



FOOD TRACKING CALCULATOR

QUICK START GUIDE

The Food Tracking Calculator helps you to track how much food is being thrown away in your business. It automatically calculates what the food thrown away is costing you and shows what savings your business could make. When used alongside the other materials in the “Guardians of Grub” Starter Pack, such as the 7 day tracking sheet, the Food Tracking Calculator can help you to reduce the amount of food thrown away in your business.

HOW IT WORKS

The calculator can track food thrown away over a 4 week period. The Week 1 data is your “baseline” data (i.e. before you make any changes). Your potential savings will be calculated on what you record as thrown away in that week. The Week 4 data is then used to show you what impact the changes you have made could have on your business. If you have already recorded food thrown away in the 7 day tracking sheet you could use that data as your Week 1 data.

TIPS ON USING THE CALCULATOR

- 1 The calculator captures the data you enter from your tracking sheet to show food thrown away over a four-week period starting on a Monday. It can take a couple of days to get used to the process, so it's a good idea to brief your team and have a couple of practice days before you start entering data.
- 2 It might be tempting to start making changes straight away, but it's recommended that you carry on with business as usual for the first week so that you have a realistic baseline.
- 3 Select the appropriate category for your business from the drop list on the '**DATA ENTRY**' sheet. The calculator uses different cost data for different types of food service businesses. The figures are based on research carried out for **WRAP**¹.
- 4 Use three bins or containers in the kitchen to separate and collect Spoilage, Preparation and Plate waste. Make sure the bins are clearly labelled and that staff know what should go into each:
 - Spoilage is food that goes off, goes out of date or is damaged so that it cannot be used to prepare meals.
 - Preparation waste is often called 'chef's waste', and comes from the food preparation process. Include non-edible waste such as egg shells and peelings, but not packaging.
 - Plate waste comes back from tables, including food from serving dishes. You should include non-edible waste such as bones and skins.
 - Buffet waste or overproduction is waste that is prepared and available for consumption but left uneaten.

¹ 'The True Cost of Food Waste within Hospitality and Food Service', WRAP 2013.

- 5 Weigh the contents of each bin using a set of metric scales. You could even use luggage scales for this.
- 6 For each day on the **'DATA ENTRY'** sheet, record the date, the number of covers and the separate weights (in kilograms) of the Spoilage, Preparation, Plate and Buffet waste. In the 'notes' column record additional information on what types of food are going in the bins. This is optional and doesn't have to be detailed but it's useful to note whether there are large amounts of a particular food. Also note down anything else that may be relevant such as a special occasion or event.

Food Waste							
Food Service Provider:		Please refer to the Food Service Provider definitions at the bottom of this page					
Restaurants		Select Food Service Provider Please select the hospitality and food service provider from the list.					
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	Day	Spoilage (kg)	Prep waste (kg)	Plate waste (kg)	Buffet waste (kg)	Notes (content of bins, special occasion)	
	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						
	Thursday						
	Friday						
	Saturday						
	Sunday						
	Monday						
	Tuesday						
	Wednesday						

- 7 When you have completed Week 1, get your team together and look at the **'YOUR RESULTS'** sheet to look at what is being thrown away and what ideas they have to reduce it. Start to make these changes either one at a time if you want to see the impact of each, or all together.

HOW MUCH FOOD ARE YOU WASTING?

FROM THE DATA YOU HAVE ENTERED SO FAR...

The total number of covers in week 1 was...	No data
	grammes
The average amount of food waste per cover was ...	No data
The average cost of waste per cover was ... (based on food purchase cost data from WRAP research. See 'BACKGROUND' tab)	No data
	tonnes
Multiplying this up to a whole year suggests that you would be wasting...	No data
	Costing the business an estimated ...
	No data

Where is this waste coming from?

Food waste by type

This chart shows where your total food waste came from in Week 1

YOUR RESULTS	DATA ENTRY SHEET	BACKGROUND	Chart1 - Waste (kg) by Date	Chart2 - Covers by Date	Chart3 - Breakdown by Bin Type	Chart4 - Average per Cover (kg)	+
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- 8 Keep measuring and recording food thrown away. The calculator can hold 4 weeks of data and uses the Week 1 and Week 4 data to calculate impacts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Food purchase is only 50-60% of the true cost of food waste to the business. Other costs include energy for storage and cooking, staff time, water and the costs of waste disposal. These costs also vary by sector. The red box at the bottom of **'YOUR RESULTS'** shows the true cost of food waste to your business.

THE COSTS SHOWN SO FAR ARE FOR FOOD PURCHASE ONLY

WRAP estimate THE TRUE COST OF FOOD WASTE including energy for cooking and storage, water, staff time, transport, administration and consumables amounts to an additional ...

49.5%

This means ...

the total average cost per cover of your food waste is estimated to be ...
and the annual cost to the business of your food waste is estimated to be ...

No data

No data

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FOOD MEASUREMENT

To make sure the calculator works for you and your business fully it is recommended that the following steps are taken:

WHO

Find a "Guardians of Grub" hero to drive the process and encourage the team to take part. This is really important; if your team aren't on board the review won't be as successful as it could be.

WHAT

Work out what type of food thrown away you are going to record, we recommend spoilage, preparation and plate waste.

WHEN

Choose a period to run the review which is typical for your business. Be sure to include both quiet and busy times. This will give you a good starting point or "baseline" which you can use to track progress.

WHERE

Choose where to do the review (e.g. kitchen, bar, front of house – you might want to cover some or all of these).

We'd love to hear about your savings, so why not share your results with us and get access to more free ideas on how to stop throwing away food in business. Contact us at guardiansofgrub@wrap.org.uk

The food waste calculator tool was produced by Tamara McNeill and Jackie Carter in the Centre for Enterprise at Manchester Metropolitan University Business School to support their work for the British Beer and Pub Association. It is being made available to Courtauld 2025 signatories as one of WRAP's 'Guardians of Grub' materials to assist with the estimation of food waste costs, but each user should make their own assessment about its appropriate use and the application of any results it produces. None of WRAP, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School or the British Beer and Pub Association accept any responsibility for any liability arising from the use of the Food Waste Calculator Tool or any of the 'Guardians of Grub' materials.

'Guardians of Grub' is a campaign to help food businesses save money and boost profits by throwing away less food. It aims to support food businesses with simple steps and handy resources to reduce the amount of food thrown away and help staff learn good practice. "Guardians of Grub" has been developed by WRAP under the Courtauld Commitment 2025.

The Guardians of Grub materials were originally developed by WRAP under the Courtauld Commitment 2025 for the 'Your Business is Food; don't throw it away' campaign. We would like to thank Love Food Hate Waste New South Wales and FoodSave London for their permission to reproduce some of the materials.

