



FACT! – Food Action!

# FACT! Workbook

To help you discover and explore your food habits  
and to change some of them,  
in three topics:

## Part 1: Food & Waste

Part 2: Food, Climate & Environment

Part 3: Food & Health

Part 4: Ripples on the water





**Visit** the [Food Action web site](#)  
**Consult** the [FAct! online reference library](#)  
**Contact:** [info@globalactionplan.com](mailto:info@globalactionplan.com)  
[EU Projects Website](#)

**Content** devised by GAP International and curated in cooperation with our project partners in Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Spain.

*Disclaimers:* We have consulted many leading sources to make Food Action easy; but we are neither environmental specialists nor health practitioners. We are unable to offer any specific health advice, nor do we endorse any specific products. We are here to help you take small steps, locate those who can offer you professional expertise, and offer you guidance for your Food Action journey.

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## Welcome to Part 1 of the Food Action program!

If you arrived here by signing up for the online FAct! program, welcome to FAct! and your first assignments.

If you arrived via a different route, do take a look and see whether you'd like to register. Every participant counts!





# FOOD ACTION PROGRAM: Part 1

## Have you ever thought

Have you ever thought you might enjoy changing your eating habits? You're not alone.

- \* Inspired by those amazing TV chefs, or
- \* wondering if different food would bring better health, or
- \* concerned whether our grandchildren will have anything good to eat...

... there are many good reasons to step back and consider changes.

This program will help you find out what works for you, and then turn it into a new habit: a lifestyle chosen to benefit you, your family, and the rest of the planet.

## Food for thought

- \* One third of the food produced for humans is never actually eaten, but thrown away
- \* Food is the biggest single cause of climate change, and one of the biggest causes of other environmental damage
- \* Food is the biggest single cause of your health – or ill health
- \* Of all the hungry people in the world, more than half are farmers or farm workers

*You can make a difference.*





# You can make a difference

## And you can have fun doing it.

Think of it as a journey: one of the biggest adventures you can have.

And you are having it with your family, where together you will learn how to take (even) better care of your health, your economy, *and* your common future – together with many people all over the world. Here's the web site: (link)

The best part: IT'S EASY to make a difference!

## This is culture

It's no coincidence that we talk about 'cultivating' food. Food is culture. It's part of our heritage and our identity.

So an invitation to change your eating habits is NOT an invitation to abandon your culture. It's about combining the best of the old with the best of the new, to meet the new conditions of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The background to this program is concern about global food problems. Its focus is on *your opportunity* to be responsive and creative – to become part of the change that we all want to see.



# Three topics, three booklets - one program

## What you measure, you can change

As you follow the program you will

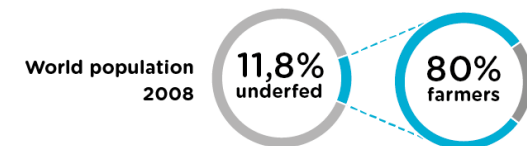
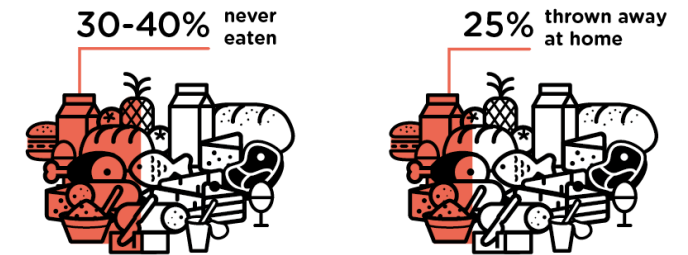
- \* Answer questionnaires about your eating habits
- \* Consider invitations to experiment with a new habit
- \* Be introduced to 'sustainable' recipes

## Three topics

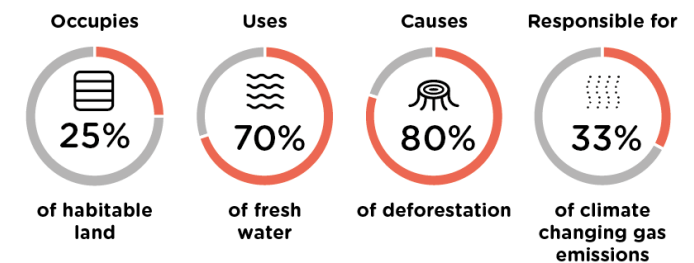
**Food waste** is a huge and growing problem. You will find below tips and ideas about how you can reduce the food waste from your household - and contribute to reducing it elsewhere.

