

# Waste Wise Ryde

**Towards Zero Waste  
Action Toolkit**



 City of Ryde

Lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep



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# Know your waste



**Waste is hard to avoid completely, however the choices we make can reduce the amount of waste we produce and make a big difference.**

**Knowing how much you throw away is a great motivator for action to reduce waste. The easiest way to check this is to do a waste audit at home.**

## **Step 1 - Organise your waste audit**

Choose how long you want your waste audit to last and make a note in your calendar – it might be a week, a fortnight, or even a month. Audits can be done daily or weekly depending on your preference.

## **Step 2 - Sort your waste**

Use containers to divide your waste into four categories – food scraps, soft plastics, recycling and other waste. Alternatively, you can do a visual inspection if you don't want to touch your waste.

## **Step 3 - Record your findings**

Make a note of the type and amount of waste in each category each time you do an audit to compare against improvements in the future. You may also like to take photos to document your progress.

## **Step 4 - Identify areas for improvement**

Look at what waste types you produce the most of and identify where you can make changes. Write these target areas down in order to make an action plan.

## **Step 5 - Brainstorm solutions**

Are there alternative products you could be using to reduce the amount of waste you throw out, such as items without excessive packaging, or reusable items like water bottles, coffee cups and beeswax wraps?

Can you think of ways to reuse your waste, such as turning your food scraps into new meals, composting, or taking your soft plastics to your local supermarket to be recycled?

Write your ideas down and make a commitment to incorporate these changes into your life.





# Meal Planning

**Meal planning is asking the 'what's for dinner' question once for the whole week, instead of every night.**

**Planning your meals, preparing a shopping list and prepping the ingredients before cooking are great ways to reduce food waste and save you time and money.**

## Planning your meals

- Have a look at your calendar for the coming week to check when you'll be home
- Think about what meals you'd like to cook and write down the ingredients you'll need
- Opt for ingredients that can be used in more than one meal
- Consider whether you can refrigerate or freeze extra portions to reheat later.

## Shopping for ingredients

- Write down your shopping list before you head to the shops and don't forget to take it with you
- Check what you already have in your pantry, fridge and freezer before you go
- Look at the use by and best before dates and make sure you'll be able to use it in time
- Only buy in bulk if you have enough room at home to store it correctly.

## Prepping your meals

- Batch cook meals you plan to eat more than once and refrigerate or freeze for use later on
- You may like to set aside time one night a week to prep and cook your meals for the week ahead
- Ensure you make the correct portions for the amount of people eating the meal
- Divide portions into containers ahead of time so you can grab and go.







# Portion Sizes

**Cooking too much is one of the main reasons we waste food. Preparing the right amount of food will reduce food waste and save you money. It also has the added benefit of looking after your waistline!**

## **Cooking the right portions**

A good way to gauge appropriate portion size without any measuring tools is by simply using your hands. Tailor your serving size to the size of each person's hands.

- Rice, pasta, potatoes and legumes = one clenched fist (equivalent to one cup)
- Meat poultry and other proteins = size and thickness of your palm
- Fish = whole of your hand
- Vegetables = two cupped hands

Serving sizes on packets are also good guides.

## **Getting your serving sizes right**

Use a dinner plate as a guide by dividing it into sections based on different food groups:

- Vegetables or salad = half a plate
- Protein including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, tofu, beans and pulses = a quarter of a plate
- Complex carbs such as whole grains and starchy vegetables = a quarter of a plate.

Please note these are guidelines only as you may have special dietary requirements or different preferences.





# Cooking with Leftovers



**Don't let good food go to waste – get creative with your leftovers instead!**



## **Create leftovers purposefully**

- If you prepare twice the vegetables you'll need for tonight's dinner, you'll have the starting point for a stir fry, curry or pasta later in the week
- Cook twice as much rice as you need and freeze the extra for use over the next couple of weeks
- Anticipate using leftover roast chicken on sandwiches
- Keep a portion of your dinner and pack it for lunch the next day
- Dedicate one night a week to eating the leftovers in your fridge.

