

Food waste diary

You'll find an explanation of why you might like to keep a food waste diary on page 33. Here's some pointers for filling your food waste diary in.

Day

What day did the food waste happen? Useful to keep track of as you may notice certain things get discarded on certain days, or that certain days are better (or worse). From here you can think about why that might be.

Time

You can be specific (8.07am) or just keep it more general (lunchtime, mid-afternoon). Again, might highlight some habits.

Food – edible

Any food that you discarded that is still edible. You might not have much in this column (most of us don't discard food that's still edible very often).

Food – inedible

Any food or parts of food that are (and always were) inedible. Cores, pips, stems, rinds, etc. Don't include food that was edible and then went bad here.

Food – once edible

This column is for spoiled food – anything that was originally edible, but went bad, exceeded its use-by date, and smells or looks questionable.

How much

It's good to keep a record of quantity, but how specific you are is up to you. You might like to weigh everything, record the number of something, use the quantity (exact or estimated) – or use a mix.

Really why

It's more useful if you can think beyond 'it went bad' or 'I didn't like it'. Why did it go bad? What was it that you didn't like? Whenever you come to a 'why' ask yourself 'and why was that' until you can dig down to the real reason the food was discarded.

Tip: Some of what we think of as 'inedible' can still be eaten. I've included some more familiar edible bits that are commonly discarded in the Fruit & Veg Guide.

Once you've completed your food waste diary you might like to research some of your 'inedible' bits to find out if you can eat them after all. Think of it as free food!

Example diary

Day	Time	Food – Edible	Food – Inedible	Food – Once Edible (Spoiled)	How Much	Really why?
Mon	Lunch			Rotten pineapple	1/2	Been at the back of fridge for 2 weeks - forgotten about. Used half for recipe but didn't plan for other half.
	4pm	Fruit teabags			Whole box - 1	Didn't like taste. Were a gift.
	6.30pm		Leek ends		2	Recipe said to use white part only.
	After dinner			Slice of cake	130g	Had mould on it. Was stored in an open plastic bag on counter. Had planned to eat at weekend.
Tues	6.30am	Oats			2tsp	Pouring from a big box and spilled on the floor
	Breakfast			Milk	200ml	Was sour – had been in fridge for two weeks. Probably bought too much.

My diary

Day	Time	Food - Edible	Food - Inedible	Food - Once Edible (Spoiled)	How Much	Really why?