Food, all along the supply chain, is the biggest single contributor to **climate** change and environmental damage. And food producers are the hardest hit by climate change. In Part 2 of the program you will learn how you can contribute to solutions.

Food is the biggest single determinant of **health** - or ill health. It's in your hands. In Part 3 you'll find out just how easy it is to improve your chances of good health.



## Global food production





# WASTING AWAY

It's EASY to reduce food waste.

You save money – for your family AND your community.

Together we can make a big difference.

## Invitations to action

In this booklet we offer you recipes for action to reduce food waste.

### AT THE STORE

Think ahead  
Smart shopping  
Read the labels  
Influencing your supplier

### IN THE KITCHEN

Keep track of waste  
Storing  
Preparing  
Leftovers

### ACTUAL WASTE

Turning waste into assets

### EASY COOKING

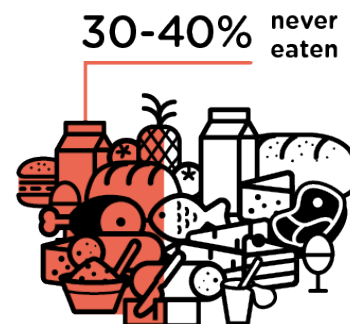
Nasi goreng  
Shepherd's pie  
Surplus aubergines?

## What works for you?

These recipes – for action and for food – are invitations. Try out those you find attractive.

This is just a 'starter kit': you'll think of more things as you go!

*Before you start: if you have not already done so, we suggest you [sign up for the online program](#). It's free, and it will help you keep track of your progress.*





# At the store: Think ahead

## Why act?

Buying food you will never eat is money down the drain, as well as a burden on the community.

Planning is the key.

*Planning is also crucial to the next action, Smart shopping*

## Recipe for action

There are two routes to planning.

1. Plan your meals BEFORE going to the store. Use grocery lists. Avoid the "I might need this"-type of shopping (impulse buys), especially for perishables. Very often these items are simply forgotten and left in the back of the fridge and eventually end up in the bin – right? Or,
2. Make conscious use of special offers: make the meal-plan in the shop, based on what is on offer. This is the advanced model!

But impulses can be good too... If you enjoy preserving, keep an eye open for special offers on in-season or nearly-overripe fruit and veg. Try some of the *recipes* for drying, freezing or bottling. Not

only a good investment but also a store of gifts for birthdays and visits.

Feeling hungry?

Better eat something first and shop later! If you're like the rest of us, you tend to buy more than you need when hungry or otherwise stressed.

## Expected results

You save money as well as waste.  
You spend less time shopping.

See if your local supermarket offers recipes for leftover dishes



# At the store: Smart shopping

## Why act?

Buying food you will never eat is money down the drain, as well as a burden on the community.

## Recipe for action

### *Bulk buying or just-in-time?*

Bulk buying of large quantities is a good way to save money for things that last a really long time – staples like rice and dry beans. Weighing out grains, nuts, and spices from bulk bins is also a way to avoid over-buying and reduce packaging.

But for perishables, unless you have a really big family, bulk buying tends to be expensive. If the recipe says two carrots – don't buy the whole bag.

### *Buy the funny-looking fruit and vegetables*

A huge amount of fruit and vegetables gets thrown away by retailers every day for 'cosmetic' reasons (size, shape, colour) even though they are perfectly edible and have the exact same delicious

taste. In self-service stores, give preference to the funny fruit! You may even find small or misshapen items on offer at a lower price; and sometimes really ripe items are offered cheaper, or even free.