## **Reimagine your leftovers into delicious new meals**

- Make a salad, soup, casserole, stir fry, curry or stew with any leftover ingredients
- Turn extra eggs and cooked vegetables into a frittata or omelette
- Create burritos or tacos with leftover cooked rice, meat and vegetables
- Have a 'make your own pizza' night and use up the extra bits of meat, vegetables and cheese
- Blend cooked vegetables with a can of whole tomatoes and create your own pasta sauce
- Make healthy juices with leftover fruit
- Turn your stale bread into croutons
- Use vegetable scraps to make stock.





**Storing food correctly will keep it fresher for longer, saving you time and money.**

### **Date labels**

- Use by dates indicate when a product may no longer be safe to eat. You should not eat, cook, or freeze it after the date displayed, even if it looks or smells fine
- Best before dates are an indication of quality rather than safety. You can still eat food after its best before date, but its flavour and texture may not be as good as before the date
- Be sure to label containers correctly and write the date on food items you put in the fridge or freezer.

### **Storage hacks**

- Airtight containers and jars with snug-fitting lids are perfect for storing items in the pantry, fridge or freezer. Using the right size is essential as it reduces oxygen in the container
- Buy containers with the same sized base so you can stack them
- Repurpose empty jars or coffee containers
- Divide bulk food into reasonable portions
- Freeze leftovers in portioned sizes to reheat and eat later
- Lunchboxes, lunch bags and bento boxes are a great way to keep your food fresh at work or school
- Tupperware, beeswax wraps and food pouches are excellent ways to store snacks when you're out
- Reusable water bottles, coffee cups and thermoses are great environmentally-friendly alternatives to single-use items.

# Food Storage Tips





# Fridge and Freezer

**Kitchen appliances and containers can help you store your food correctly and keep it fresher for longer.**

## **The fridge**

- Make sure the temperature is between three and four degrees celsius and the door seals are working
- Wait for food to stop steaming before putting it away so your fridge doesn't have to work as hard
- Keep food covered or stored in sealed containers to keep it fresher for longer
- Store soft cheeses like camembert in wax paper or baking paper
- Hard cheeses like cheddar or parmesan can be stored in airtight containers
- Store eggs in their original carton
- Yoghurt is best eaten within the first ten days but can last up to six weeks
- Sour cream will stay fresh unopened for up to one month in the fridge. However, it is best used within a few days of purchase once opened.

## **The freezer**

- A freezer works like a 'pause' function. The quicker food is frozen, the faster the natural deterioration process stops
- Make sure the temperature is set to minus eighteen degrees celsius and the door seals are working
- Freeze food in sealed containers, wrap it in foil or use reusable zip lock bags to avoid freezer burn and contamination
- Label containers with the date and store food in single or family size portions, so you only need to defrost what you need.







# Pantry Items

**Use the correct storage methods to keep your pantry items fresh and safe to eat.**

## **Cereals, pasta and rice**

- Cereals, pasta and rice should be kept in good quality airtight containers in the pantry. If you do not have suitable containers, tightly reseal the original packaging
- Cooked pasta should be stored in an airtight container in the fridge within one hour of cooking and eaten within two days
- Cooked rice should be stored in an airtight container in the fridge within one hour of cooking and eaten within three days.

## **Bread**

- Keep bread at room temperature in its wrapper or an airtight container and consume within two days
- Storing bread in the fridge is not recommended as it can become stale faster
- Bread can be stored in the freezer for up to three months.

## **Other pantry items**

- Use airtight containers for storing flour, sugar, grains and nuts
- Never add new supplies to the old — finish whatever is in the container before adding more
- Store jam, long-life milks, sauces and cans in the pantry until opened and then store in the fridge
- Refer to the use by date on the packet which advises how long you can store the item
- Keep pantry items away from direct sunlight and heat sources as they'll deteriorate more quickly.





