

# Food Waste Avoidance Benchmark Study

At a glance – Cook it

LOVE  
FOOD  
hate waste

**Cooking too much food can result in wasted food. In NSW we throw away \$694 million of leftovers and more than 800,000 tonnes of food per year.**



We cook too much food when we:

- do not consider or measure serving sizes
- prepare extra food just in case it is needed
- serve more food than we need.

We can reduce food waste by:

- **measuring** and **preparing** the correct serving size.

## Background

To better understand community knowledge, attitudes and behaviours about household food waste 1,200 NSW households were surveyed as part of the *Food Waste Avoidance Benchmark Study 2009*. This study is the start of a series of analyses to monitor food waste related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the NSW community over three years.

**At a glance – Cook it** highlights findings from the social research into food preparation and cooking behaviours in NSW.

## Cooking too much is one of the main reasons food is wasted in NSW households

- 7 per cent of respondents indicated cooking too much as the main reason they waste food
- 25 per cent indicated cooking too much as a secondary reason
- 22 per cent rarely or never considered portion size when preparing meals
- 32 per cent said it is difficult to know how much to cook per person.

We often cook too much because we do not consider serving size or measure the amount of food we need. We also like to have extra food just in case. Families with children are the most likely to prepare too much food.

When we cook and serve too much, family and friends are often unable to finish their meal.

Leftovers on the plate can end up:

- in the bin
- being fed to pets
- on the compost heap.

NSW householders throw away more than 800,000 tonnes of food per year. Food in the bin often ends up in landfill and produces methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times stronger than carbon dioxide.

Measuring the amount of food we need prior to cooking is one way to reduce the amount of food we waste.

The Love Food Hate Waste serving size calculator suggests how much food is required per serve of individual food items. It is a useful and easy tool to use and can help reduce food waste in your home.

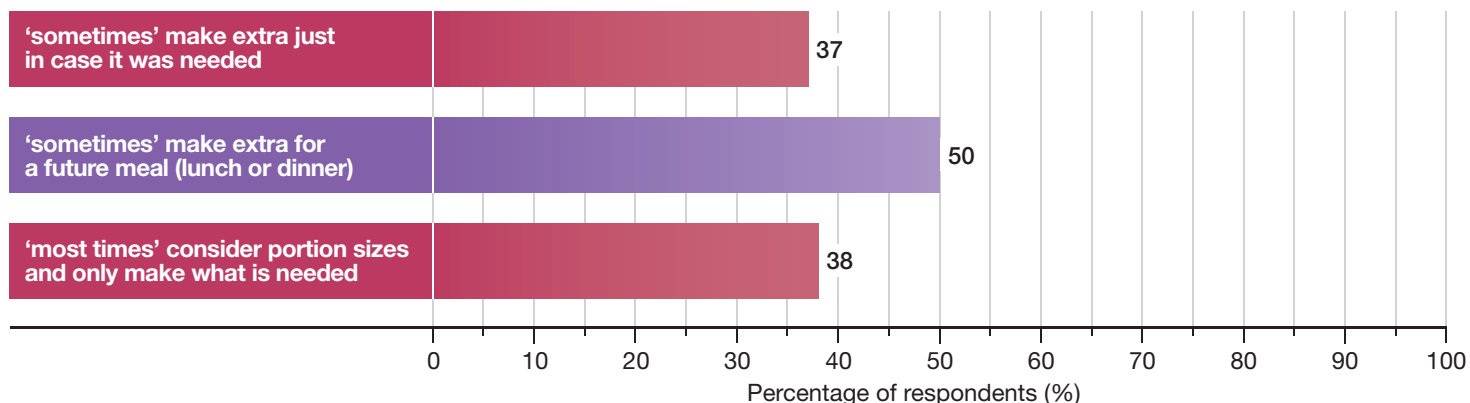
By planning, considering serving sizes and measuring the amount of food required, we can reduce the amount of food wasted.



## Common cooking behaviours

Our behaviour when cooking can influence the amount of food we prepare.

Most common responses when asked about cooking behaviours:



On average we cook at home four nights a week. More than a third of respondents cook at home five to seven nights per week. People aged over 55 years are more likely to cook meals at home.

Many people cook their main meal at home making planning and considering serving sizes an even more important way to help reduce food waste.

Single people and those in shared households are more likely to eat out and buy takeaway meals.

When eating out or ordering takeaway think about how much food you really will eat – serving size still matters even if you are not doing the cooking.

### People are prepared to change the way they cook and prepare food to avoid food waste

Nobody likes to waste food and in fact most of us, 72 per cent, feel guilty when we do.

Encouragingly, more than two-thirds of respondents reported that they are willing to try and cook the right amount of food.

72 per cent of 18–24 year olds are willing to cook the right amount to reduce food waste. This age group spends almost \$25 per week on food that is wasted compared to the average of \$19.90.

## Love Food Hate Waste

To tackle household food waste, the NSW Government has developed the *Love Food Hate Waste* program. The program aims to raise awareness about the environmental and financial impacts of food waste in NSW and to reduce the amount of 'good' food being sent to landfill. By promoting easy and practical solutions for buying, cooking and storing food, *Love Food Hate Waste* will help the NSW community to reduce food waste, save money and our environment.

For more information, please visit  
[lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au](http://lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au)

or contact:

**Environment Protection Authority**

**Phone** (02) 8837 6000

**Email** [info@lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au)