### *Don't be put off if there is only a little left*

Shopkeepers report that if there is just one lettuce left, or a few bunches of radishes, they are very hard to sell – even to people who will buy them if there are lots left. So they tend to order more and discard the remaining items. Take pity on that last lettuce!

## Expected results

You save money as well as waste. You save on shopping and cooking time by having ingredients to hand when you need them.





# At the store: Read the labels

## Why act?

It's easy to confuse what is safe, unsafe or unwise to eat, and to reject good food on suspicion. 'Best before' is not necessarily 'bad after'!

## Recipe for action

*If you're buying for today's dinner,* look for products near the end of their label 'life'. You may not only save the store from discarding them, you could also get a bargain – and indeed some products, like cheese, are often at their very best then.

## Expected results

Less waste in the store – and in your home.

Use-by, best if used by, best before	Generally found on shelf-stable products. How long the product is likely to remain at its absolute best quality when opened. Not a safety date
Sell by	Found on perishables like meat, seafood, poultry and milk. Guide for retailer on how long to display and sell the product. Can be stored at home for some time beyond sell-by date if properly stored
Expires on	On infant formula and some baby foods. Always use before expired date has passed
Packing codes	Series of letter and/or numbers on packaged. Sometimes indicate date or time of manufacture



# At the store: Influencing your supplier

## Why act?

Many shopkeepers are unaware of the potential sales of less wasteful and more environment-conscious stock. Did you ever hear 'There's no demand for that around here'?

When they believe that, they may considerably buy in small quantities, which means higher prices; and often don't display prominently, which may mean more waste.

## Recipe for action

1. Look around the shop or market stand where you buy a lot of food.
  - \*Are there things you would really like to buy regularly, but which you don't find?
  - \*Ask the shopkeeper what it would take to have them regularly available
2. Ask the shopkeeper which products are most thrown away.
  - \*Are any of them products you would perhaps buy, if your attention was drawn to them?
  - \*Agree with the shopkeeper how they could be made more 'visible' before being thrown away
3. Get together with neighbours to tell them about the situation and reinforce the potential demand

4. *Bonus action:* You may consider supporting or starting a 'customer club' to help the shopkeeper on an on-going basis.

## Expected results

A better selection of goods for you, less waste for them.





# In the kitchen: Keep track of waste

## Why act?

It's easy to reduce food waste, and a lot easier if you know what foods you most often throw away.

## Recipe for action

### *Keep a log*

For one week, write down everything you throw out.

### *Make a date*

Make sure you understand the date labels on packaged products so you don't throw away good food – see above.

### *Look for patterns*

For instance do you throw away a lot of bread? Fruit? Vegetables? Dairy? Make a mental note to buy less of those things – or to cook/freeze half when you get home.

## Expected results

Knowing your own habits makes it a lot easier to avoid waste – and save money.





## In the kitchen: Storing

### Why act?

Simple changes in routine may help you reduce waste and avoid clutter.

### Recipe for action

#### *First In, First Out*

When you unpack your groceries, move older products to the front and put the new products in the back. Check the freshness of the older ones. Time to eat them up – or freeze, dry or pickle them, or give them away?

#### *Pack it!*

Food that is properly packaged remains edible for longer. Even a dish with a lid (a saucer or small plate) can make a big difference. Ripe fruit (except bananas) keeps much longer in the fridge.

### Expected results

Less waste, money saved; orderly fridge and cupboards make cooking quicker and easier.





## In the kitchen: Preparing

### Why act?

Some food parts that are routinely discarded could form the basis for new, nourishing meals.

