

Make the most of your Christmas food

The festive season can be an expensive time of year, but it doesn't need to cost the Earth.

Around a quarter of all the recycling collected in west Cheshire in December and January is food waste, and around one third of us say that we are likely to waste more food at Christmas than at any other time of year. So how can we make the most of our food this Christmas?

All of the foods and drinks we buy have an impact on our planet's resources, all of our food sources need water and nutrients to grow and all of the processing that our foods go through before they reach our plates can be very energy intensive, which means that when we buy more than we can eat, we're not only wasting food, but wasting the vital resources and energy that go into getting the food onto our plates - All of which fuels climate change.

It is estimated that UK households throw away around 7 million tonnes of food every year, yet over 8 million people in the UK are struggling to afford to eat. It's time we did all we can to prevent food waste on this scale by reducing the amount we buy, reusing leftovers and reducing Carbon emissions by recycling what's left.

IF YOU'VE GOT IT, USE IT!

The first step in reigning in the panic buying is to work out just how many people will be with you for meals for the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Look at the calendar, there may be several gaps that you had forgotten about when a meal is not needed.

A good habit to get into is making sure that you only buy what you need. Make a list or take a picture of your food cupboard to save time and money before you dash to the shops. You might be pleasantly surprised at just how much forgotten food you have in the cupboards and freezer.

Don't forget to rotate your food stock when you're adding to shelves and drawers, placing your older items toward the front to make sure they're used first. This can prevent food going out of date.

SMART STORAGE

Did you know: *The greenhouse gas emissions associated with a year's worth of potatoes thrown away from UK homes is capable of melting almost 1 million square meters of Arctic Ice! Spare a thought for polar bears who rely on Arctic ice to hunt for food to see them through the warmer months.

Half of the food people throw away could have been eaten. Keeping food out of the bin is good for your pockets and for the planet. So just follow these simple steps to get the most out of your food.

- Make sure your fridge is set to below 5C. If your fridge is too warm perishable food will go off much quicker.
- Be sure not to over stock your fridge, as your fridge works best to keep food cool and fresh when the air can circulate.
- Fruit and veg packaging have been designed to help it stay at its best for longer, so don't take the packaging off until you're ready to eat the food.
- Don't forget to freeze food before it's 'use by' date and label your leftovers so you know what it is and when it was frozen.
- Tins are just as nutritious as fresh, so using tinned vegetables and fruit is just as good and counts towards your 5-a-day.
- Cool leftovers as quickly as possible after cooking and store them in the fridge. Eat within two days or freeze for another day.
- Once opened, food like cheese and ham keep better if they're well wrapped by re-closing the pack, wrapping in cling film or foil, or putting it in an airtight container.

MAKING A MEAL OF IT

Without a meal plan for the Christmas period, it is highly likely that we will buy far too much 'just in case' and in the run up to Christmas the temptation to grab and stockpile goodies is strong.

If you would like to take the hassle out of the holiday season, why not check out the handy downloadable shopping lists and meal plans for those cooking this Christmas.

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/article/christmas-dinner-all-wrapped These are designed to help you deliver a three-course Christmas feast with minimal waste.

If you prefer to go it alone, you can simply write out a menu plan so you can see where time and effort can be saved, make the most of the food you have and be creative with any leftovers.

LOVELY LEFTOVERS

Roasted veg is almost a dead cert at Christmas and any extra you have left can make a tasty roast dinner soup or that old favourite bubble and squeak. Leftover wine and beer can even be frozen in ice cube trays to flavour casseroles, risottos and gravy too. If you are lacking inspiration, visit: www.lovefoodhatewaste.com where you can access a huge selection of recipes.

Did you know that the global food system is one of the main causes of deforestation, biodiversity and water scarcity which is feeding climate change? So, before throwing away those bananas that have been shipped halfway around the world to turn brown in your fruit bowl, think about other recipes you might use them for such as delicious banana bread, peanut butter and banana flap jacks, or even banana ice cream.

SHARE THE CHRISTMAS JOY

We all have some edible food we haven't opened, either can't eat or don't have space for which often goes to waste.

This year why not check with your local food bank or community grocery to see if you can donate your unopened food instead.

Household Waste Recycling Centre Christmas 2021 opening hours

Day	Date	Frodsham	Neston	Northwich	Tattenhall
Friday	24 December 2021	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm
Saturday	25 December 2021	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday	26 December 2021	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday	27 December 2021	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm
Tuesday	28 December 2021	8am - 4pm	Closed	8am - 4pm	Closed
Wednesday	29 December 2021	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Thursday	30 December 2021	Closed	8am - 4pm	Closed	8am - 4pm
Friday	31 December 2021	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm
Saturday	1 January 2022	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday	2 January 2022	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm	8am - 4pm



Sites at Winsford, Ellesmere Port and Chester will keep to normal opening hours over the Christmas period. All sites will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. To find out more visit: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

working in partnership



Cheshire West & Chester Council

Christmas 2021 collection dates

There will be no changes to collections during the festive period.

Garden Waste Collections will be suspended for 12 weeks commencing Monday, 6 December 2021, and resuming on Monday, 28 February 2022.

Find out what you can recycle over Christmas at: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-bin

Garden waste collection service

From Monday, 28 February 2022 there will be a £40 annual charge for garden waste collections. If you would like your garden waste collected on your scheduled garden waste collection day from Monday, 28 February 2022, you will need to make the required annual payment.

Look out for more details, including when you can subscribe to the new garden waste collection service at: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-bin

Visit: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Don't forget:

1. Garden waste can be recycled at your recycling centre for free.
2. Composting is a great free way to improve the soil in your garden.
3. You can share your garden waste collection service with a neighbour.

Cheshire West
Recycling
Tomorrow starts today

Cheshire West
and Chester