**20 Facts About Food Waste**

World Food Day is held on October 16. On this day, we recognise the importance of ensuring a global sustainable food supply, which will become increasingly threatened as global temperatures rise. We also need to be more mindful of the immense amount of food that we waste. Food waste is a pervasive problem all around the world, not just among developed nations. Currently, over 800 million people are suffering from severe malnutrition, a shocking thought when one third of all the food that is intended for human consumption is wasted or lost. Food waste negatively affects the environment, the economy, food security and nutrition. Successfully dealing with the issue remains a great challenge for the coming years. Here are 20 facts about food waste that you need to know.

1. Roughly [one third](https://stopwastingfoodmovement.org/food-waste/food-waste-facts/)of the food produced that is intended for human consumption every year- around 1.3 billion tons and valued at USD$1 trillion- is wasted or lost. This is enough to feed 3 billion people.
2. The water used to produce the food wasted could be used by [9 billion people](https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/food-waste-facts) at around 200 litres per person per day.
3. The food currently wasted in Europe could feed 200 million people, in Latin America 300 million people and in Africa 300 million people.
4. Annual per capita waste by consumers is between [95-115kgs](https://stopwastingfoodmovement.org/food-waste/food-waste-facts/) a year for Europeans and North Americans, while in south and southeastern Asia, it is 6-11kgs.
5. Food loss and waste accounts for about 4.4 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions annually.
6. If food loss was a country, it would be the [third-largest greenhouse gas emitter](https://www.unep.org/regions/north-america/regional-initiatives/promoting-sustainable-lifestyles#:~:text=Globally%2C%20if%20food%20waste%20could,3.3%20billion%20tons%20of%20CO2.), behind China and the US.
7. Developed and developing countries waste or lose roughly the same amount of food every year, at 670 and 630 million tons respectively. Around 88 million tons of this is in the EU alone.
8. Breaking it down by [food group](https://stopwastingfoodmovement.org/food-waste/food-waste-facts/), losses and waste per year are roughly 30% for cereals, 40-50% for root crops and fruit and vegetables, 20% for oil seed and meat and dairy and 35% for fish.
9. If 25% of the food currently being lost or wasted globally was saved, it would be enough to feed 870 million people around the world.
10. By mid-century, the world population will hit 9 billion people. By then, food production must be increased by 70% from today’s levels to meet this demand.
11. Food losses translate into lost income for farmers and higher prices for consumers, giving us an economic incentive to reduce food waste.
12. In developing countries, 40% of losses occur at the post-harvest and processing stages, while in developed countries, more than 40% of losses occur at the retail and consumer levels.
13. At the retail level, large quantities of food are wasted because of an emphasis on appearance- in fact, [half of all produce is thrown away in the US](https://olioex.com/food-waste/food-waste-facts/) because it is deemed too “ugly” to eat; this amounts to 60 million tons of fruits and vegetables.
14. An area larger than China and [25% of the world’s fresh water supply](https://www.mapleridge.ca/1776/Food-Production) is used to grow food that is never eaten.
15. The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals aims to halve per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.
16. Promotions in supermarkets may lead to more food waste; we may buy more food that we don’t necessarily need if we think we are getting more for our money.
17. According to a survey conducted by [Respect Food](https://www.respectfood.com/article/11-facts-about-food-wastage/), 63% of people don’t know the difference between the “use by” and “best before” dates. Foods with “use by” dates are perishable and must be eaten before the given date. Foods with “best before” dates can be eaten after the given date, but it won’t be at its best quality.
18. Because of quality standards that rely too much on appearance, crops are sometimes left unharvested and rot.
19. In Europe, 40-60% of fish caught are discarded because they do not meet supermarket quality standards.
20. In the US, organic waste is the [largest source of methane emissions](https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/food-waste-facts).

These facts tell us that we need to reduce the amount of food waste that we produce or at the very least, learn how to reuse leftover food to feed humans and animals or to produce energy and compost in order to close nutrient cycles. We hope that these facts about food waste have inspired you to rethink your consumption habits!