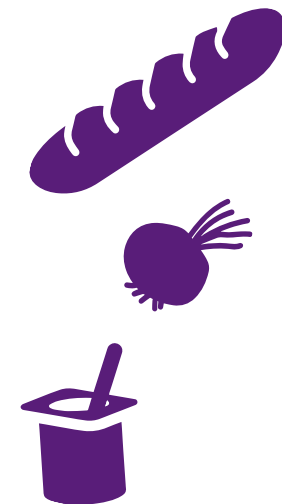
### Recipe for action

When preparing food for cooking, use as many parts as you can – or save for later use.

- \* Fruit and vegetables: a lot of nutrition is often in skin and stems. Wash well, rather than peeling. The exception would be when the fruit or vegetables have been heavily sprayed: for instance, don't use the skin of citrus, apples and other fruit unless they are organic.
- \* For meat, fish and shellfish, as well as vegetables, the parts that you might discard can often be made into nourishing soup or broth.
- \* If you do need to peel or trim, consider using the off-cuts for another meal: if not soon, then they can usually be frozen for later use.

### Expected results

Less waste, money saved, tasty additions to the menu.





## In the kitchen: Leftovers

### Why act?

Some of the world's favourite recipes started as ways to use up leftover food. If you're throwing out a lot of leftover food, you can save money, reduce waste – and maybe invent a fabulous new recipe by viewing leftovers as an exciting base for a new dish.

### Recipe for action

*Think before you shop*

1. Is there something left over in the fridge or larder that I could have for lunch or dinner?
2. If I don't want or need what's in the fridge, shall I freeze it for later?
3. Is there something in the freezer that would make a good meal today?

It may help to keep a list of what's in the freezer and/or fridge.

*Love your leftovers!*

Use leftovers to make delicious meals. Think of nasi goreng, shepherd's pie, risotto...

- \* Look up recipes for leftover dishes.
- \* Designate at least one dinner each week where you use up products you have at home. See what you have in your cupboards and fridge. This is common practice in many cultures – for instance, Monday can be a day for eating up weekend leftovers

*Preserve it!*

Do you have lots of fruit or vegetables at home that you don't know what to do with? If you freeze or bottle them, they will last a lot longer. Pickling can also be an alternative, to take care of surplus fruits and vegetables.

*Donate what you don't use or eat*

Do you have products at home that you are never going to eat? Donate them to a food kitchen before they expire. Do some research to see where this is possible in your vicinity.

### Expected results

Reduced waste and expense – and a huge feel-good factor.



# Actual waste: Turning waste into assets

## Why act?

There will always be some food waste at home – unless you buy everything pre-packaged in portions, which is a poor choice from the point of view of health as well as non-food waste (packaging). How you take care of your food waste also affects the environment.

## Recipe for action

The main way of making good use of waste food is by composting, to make new soil.

*Maybe you can send for central composting?*

In some communities you can send your organic waste for central composting, for example by putting it in special bags. The best thing about such a system is that it often

makes use of the gas (methane) that is released during composting, providing not only fertilizer but also fuel.

### *Compost at home*

Start composting in the backyard, on your balcony, even under the sink – with help from bacteria, fungi or worms. In this process food waste is converted into a useful resource. Feed your garden or your flowerpots by using the compost as a free, nutritious fertilizer that will help your plants to flourish.

There are many technical solutions on the market, for both indoor and outdoor use. Remember to check for any local regulations about composting, for instance to make sure you don't attract rats or other scavengers.

### *Donate perished food!*

An alternative is to use food waste for animal feed. Many small farmers would love food scraps to feed their animals (or to use for compost). If you have a local farmer or Farmers' Market you could ask there.

## Expected results

Composting brings about a dramatic reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfill or incinerator. It saves money for the community, and for you if you pay for garbage collection by weight. It reduces methane emissions from unsuitably managed organic waste. And, most important: it supports a natural food cycle by enabling the return of nutrients to the soil, reducing the need for artificial fertilisers.