**Buy locally grown fruit and vegetables in season, or have a go at growing your own, to keep them fresher for longer and avoid food waste.**

### **Fruit**

- If in doubt about whether a fruit should go in the fridge, think about the climate that it was grown in
- Most fruit should be kept in the fridge once it is ripe or cut
- Store your apples in the fridge as they soften ten times faster at room temperature
- Store berries in the fridge and wash gently before eating
- Citrus fruit will keep for a couple of days at room temperature but will last longer in the fridge
- Apricots, avocados, kiwifruit, mangoes, melons, nectarines, papaya, peaches, pears, plums and tomatoes can be ripened at room temperature in a brown paper bag then refrigerated for longer storage
- Keep bananas out of the fridge in a cool, dry area.



### **Vegetables**

- Store vegetables in the same way as where you bought them i.e. fridge vs room temperature
- Potatoes, onions and garlic should be kept at room temperature in a well-ventilated area
- Avoid washing vegetables before you store them in the fridge — wait until you're ready to use them
- Once cut or peeled most vegetables are best kept in the fridge crisper
- Keep cut carrots, celery and capsicums in a container of water in your fridge so they won't dry out
- Avoid leaving cut or peeled vegetables at room temperature for more than two hours
- Some vegetables sweat moisture and this causes faster deterioration. Absorb this moisture by placing one or two paper towels on the top and/or bottom of the airtight containers the food is stored in
- Many vegetables will come back to life if left in a bowl of very cold water for a while.



*Fruit and Vegetables*





# Meat and Seafood



**Ensure your meat and seafood is stored and prepared correctly to keep it fresh and safe to eat.**



## **Raw meat**

- Refrigerate raw meat and poultry promptly after purchase
- Store it in a sealed container at the bottom of the fridge to prevent it contaminating other food
- Keep it refrigerated until it's ready to be cooked
- If you know it won't be used within two days of purchase it's better to freeze it straight away.

## **Cooked meat and poultry**

- Meat and poultry must be refrigerated as soon as possible after cooking
- Never leave cooked meat at room temperature for longer than two hours
- Place hot meat in your fridge uncovered until it cools then cover.

## **Delicatessen meat**

- Delicatessen meats must be stored in the fridge and will keep for four to five days after purchase
- Pre-packaged delicatessen items can be stored until the use by date as long as they remain properly sealed.

## **Seafood**

- Cooked or uncooked fresh seafood should be wrapped and kept for one to two days in the coldest part of the fridge away from other produce items
- If freezing fish, clean and prepare it as if you were going to eat it and freeze as fillets. You can freeze a whole clean fish if you want to cook and serve it whole. Make sure you label and date the fish.
- Refrigerate seafood as soon as possible after cooking.





# Composting Organics

**Around 40% of our household waste is organic and can be diverted from landfill through composting.**

Composting converts organic matter like food and garden waste into material that is rich in nutrients and makes an excellent fertiliser or potting mix for your garden.

There are different composting methods available which suit different property types:

- Compost bins are suitable for properties with a yard or garden
- Worm farms are suitable for properties with balconies or shaded areas
- Bokashi bins are suitable for indoor environments.

## Composting principles

The principles of ADAM — Aliveness, Diversity, Air and Moisture — will help you create a healthy home composting system.

### A is for Aliveness

Micro-organisms such as microbes, bacteria and worms are needed to break down your organic matter and turn it into compost

### D is for Diversity

A healthy compost pile needs a diverse range of materials to make a balanced and nutrient rich compost

### A is for Air

Good aeration is important in helping waste break down and keeps the compost pile from smelling

### M is for Moisture

Compost needs moisture to help materials break down and should ideally be as wet as a damp sponge.

## Troubleshooting

Not everything goes to plan all of the time! Here are some solutions to common problems that can occur.

