable. Make sure you have a backup plan for these dishes and put them on your specials board if necessary.

### Get creative

Waste is an inevitable side effect of cooking. Therefore, the creative use of waste is not a new concept. Some of the world's most famous dishes originate from attempts to reuse waste. Paella, potato salad and haggis were all created to utilise by-products.

Here are some ideas:

- Be creative with vegetable trimmings to make tasty soups
- Use leftover toast from breakfast to make breadcrumbs for fishcakes, and stale brioche for bread-based puddings or croûtons
- Use trimmings to create tasty starters, e.g. pork and chicken trimmings can be turned into pâtés and terrines
- Turn excess produce into chutneys, pickles and jams
- Flash freeze leftover grapes or berries on a baking sheet for use in smoothies, shakes or other recipes



## 3. Mise en Place (the role of modern scratch)

I am a creative and talented chef, but I am also a businessman; I need to know how and when I can use quality bought-in ingredients that will not compromise my standards.

With a bit of lateral thinking, I can cut both my mise en place, plus my waste, so that's win-win.

Here are just a few examples, but think along these lines and in no time you will be seeing the benefits; both on the plate, and in the office!



### Mise en Place Tips

- Cook smaller batches of pre-prepared staple food to make sure you don't over order. Let the numbers tell the tale
- Sharp planning and forecasting
- Plan carefully. This optimizes your labour efficiency and reduces waste
- Be flexible and reactive: tailor your mise en place to bookings, weather, holidays, etc, increasing and decreasing par levels accordingly
- Avoid the temptation of exceeding par stock levels and overdoing the mise en place, even when you have spare time. It is a false economy to 'get ahead', as often this leads to wasted stock and effort. There are better uses of your time!



### Chris says...

A kitchen lives or dies in service by the quality of the mise en place. In my experience on the stoves, running out mid service will lead to disaster.

If, and whenever possible, try and live on the edge a little; as we know, pointless mise en place leads to waste on product as well as labour, so a double whammy of wastage. Try and involve the whole team in the planning process so they can understand the aims and ambitions of the operation – go through the impact of poor planning with them so they too take ownership. Don't be afraid to reward your team for their efficiency; maybe just for fun, or even for financial incentive to help 'oil the chain' a little! Investing a few pounds in kitchen incentives could see a triple figure return – so well worth the investment.



### Tool Kit

Event Efficiency Tool

Planning Poster

Mise en Place Planning Form

### A Herb Crust

This is a great way to bring a restaurant touch to lamb, chicken or fish fillets; however fresh herbs are expensive, deteriorate quickly, and take time to prepare. In this case, mix a good quality herb paste with equal quantity of a light flavoured mustard. Spread this onto your piece of meat or fish and then press on fresh breadcrumbs; pan fry, grill or roast to create a great result.

### Customise your Mayonnaise

Fresh mayonnaise takes time and skill; whilst bought in product is often good, unadorned it is easy to spot as 'off the shelf'. Add a couple of homemade touches and you enhance a good product, making it a great one. For example, add a spoonful of basil and garlic purée, finish with a squeeze of lemon for a cracking 'sauce vert'. Otherwise, just add a spoonful of tandoori paste and you have a great coronation chicken dressing or a dip for Asian style snacks. Even simpler is to add a touch of wholegrain mustard to the mayonnaise base – a great accompaniment for sausages and mash or charcuterie boards.



### Fruit Coulis

Is not just for pouring on ice cream or desserts, it can be utilised in many ways. The quality is excellent, and it can save hours in prep time... try adding mango coulis to cheesecakes and fruit mousse mixes as opposed fresh – you will hardly notice the difference; as the fruit is harvested at its best, you are most likely to see better quality, consistency, and no waste. It is sickening to see how much fruit can end up in the bin, and by using a coulis you can keep this wastage to a minimum.



### Soup of the Day

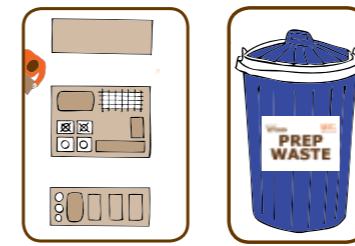
Wild mushrooms are a 'must' for modern gastro pub and club menus, but they are hugely expensive, take ages to prepare and can go rotten in a flash. Why not take a good wild mushroom soup base, and if you want, garnish it with a few sautéed fresh chanterelles or cepes, and even some ready made croûtons. You can still get the wow factor on your menu, but you remove the operational jeopardy from the dish. A similar principle can be applied to other soups based on luxury ingredients such as asparagus and even watercress. It doesn't matter if the soup base is a powder, or an ambient liquid, both will create the base perfectly for an enhanced restaurant dish.



### Roast Breast of Duck with Ginger

Sounds an elaborate restaurant dish. However, sear the duck breast to crisp the skin, place in a medium oven for 10 minutes and leave to rest. Utilise a ready made rich demi glaze and flavour with a good quality ginger puree. Enrich the sauce with the duck roasting juices and serve... that's it; easy, no waste, hardly any mise en place.

