



Could *you* go a whole week without producing any food waste?

Statistics show that 20 per cent of all the food we buy gets chucked away – a figure that’s risen since 2012. Although, realistically, it’s tricky to eliminate every scrap of your food waste, minimising it is a goal we can all work towards. We asked food writer Ramona Andrews and her family to try a no-waste challenge for a week. Here’s how they got on



SEXY PEEL? Ramona found that her sons Rudy, eight, and Erland, six, enjoyed some of her waste-saving recipes more than others



PHOTOGRAPHS: JOSEPH TURP

MONDAY

I have diligently put together a menu plan, but I’ve forgotten all about the weekend’s pesky leftovers. So I stick the roast lamb in with the fried rice as planned and add an improvised sauce made from houmous dregs. Thinking ahead for tomorrow, I come up with an ingenious way to use up onion peelings: a tomato sauce. I cook onion peelings, a knob of butter and a tin of tomatoes low and slow while we put the kids to bed. The remaining lamb carcass can go in the freezer to deal with later – a future stock or soup perhaps. Win.

TUESDAY

Today’s dinner is meatballs made with half a packet of leftover pork mince from the freezer. I blend up some veg ends, including beetroot stems, which give it a vibrant colour and voilà – ‘flexitarian’ meatballs. Picking the onion peelings out of my not-so-ingenuous sauce from yesterday is messy and tedious, though. Fail.

WEDNESDAY

Today I’m office-based so I’ve been super-organised and got a fish pie ready for Joe to bung in the oven. At the end of the meal there is a barely-salvageable splodge left in the dish, so out go the planned

fishcakes for tomorrow. Just a little pile of peas await the anti-waste treatment. Back in the game.

THURSDAY

Today I’m working in a different office and it’s the canteen’s curry day. I bring in some plastic boxes to take home any canteen leftovers (they do seriously big servings). Tonight to go with the pea fritters there’s also some tired salad that needs using up. We try it fried to wilt it, then zhuzhed up with chopped garlic and soy sauce. Tasty.

FRIDAY

The boys didn’t finish their porridge this morning. Food writer Jack Monroe’s *cookingonabootstrap.com* blog suggests making porridge pancakes, so after school we shape the leftover porridge into patties and fry them in butter. Who knew porridge could taste this good?

SATURDAY

I’ve been saving the children’s discarded ends of peanut butter on bread all week (the glamour!) and transformed them today into croutons fried in garlic and rosemary. This tops a broth made with all the veg cuttings from the week. If in doubt, make soup.

SUNDAY

Today our potato peelings make a superior snack drizzled with oil and roasted for 10 minutes or so in a

medium oven. Though I’m still not sure peeling potatoes for roasties is strictly necessary, it’s worth it for such delicious crisps.

SO HOW DID WE DO?

Thursday’s fried salad was a revelation. Lettuce is one of those things that can end up turning to slime in the fridge. We learned that, as a family, we can and will change our habits.

Here’s the reality, though: keeping such a tight ship needs organisation. A surprise meal out, fussy children, poor judgement on portions... The unexpected means food does end up going to waste sometimes.

According to food waste charity WRAP (wrap.org.uk), the average family spends more than £700 a year on food that’s subsequently thrown away. To get a sense of the environmental impact, when that’s scaled up for all the UK, we’re talking a land production requirement almost the size of Wales. Quite something. So for me, it’s a moral duty to do my very best in the fight to stop good food going to waste.

Try Ramona’s waste-saving recipe ideas overleaf →



MORE PLEASE, MUM!
Lamb and veg rice
was one of the
week's big hits

RAMONA'S WASTE-SAVING RECIPE IDEAS

Flexitarian meatballs

Gather up **140g vegetable peelings** (I used 10 beetroot stems soaked in boiling water, 5 mushroom stalks and the peelings and tops from 3 carrots, along with ½ onion and 1 garlic clove). Whizz in a food processor with the **leaves from 1 fresh rosemary sprig** and **½ slice stale bread**. Mix with **200g pork mince**, season well, shape into balls and fry in **olive oil** until cooked.

Lamb and veg rice

Fry a **handful of broccoli florets**, **1 chopped pepper** and **2 chopped carrots** in **olive oil**. Add **150g cooked rice** and **100g shredded roast lamb** and heat through. Mix in **2 tbsp tamari** and **1 tbsp chopped fresh mint**. Serve with **2 tbsp houmous** mixed with **1 tsp harissa** and **2 tbsp olive oil**, topped with **10g toasted sunflower seeds**.

Leftover rice bake

Fry **½ chopped onion** and **1 chopped garlic clove** in olive oil until softened. Put in a bowl, mix with **200g cooked rice**, **8-10 beetroot leaves, chopped**, **1 beaten free-range egg** and **1 slice of ham, finely chopped**. Oil a small pie dish and press the mixture into it. Chill for 30 minutes. Drizzle with a little **olive oil** and bake at **190°C/170°C fan/gas 5** for

25-30 minutes. Make a dressing by mixing **100g natural yogurt**, **½ tsp mint sauce** and **1 tsp mango chutney**. Drizzle over the rice to serve and top with **shredded celery leaves**.

Pea fritters with feta dip

In a bowl, mash **100g leftover cooked peas** with a fork. Add **200g plain flour**, **2 tsp baking powder**, **2 beaten free-range eggs** and a **few chopped fresh mint leaves**. Stir together and add **4 tbsp milk**. Shape into fritters and fry on both sides in **olive oil**. In a food processor, whizz **130g feta** with **60g cream cheese or natural yogurt**. Add a **glug of olive oil** and a splash of **lemon juice** to make a dipping sauce.

Porridge patties with strawberry compote

Leave **leftover porridge** in the fridge to harden a little. Shape into patties with floured hands. Fry in **butter** and serve with **6 chopped strawberries stewed with 2 tbsp leftover jam**.



Leftover rice
bake

“The average family spends more than £700 a year on food that’s then thrown away”

YOU CAN DO IT!

Here are six more ways to get on board...

MINIMISE WASTE For heaps of ideas check out the **Love Food Hate Waste** website. lovefoodhatewaste.com

NEW COOKERY COURSE Enrol on a **Waste Matters** evening class at London's Cookery School at Little Portland Street. Starting in September, each three-hour session will teach you how to whip up appetising meals from off-cuts and leftovers. £125; cookeryschool.co.uk

SHARE THE SURPLUS Food-sharing app **Olio** (olioex.com) connects local people with surplus food from homes and businesses. Bought too many carrots? Use the app to share them with neighbours. The **Too Good to Go** app (toogoodtogo.co.uk) is worth checking out, too, as it connects you to cafés and restaurants in your area selling uneaten food at a discount.

TRY SOME REAL JUNK FOOD Cafés all over the UK are repurposing landfill-destined food to conjure up fantastic ‘Pay As You Feel’ feasts. Go to **The Real Junk Food Project** website to find one near you. therealjunkfoodproject.org

BECOME A GLEANER Gleaning involves salvaging unharvested fruit and vegetables from farms – it’s a fun day out, and the fresh produce is redirected to those who need it. UK charity **Feedback** runs a number of gleaning initiatives aimed at combating global food waste. There are hubs across England and the network is growing all the time. feedbackglobal.org/gleaning-network

FERMENT YOUR FOOD Making your favourite fermented foods (such as kimchi and pickles) is easy and can save chucking away veg at the back of the fridge. **Friends of the Earth** has lots of recipes to get you started – search ‘fermenting’ on its website. friendsoftheearth.uk