Problem	Solution
Compost is too dry	Add water and wet organic materials
Compost is too wet	Add dry organic materials and mix them around
Materials are not breaking down	Cut materials into smaller pieces
Foul odours	Turn the compost using an aerator
Flies or vermin	Reduce food waste and add compost conditioner





# Compost Bins

## Setting up your compost bin

- Put your compost bin directly on the soil in an area of your yard that's easy to access, well-drained and has some shade
- Add a layer of twigs on the base, followed by alternating layers of the below nitrogen-rich and carbon-rich materials. The smaller the pieces, the better, as they will break down quicker.
  - Nitrogen-rich materials include fruit and vegetable scraps, tea leaves, teabags, coffee grounds, grass clippings and garden trimmings. These are often referred to as 'green' or 'wet' ingredients.
  - Carbon-rich materials include dried leaves, twigs, straw, newspaper, shredded paper, eggshells and egg cartons. These are often referred to as 'brown' or 'dry' ingredients.
- Place a compost blanket or hessian sack on top of the pile to retain the heat and put the lid on.

## Maintaining your compost bin

- Continue to add a mix of approximately 50:50 nitrogen-rich and carbon-rich materials each week
- Sprinkle a teaspoon of compost conditioner when you add food
- Turn your compost using an aerator once a week to keep it aerated and healthy
- Keep your compost damp at all times, adding water when necessary.

## Using your compost

- It can take anywhere from six weeks to six months for your compost to break down enough to use it, depending on what materials you put in, the temperature and how often you tend to it. Once it's ready, your compost will look like a rich dark brown clumpy soil and smell earthy.
- Add your finished compost as fertiliser on garden beds, as topsoil on lawns, or as potting mix in pots.





## Setting up your worm farm

- Put your worm farm somewhere in a sheltered, shady and cool position that's easy to access.
- Assemble your worm farm and bedding block as per the instructions that come with the worm farm. Spread the worms on top of the bedding, place the worm blanket on top and close the lid.
- After a couple of days, add a 2cm layer of the following items to the top tray below the worm blanket:
  - Fruit and vegetable scraps (no citrus, onions, garlic or chilli)
  - Coffee grounds and tea leaves/bags
  - Newspaper and shredded paper
  - Crushed eggshells.



## Maintaining your worm farm

- Add more food when the worms have finished the previous scraps, ensure they are in small pieces
- Sprinkle a teaspoon of worm conditioner once a week when you are feeding your worms
- Add the second tray once the top tray is full. This will take around three to six months to fill up
- Once both trays are full, remove the lower working tray and remove the castings, then rotate the trays so this is now the top working tray. Continue feeding in the new top tray
- Flush the worm farm weekly with five litres of water and open the tap to drain and collect the liquid.

## Using your worm castings and liquid

- The castings can be used on your garden or mixed with regular soil as potting mix.
- The worm liquid can be diluted with water (one part worm liquid to ten parts water) and used as a fertiliser for your garden.

*Worm Farms*



# Bokashi Bins

## What is Bokashi?

- Bokashi is an indoor composting system that uses a liquid spray or powder to help ferment and break down food waste quickly. The fermented waste material produced then needs to be buried in a garden or compost bin to complete the decomposition process.
- You can put all types of food waste in a Bokashi bin, including cooked and raw food, fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee, tea, meat, fish, dairy, onion and garlic. Cut them into small pieces and avoid bones.

## How to use your Bokashi bin

- Add your food scraps to the Bokashi bin, ideally no more than a 3-4cm layer at a time
- Add three to five sprays of liquid Bokashi or one tablespoon of Bokashi powder daily
- Press it all down using a trowel to remove the air
- Close the lid to aid decomposition.

## Using your Bokashi liquid and waste material

- Collect the liquid from the tap at the bottom every few days and dilute it in water (two teaspoons of Bokashi liquid per litre of water) to use it as a fertiliser for your garden or pot plants. It also makes a great drain cleaner and can be poured straight down your sink or toilet
- When the Bokashi bin is full, leave it three weeks, then empty the contents into a hole 20-30cm deep in the garden or a compost bin and cover it up again. It will break down into organic matter that will improve the condition of your soil and help your plants grow. Wash out your Bokashi bin afterwards.
- Don't have a garden? Bury the Bokashi waste in your pot plants. You could also ask your family and friends if you can add your Bokashi waste to their compost or garden.