# Easy cooking: Nasi goreng

## You need

- \* 1 onion or 2-3 shallots
- \* Tablespoon coconut oil or other cooking oil
- \* Leftover cooked rice
- \* Any other leftovers, shredded: vegetables, meat, seafood
- \* Sambal: many types available, choose your favourite
- \* 1 egg per person
- \* Soy sauce, chilli sauce or more sambal, to taste

## How to do it

- \* Chop and gently fry the onion/ shallots in the oil till transparent
- \* Add the sambal (try a dessertspoon if you're unsure about strength), stir well
- \* Add the rice, taking care to separate any clumps; fry gently
- \* When it's all warm, stir in the shredded leftovers
- \* Fry the eggs and serve as topping
- \*
- \* Serve as is, or with salad and chili sauce

## What to expect

This Asian fried-rice dish - popular in Indonesia and Malaysia - is a great way to use up leftovers, for a quick lunch or light dinner.

It has as many variations as there are cooks. So don't be afraid to experiment! (One favourite is to add peanuts...)







# Easy cooking: Shepherd's pie

## You need

- \* Cooked potatoes (about 1 kg) - boiled or mashed
- \* 1 egg (or 1 dl cream-substitute for vegans)
- \* 1-2 onions
- \* 1 tablespoon Your favourite oil for frying
- \* Leftover vegetables (and meat, if you have it), total around 1 kg
- \* 1 cube Vegetable or meat stock (max half a litre)
- \* Pepper to taste

If you don't have quite enough leftovers (vegetables) or potato, cook up a little more

## How to do it

- \* Cut the vegetables into bite-size chunks
- \* Mince or chop the meat
- \* Chop the onions and fry till transparent
- \* Add the leftovers, the pepper, and the stock cube dissolved in water
- \* Leave on low heat; set oven to medium heat
- \* Mash the potatoes
- \* Beat the egg and mix with the potatoes
- \* Put the leftovers in a greased ovenproof dish
- \* Top with the potato mash
- \* Put in the oven - with the grill on, if you have one - for about 20 mins; nice if the potatoes begin to look toasty

## What to expect

This is a typical British 'Monday dinner' using the weekend leftovers. Like nasi goreng, there are as many recipes as there are cooks.





## Easy cooking: Surplus aubergines?

### You need

- More aubergines than you can eat.
- \* 1.5 l boiling water
  - \* 2.5 dl Vinegar (malt, white wine, apple cider)
  - \* 0.5 tbp Salt

Clean jars with lids

*For serving:*

Pressed garlic

Mayonnaise or crème fraiche

### How to do it

- \* Peel the aubergines
- \* Put enough empty jars in the oven to contain them, set to 125° C
- \* Mix the water, vinegar and salt in a saucepan
- \* Pack in the aubergines
- \* Simmer (with the lid on) until the aubergines are tender, ca 15 min
- \* Transfer the aubergines to the hot jars, top up with the liquid from the saucepan, and close

Allow to cool, and store in a cool place till needed. Strain off the liquid, chop roughly and mix with garlic and mayonnaise/crème fraiche. Serve as a side dish.

### What to expect

A delicious and unusual side dish that goes with almost anything.

Preserving surplus veggies can be really simple, as in this recipe from Belarus: no matter whether you grow them yourself, or there's a glut on the market.





# HOW WAS THAT?

## Progress!

Did you fill in the second quiz on the web site?

It's so easy to forget the changes we make. Remember to give yourself a pat on the back for all you do to reduce food waste.


Are there more recipes you would like to try? Put a reminder note in your diary on or on the fridge door!

## Next: climate and environment

You probably noticed that some of the recipes for action to reduce food waste are also good for our environment.

In the next part of the program we take a closer look at food, climate and environment. Remember: food is the biggest single contributor to global climate change as well as a major source of pollution.

It's not difficult to contribute to a better environment. Take a look at Part 2 of the Food Action Program.



**Know Your Food Print**  
Your food choices affect the environment!

Agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and impacts the environment.

Making informed choices about the types of food you eat can reduce your "foodprint" - the negative environmental impacts of food consumption.