To succeed in a modern kitchen you must utilise every tool you have; that may be recipes, techniques, gadgets... but with equal importance... modern scratch ingredients.



## 4. Preparation to order

A menu's success strongly depends on the skills of the kitchen team and their equipment. Are they able to carry out what is on the menu? If skills or equipment are insufficient, the menu is destined to fail. The menu is a reflection of your kitchen and what you promise to your guests must be served. You should ensure that the kitchen team is abreast of the entire menu and all components.



### The standard recipe card

As the above paragraph explains, preparation is key. Most of these essentials can be summarized on a standard recipe card. The three main advantages of introducing standard recipe cards to your business:

1. Consistency across your menu
2. More efficient staff training
3. Cost analysis

*A standard recipe card includes the following:*

- Specific ingredients with purchasing and storage information
- Costs of ingredients and the card price calculations
- Dietary and nutrition information
- Quantities
- Ingredients grouped by sub items
- Cooking method(s) per ingredient group (i.e. dicing or tempering)
- Preparation steps
- Cooking temperatures
- Image for presentation/garnish (optional)
- Food matching (optional)
- Plate portioning

### Measuring matters

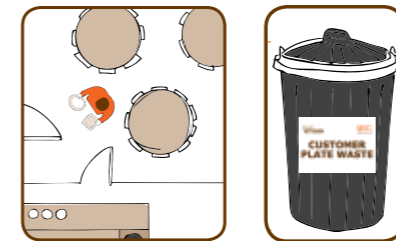
Use scales to measure out ingredients as well as portions. Your recipe should always be the basis for your selling price. It's not unusual to be over serving by more than 40%.





DID YOU KNOW?  
30% of food  
waste comes  
back from  
customers  
plates?\*

\*Source: Sustainable Restaurant Association, UK Restaurant Food Waste Survey Report (2010)



## 5. Portioning & Plate Waste

If a guest orders fish and chips, how many grams of fish do you serve? A too generous portion may not seem to be an issue, multiplied over days, month's years, the issue becomes more alarming. It's worth remembering that over-portioned meals often end up in bin, not always in the guest's stomach! Accurate portion control is key to reducing waste and increasing profitability.

### *A costly example regarding over-portioning*

Imagine a product that costs €20 per kilo (for example: filet of lamb). Constantly serving a filet that weighs 230 grams instead of 200 grams means an over-portioning of 30 grams. These 30 grams add an additional 60 cents of food cost to the dish. If you sell on average 25 servings per day this means an increase of food costs of almost €5,500 per year.

### **Triple-win situation**

Correcting your portion sizes might sound like a huge step to take, but on the other hand, but when executed carefully, it presents three major advantages:

- *Save money*
- *Customers will be more satisfied*
- *Help the environment and create your own green buzz*

It's a sad fact, but the percentage of food that doesn't reach the consumer is rising. For food service operators aligning portion sizes are an opportunity to cut costs significantly. Plate waste will never disappear completely; however, with proper portioning and the right options on your menu it can be reduced significantly.

### **Same dish, different size**

The theory of menu management encourages lean menus with profitable popular items. This doesn't mean that you can't offer the same item in different portion sizes. Portion options and the ability to eat light (e.g. two starters instead of a starter and a main course, or mini sized desserts for guests that are too full to eat a full dessert) are today's most important trends.



### Selling the solution

Giving guests control over how much they want to eat is a great way to start reducing your waste. Your waiting staff must fully understand the benefits of the offer for both the business and the customer. Train your staff to sell the benefits of a guest choosing their portion size and start reducing your waste immediately.

### Plate waste monitor

As with most improvement strategies, the most important thing is the engagement of your staff. Monitoring your plate waste is a great way of engaging your waiting and kitchen staff in the quest for less waste. The 'plate waste monitor' helps your team register what comes back from the restaurant as plate waste, so that proper actions can be undertaken to alter the portioning.



### Tool Kit

Plate Waste Monitor

Portioning Poster

### Portioning & Plate Waste Tips

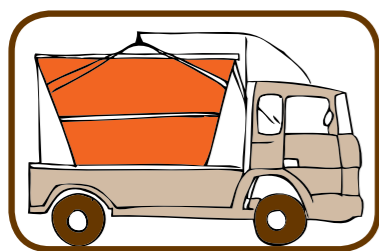
- Use standard spoons/ladles with a fixed volume to portion out your dishes. Every dish should be allocated its own sauce spoon to ensure portion consistency
- Create staff awareness around waste. Tell them the real costs to the business and the negative effects on the environment. You could also reward the employee with the best waste-preventing solution of the month, quarter or year
- Offer much smaller portions for children – you don't necessarily need to offer a separate menu just a smaller plate
- You eat with your eyes; present food creatively, cutting quantity served and potential waste. Often kitchens serve larger portions to attract custom and deliver value; sadly with eyes bigger than bellies, plates are returned unfinished. Carving meat as opposed to serving slabs, serving two fillets of battered fish as opposed to one large one, are just two examples of how you can be seen to offer value and generous portions. In these cases you retain a happy customer, but avoid plate waste
- Second helpings of side dishes: a good trick is to serve adequate portions of side dishes, and offer top-ups if required, as opposed to overdoing it in the first instance. You may think that this is open to abuse from greedy customers, but take a look at how many restaurants offer 'bottomless' soft drinks to see how successful this can be



### Chris says...

I recall cooking a very smart private dinner for a crowd of super model and actor types. My inclination was to serve modest, smaller than restaurant portions. It was a terrible shock to see much of the food come back untouched, yet I received the most incredible compliments. The host explained that her guests ate out lunch and dinner every day; the dinner party itself was no particular treat, and they have to watch what they eat when dining out so frequently. With hindsight, it would have been obvious to tailor the portion to the clientele... but when you are flat out cooking virtually 24/7, 'obvious' is not always apparent.

The key to getting this right is attention and communication; keep an eye on plate returns and portions, and make sure that the front of house team keep the kitchen informed of who the guests are – a super model is going to eat less than the rugby team!



## 6. Disposal

Waste is an inevitable side effect of any restaurant operation and an inevitable source of expense. Reducing the volume of waste is the only way to tackle this issue. The last stage of the three R's discusses recycling: disposing of your waste in the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly way.



### Don't WASTE money

The easiest form of recycling is selective waste sorting if the logistical system is in place. Some governments encourage this with subsidies and other benefits, others such as in the UK get no support unless it is paid for. There are ways to make money out of your waste. Slop oil and fat can be sold to processing companies that use this waste for cattle fodder. Other organic waste can be separated and sold or donated to farmers.



### Tool Kit

Disposal Poster  
Waste Audit



### Disposal Tips

- A best practice for profitable organic waste reuse is saving up your organic waste for your local farmer to pick up in exchange for a discount on the organic meat; this also makes a great selling story for your guests! As the above paragraph explains, preparation is essential. This may not be possible in some cases due to country regulations
- Try to utilize reusable storage containers with airtight lids as opposed to expensive cling film. This will also help reduce your refuse collection
- Many deli products come in good plastic or even glass kilner jars; save and recycle these for storage. Kilner jars can be used to display jams, honey, etc., and can even be used for chutneys and pickles which can be sold or given to guests as gifts
- Get your food waste collected for anaerobic digestion or composting, as an alternative to being sent to landfill. This can help save you money if land fill taxes are in place



### Chris says...

Commercial recycling invariably comes at a cost to the business, so you need to be committed to the cause to do something about it; the best way being to prevent creating waste in the first place.

Many inner city councils charge waste per sack. Consider a small compactor which would pay for itself in but a few months by reducing the amount of sacks used; remember that they are charged by volume not by weight.

Waste can be created throughout the food chain, but the restaurant being the end user often is the one who is left with the big cost of disposal. Work with your suppliers to minimize packaging- send the delivery driver back with unwanted boxes and packaging - the message will soon get across and back down the chain... no one wants the cost of disposal, so by pushing it back along the supply chain you will be doing something positive.



## Chris Barber, Food and Restaurant Consultant

Chris Barber is a dynamic and charismatic food professional with a career that has encompassed many of the aspects of the food business. From award winning chef, to acclaimed food writer, restaurateur and business consultant, Chris has an unrivalled insight into the world of chefs, restaurants and food.

Chris began his culinary career in the kitchens of a top London hotel, spending 2 years at the Intercontinental Hyde Park Corner, then one of the only Michelin starred hotel kitchens. He then joined The Royal Household, where he went on to become personal chef to HRH Prince of Wales for 11 years. There were many highlights during this period, including trips and tours abroad, and working sabbaticals in Britain and Europe's top kitchens.

After leaving HRH, Chris owned and ran a successful hotel and restaurant business, before moving on to create a successful consultancy career with clients including Royal Shakespeare Company, Warwick Business School, Royal Albert Hall, Garsington Opera, Pizza Express (Gondola Holdings Ltd), Festival Culinaire Bernard Loiseau, St James's Hotel and Club and a long list of start up and relaunched hospitality and food concepts. Chris has become an expert in new concept launches, especially focussing on healthy, nutritious fast food offers. He also coaches and mentors start up entrepreneurs, many new to the food industry. Chris implements sound and practical green and waste saving policies to all of his clients, with both environmental and cost saving benefits in mind; waste management and kitchen efficiency are a particular area of expertise.

Chris's consultancy, Leiths Food Solutions is partnered with the world famous Leiths School of Food and Wine, and with that association he has a ready made food network and knowledge base.

Chris has enjoyed a successful career as a freelance journalist specialising in food and rural affairs, and runs a number of food websites and festivals, as well as contributing regularly to TV and media food concepts.



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