# Eco-friendly Alternatives

**There are lots of ways we can reduce our impact on the environment by being more mindful consumers.**

How many of these do you already do? Pat yourselves on the back for each one!

Are there any other eco-friendly alternatives you could incorporate into your daily routine?

## **Swap this for that**

- Bring your own shopping bags and produce bags instead of using plastic bags
- Look for products with recycled or no packaging instead of excessive packaging
- Bring your own refillable water bottle everywhere you go instead of buying single-use bottles
- Take your own coffee cup on your next coffee run instead of throwing out take away cups
- Bring your own cutlery and straw when you eat on the go instead of using single-use plastic items
- Use beeswax wraps or food pouches instead of cling wrap
- Opt for bulk condiment and sauce dispensers instead of single serve packets.

## **Take it to the next level**

- Shop at bulk food stores with your own containers or jars
- Take your own containers to your local deli or butcher
- Let your favourite take away place know you'll be bringing your own containers
- Bring containers to restaurants for leftovers
- Buy second hand clothing and homewares instead of buying new products
- Use cloth nappies instead of disposable nappies.





**Parties and picnics are often some of the biggest causes of waste, but it doesn't have to be that way.**

**With a bit of planning, you can throw a fabulous event and not feel guilty about your carbon footprint.**

# *Sustainable Entertaining*

## **At home**

- Prepare the right amount of food for the number of guests coming to avoid food waste
- Send your guests home with leftovers in reusable containers if you over-cater or freeze them for another day
- Use your crockery, glassware and cutlery instead of disposable options
- Use linen tablecloths instead of plastic tablecloths
- Use cloth napkins instead of serviettes
- Use a dish cloth instead of paper towels to clean up
- Recycle your bottles, cans, containers, paper and cardboard
- Compost your fruit and vegetable scraps.

## **Out and about**

- Make or borrow a party kit full of reusable items such as plates, cups, cutlery and utensils
- Bring large drink and sauce dispensers instead of individual bottles and packets
- Opt for metal or paper straws instead of plastic straws or avoid them altogether
- Make your own decorations or bring reusable banners or bunting instead of balloons and streamers
- Use the recycling bins provided or take your bottles to your nearest Return and Earn site
- Take soft plastic packaging to the REDcycle bins at your local supermarket
- If there are no bins or the bins are full, take your waste with you to avoid creating litter.





# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

## **Our resources are precious and finite and are simply too good to waste.**

We need to look at ways of keeping waste out of landfill and contributing to a circular economy. We've listed a few ideas below to help give your items a new lease on life.

### **FREE Council services**

- Hold a Second Hand Garage Sale to sell your unwanted household items and Council will advertise it for you in the local paper
- Book a Collection and Rehoming service provided by The Bower for household items including furniture, whitegoods and electronic appliances
- Use our clothing bins to donate good quality clothing, accessories and textiles to people in need
- Book a Television and Computer Collection Service to recycle old TVs, computers and accessories
- Use our Problem Waste Drop-Off Stations to recycle household batteries, light globes, ink cartridges and mobile phones
- Take problem waste such as paint, gas bottles, motor oils and car batteries to our Community Recycling Centre at 8 Waltham Street, Artarmon.

Visit [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/otherwasteservices](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/otherwasteservices) for more information.

