

# 1

## Check your stock

Make one employee responsible for the stock, checking the use by dates and quality. You will be aware of the food that might go off soon and adjust the daily menu accordingly, or even donate the food. You can also buy pre-prepared ingredients with longer use by dates.

# 2

## Loosen up the standards

The standards that have been set for service in quick service restaurants are very strict – e.g. the time during which it is possible to serve pre-prepared food to the customer. Consider whether a few added minutes would actually harm the quality of the food, or damage it. If these standards are set by central management, open a debate about the possibility of change throughout the company.

# 3

## Get your staff involved

Leave more experienced workers to supervise newcomers. This minimizes errors made out of negligence including unnecessarily large offcuts, burnt or otherwise spoiled food. Organize trainings and educate the team. People will appreciate their professional progress and they will be satisfied with their careers.

# 4

## Inform your customers

Inform your customers about what the consequences of food waste are and what they can do to prevent it. Also try to conduct satisfaction surveys more often, this will help you notice the changes in consumer behavior, requirements and needs.

# 5

## Attract with a discount

Ready made meals that did not get served or sold can be sold discounted. You can use one of the existing mobile apps, where customers order their food and pick it up at your premises – in the Czech Republic these are for example the Nesnězeno or Jídlov apps.

In Czech cafeterias, canteens and fast food chains, an average of 45 kg of food is thrown away daily. More than 50% is thrown away in the kitchen, 36% comes from leftovers on the consumers' plates and 14% is unserved, unsold food. European restaurants throw away an estimated 17 billion Euros worth of food yearly. That is money that could be invested a lot more efficiently. But it is not just about finances. Food waste also significantly contributes to the global climate crisis. Help us change it. Saving money as well as the planet. These recommendations on how to reduce waste in these types of operations came about because of the research done in the RedPot project, which was the first ever on the topic of food waste in quick service restaurants in the Czech Republic.

# How to save food?

Recommendations for canteens, cafeterias and fast food chains.

# 6

## Use technology

Vacuum packaging can extend the shelf life of food by three extra days and if you shock freeze unsold meals, they can last even longer. You can also freeze individual ingredients of the meal and then heat them up according to the amount of incoming customers.

# 7

## Donate ingredients as well as ready made meals

In compliance with the pre-determined storage conditions, you can donate chilled food and drinks, fresh and frozen meat, fish, fruit, vegetables and baked goods. Unserved and unsold food can also be donated, however, food safety standards are very strict.

Recommendation numbers 9, 10, 11 and 12 apply in particular for canteen and cafeteria types of operations. Fast food chains mostly work on other principles and are not as flexible with menu changes.

# 12

## Take photographs of the sample meals

Sample meals, which are shown during service, are often discarded and replaced multiple times during the day. Replace these meals with electronic screens with photographs of the food. You can also easily state the ingredients and spices used as well as the allergens.

# 11

## Adjust portion sizes

Many customers already know in advance that they will not finish the entire portion served. Give them a chance to ask for a smaller portion. If you are bound by a contract, try to negotiate with the management of your client companies and regularly mention how much food remains on the plates and how much of their money is being invested unnecessarily.

# 10

## Invest together

Technologies used for extending the shelf life of food can be very expensive. Try and have a discussion with your long-term clients and work together to cover the costs.

# 9

## Plan ahead whenever possible

Ordering systems are one of the most effective solutions to get the right amount of meals prepared according to the amount of customers. In combination with a hot buffet you can cover an increased demand from any unexpected customers. In addition, you can narrow the range of options towards the end of the service period.

# 8

## Recycle

Waste cannot be avoided entirely. But by sorting it correctly you can save money. The collection of mixed municipal waste is usually more expensive than sorted waste. The basic rule is to separate organic waste from raw materials of animal origin so that it can be compostable. You should also sort oils for further usage (for biofuel production), food waste (into biogas waste stations), meat offcuts and bones (into rendering plants) and old baked goods (for animal feeding).