### **Other options**

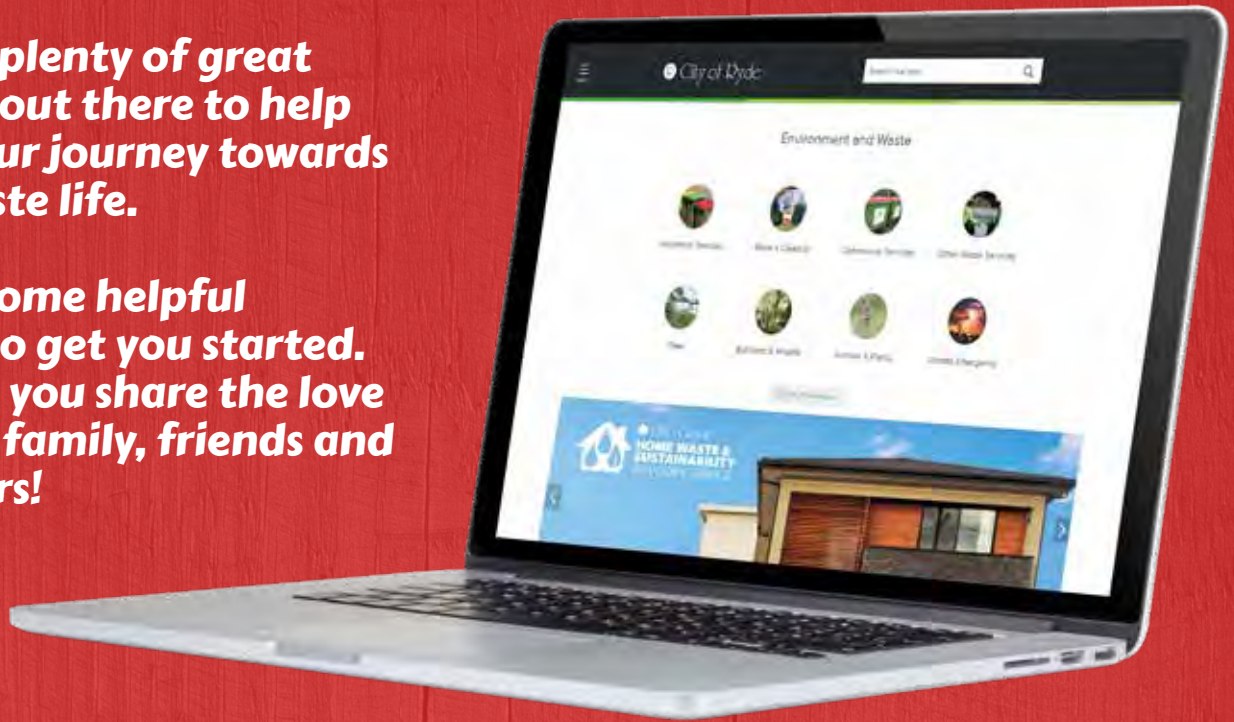
- Sell or give your items away on websites such as Facebook Marketplace, Buy Swap Sell, Pay it Forward, Freecycle, Gumtree or eBay
- Donate clothing and homewares in good condition to your local charity store or The Generous and Grateful
- Use The Bower's Reuse database to find reuse organisations in your area or borrow items from their E-Tool Library
- Find your nearest Terracycle community collection hub to recycle a multitude of items such as office supplies, media storage and personal care accessories.





**There are plenty of great resources out there to help you on your journey towards a zero waste life.**

**Here are some helpful websites to get you started. Make sure you share the love with your family, friends and neighbours!**



### **Waste and recycling resources**

- Council's website [www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/waste](http://www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/waste) has lots of handy waste information including:
  - A-Z Guide of Waste and Recycling
  - Education programs and workshops
  - Waste resources for your home or apartment complex
- Good for the Hood's War on Waste action toolkit will help you fight the war on waste in your 'hood. Visit [goodforthehood.com.au](http://goodforthehood.com.au)

### **Food waste avoidance resources**

- The Love Food Hate Waste program has tips to help your household reduce food waste. Visit [www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.nsw.gov.au)
- The NSW Food Authority has great information about food labelling and keeping food safe. Visit [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)

### **Composting resources**

- Tumbleweed has video tutorials to help you become a composting or worm farming champion. Visit [tumbleweed.com.au/tutorials](http://tumbleweed.com.au/tutorials)
- Urban Composter has video tutorials to help you master your bokashi bin. Visit [urbancomposter.com.au/video-tutorials](http://urbancomposter.com.au/video-tutorials)

*Further Resources*





**Be Waste Smart**

 City of Ryde



Lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep