



# *Food sustainability in focus:* A blueprint for action

A curated compendium for future-ready organisations:  
**25 global best practices for reducing food waste  
in 2025**



# Foreword

## Subroto Gupta

Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer,  
Compass Group India

Compass Group India upholds a longstanding commitment to the well-being of our customers, communities and the planet. Our identity revolves around doing what is right, fostering a culture of advocacy, transparency and responsibility.

We commit to practical and sustainable practices in raw material procurement, production processes, material use and waste management. Our approach involves influencing clients, suppliers, customers, investors, shareholders and prospects, educating and upskilling our internal teams to enhance employee retention and attract new talent and empowering front-line teams to initiate climate-friendly initiatives and champion a movement for change.

In a country as complex and vibrant as India where abundance and scarcity coexist, food waste is not just an operational issue; it is a societal, ethical, and environmental challenge that demands immediate and collective action. With approximately 40% of food wasted annually, costing the nation nearly INR 1 lakh crore and contributing to 10–12% of greenhouse gas emissions, the urgency is clear.

We have long recognized this, and we have made it our priority to lead from the front, transforming kitchens, cafeterias, and food service operations into models of efficiency, innovation, and conscious consumption.

### The '25 Best Practices to Fight Food Waste'

initiative represents our lived expertise. These are not just theoretical suggestions but solutions we apply every day across our client sites, developed through years of experience, constant innovation, and close collaboration with our partners. This compendium distills our real-world learnings into a powerful framework that is easy to adopt, scale, and customize whether you operate a single location or a pan-India network.

Each practice combines global insights, local relevance, operational practicality, and measurable impact. They have been rigorously tested and refined by our teams and embraced by our clients, helping us reduce waste, optimize operations, and drive value. Our intent through this is to equip industry leaders of India Inc. with an actionable, easy to adopt and implement playbook for food waste reduction.

It is a conscious statement of intent: Compass Group India is leading the way in reimagining food systems for a better tomorrow. With this, we invite our clients, partners, and industry peers to join us in this movement.

We are proud to present this **Compendium 2025** and hope it inspires action and partnership toward a more responsible and resilient future.

We hope you find as much value as we did in putting them together!

# Acknowledgement

**Food sustainability in focus:** A blueprint for action is an initiative that has been the result of collective effort, dedication, and unwavering support from various individuals and teams across the organization. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our global, operations, supply chain, culinary teams whose contributions were instrumental in shaping these industry best practices.

The Compass India team has demonstrated exceptional commitment in promoting sustainable kitchen practices and offering practical, impactful solutions to reduce food waste at its source. Through our unwavering focus and hands-on execution, we have transformed ideas into action and helped embed food sustainable practices into daily routines. This initiative has been supported with thoughtful and strategic best practices, helping align our efforts with long-term food sustainability goals.

We are especially grateful to the key opinion leaders whose invaluable insights and thought leadership greatly enriched the initiative. We thank Ms. Ankita Vijayvergia, Dr. Himanshu Talwar and Major Anurag Jain for their time, expertise, and commitment to addressing food crisis in India. Their voices brought credibility and depth to our shared mission.

To everyone who played a part in this journey – thank you for your passion, your purpose, and your partnership. Together, we are moving closer to a future where food is respected, resources are valued, and waste is minimized.

With sincere appreciation,

**Compass Group India**





# 25By25

25 ways to reduce food waste  
in 2025



## 1. Invest in right storage equipment



- India loses 30 million tonnes of food worth ₹30,000 crore yearly due to poor cold storage.
- Maintain proper HVAC and humidity. Store meat and fish below  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Regularly service storage equipment.
- Effective cold storage practices can slash wastage and losses.

## 2. Extend shelf life of cooked, semi-processed and processed food

Extending food shelf life cuts waste, emissions, and water use across the supply chain.

Increasing bread's shelf life by 20% reduces food waste by 5–6%, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 192 kg, and saves 248,000 litres of water per ton.

Techniques like blast chilling, dehydration, and vacuum sealing help preserve freshness and prevent spoilage.





### 3. Use bruised Fruits and vegetables

- In India, 350 crore kgs of fruits and vegetables are rejected yearly for looking imperfect – enough to feed 7 crore people daily.
- Crooked carrots and bruised apples are just as nutritious!
- Instead of tossing them, check for rot and use them in soups, smoothies, or chutneys.

### 4. Source local

- Choose local produce as much as possible for longer shelf life and to avoid transit wastage
- Source fruits and vegetables locally within 200–300 kms to minimize food waste before it reaches shelves



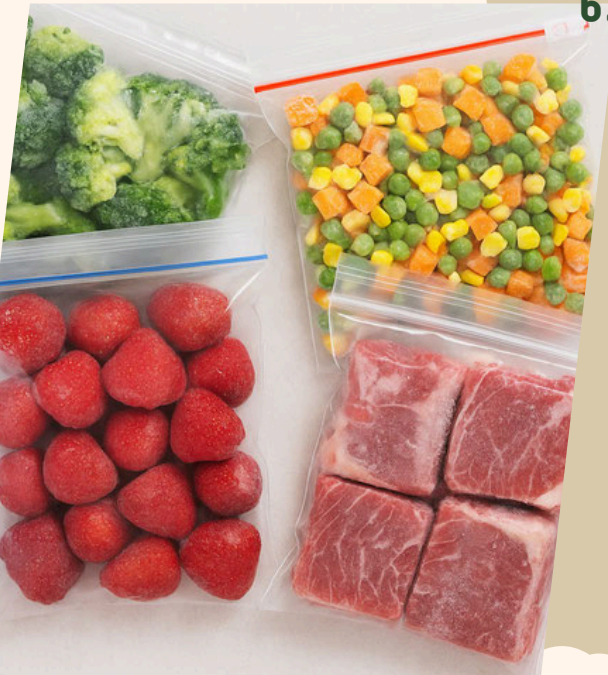
## 5. Go seasonal

- In-season produce stays fresher longer, needs fewer preservatives, and offers better yield and nutrition.
- Ordering seasonal items in smaller, frequent batches reduces overbuying and spoilage.
- For off-season demand, plan ahead and freeze seasonal items in bulk during their peak.



## 6. Freeze raw materials

- Freezing is a powerful way to extend shelf life and cut food waste.
- Individually quick freezing seasonal produce and meats locks in nutrition, taste, and quality for months.
- It enables better planning, year-round use of seasonal ingredients, and minimal spoilage, making every ingredient count.



## 7. Forecast accurate demand

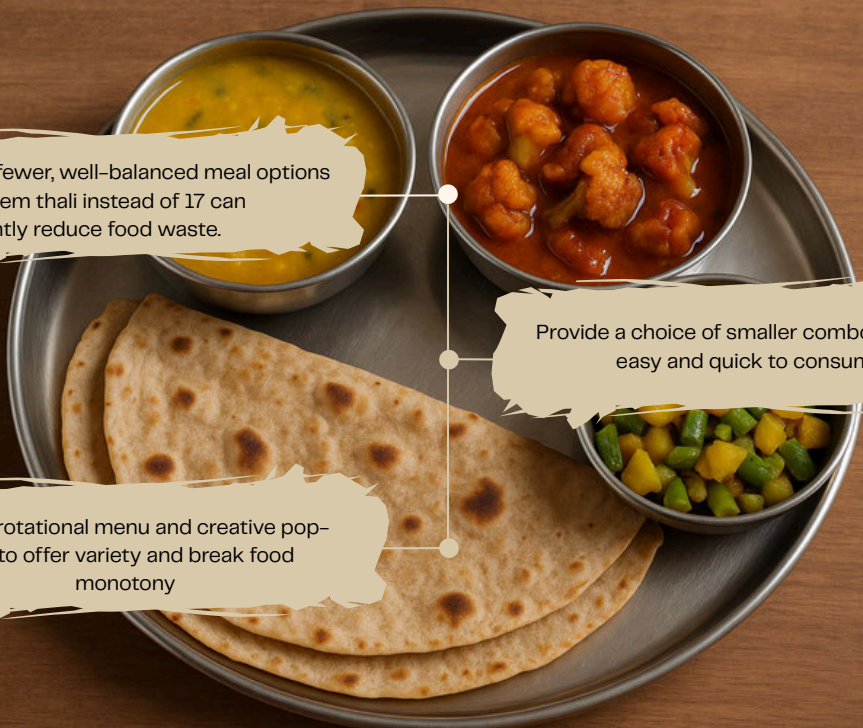


Over-ordering and over-production are key drivers of food waste, but accurate demand forecasting can change that.

By tracking daily consumption and using analytics, kitchens can forecast demand more accurately across day parts, seasons, and events.

Incorporating past trends, workplace events, and factors like weather helps cut waste and optimise resources.

## 8. 'Unthali' the thali



Offering fewer, well-balanced meal options like a 4-item thali instead of 17 can significantly reduce food waste.

Provide a choice of smaller combos that are easy and quick to consume

Opt for rotational menu and creative pop-ups to offer variety and break food monotony



## 9. Serve 'Hero' items and chef's special



- People are less likely to waste food they love.
- Featuring a popular 'Hero' item, like biryani or butter chicken, encourages complete consumption and cuts waste.
- Designing menus around past consumption trends improves planning and reduces leftovers, making meals more efficient and enjoyable.

## 10. Adopt simpler and smarter cutting technique

- Practice root to stem approach as much as possible.
- Reduce decorative cuts and avoid cuts like dice, baton and slice to ensure maximum usage in cooking process.
- Use sharp knives to minimize tearing of vegetables, leading to less waste.
- Ensure awareness and appropriate training of the kitchen staff in chopping techniques.



## 11. Repurpose peels and stalks



- Peels and stalks make up nearly 30% of kitchen waste but are rich in nutrients.
- Consume fruits and vegetables with skin, that can be eaten that way. For e.g carrots and potatoes.
- Repurpose peels to cook creative, nutritious and tasty dishes like smoothies, jams and sauces.

## 12. Calibrate food service to peak and non-peak hour demand

- Calibrate quantum of food to expected demand.
- Keep limited food counters and baimaries beyond peak lunch hours, to avoid food waste.
- Always remember our chef's 70:70 principle; keep food options to 70% once 70% of the lunch time is over.

### PEAK HOURS



### NON-PEAK HOURS



## 13. Use smaller plate size and bowls



- Using smaller plates and bowls helps reduce food waste.
- People serve and waste less with smaller dishware, as it creates the illusion of a fuller plate and encourages mindful portions.
- Swapping large buffet plates for 3 or 5 compartment ones can significantly cut over-serving and leftovers.

## 14. Control portion size while serving



- Use smaller serving spoons either for self-service or serviced counters.
- Encourage consumers to opt for smaller portions in first and second helpings, as overfilling often leads to food waste.
- Adopt the age-old Japanese practice of "Hara hachi bu" – a 2500-year-old Confucian mantra said before meals. It gives us a reminder to stop eating when our stomach is about 80% full.





## 15. Celebrate 'No Bin' days

- Most people think food waste is someone else's problem, but consumer habits make everyone responsible.
- Positive nudges like "No Bin Days" have in some cases proven to cut food waste by 80 kg in a day.
- Canteen messages boost mindfulness.
- Celebrating, incentivizing, or even penalizing food habits could spark lasting change.



## 16. Offer 'Two Good' menu choices

- Narrow, well-paired options can reduce waste by 57% while boosting speed, convenience, and taste.
- It's time to pair dishes that naturally belong together.
- Our 'Two Good Meals' program, inspired by Yin-Yang, offers combos like Dal-Chawal, Curd-Rice, and Idli-Sambhar for balance, nutrition, and full flavour.

**Yeh Dosti Hum Nahi Todenge!**



Chole

+

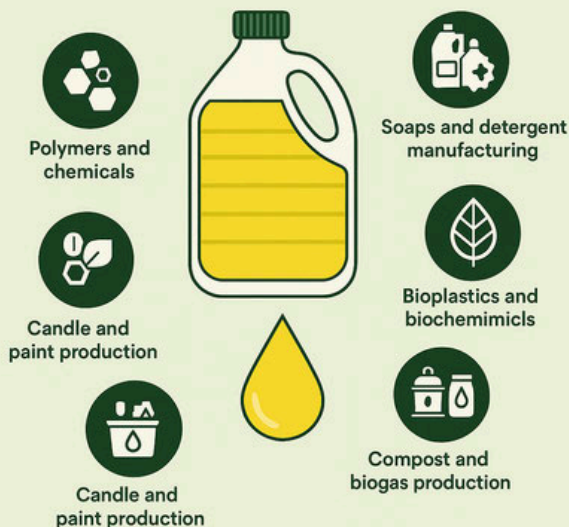
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## 17. Redistribute surplus food



- Maintain a network of local partners who collect even small quantities of leftovers for redistributing safe, unused food and surplus inventory that can be frozen.
- Consider having a tech-driven food redistribution strategy to ensure seamless daily redistribution
- You can partner with a network of old age homes, shelter homes or orphanages for redistribution, minimizing food waste.
- Compass India's work with the Robinhood Army is a strong example — donating 35,000 meals and preventing over 17,000kg of food waste in a year.

## 18. Repurpose used cooking oil



- Repurpose once-used commercial cooking oil for industrial use, in partnership with certified vendors.
- For e.g, soaps and detergent manufacturing, lubricants and industrial applications, bioplastics and biochemicals, compost and biogas production, candle and paint production, polymers and chemicals.
- Compass India repurposes cooking oil from our central kitchen across India, which is equivalent to manufacturing over 1.7 million soap bars every month!

## 19. Adopt rapid, low-cost, and fully circular technology

by Ankita Vijayvergiya



- Entrepreneur Ankita Vijayvergiya champions a circular, tech-driven approach to managing unavoidable food waste.
- Apply innovative technology solutions at every stage of the food value chain; prevention, redistribution, and smart treatment, to make food waste a resource generator
- Adopt a 3-day, low-cost, circular food waste solution using an IoT-enabled bioreactor that rapidly reduces waste while addressing odour, safety, and energy challenges.

## 20. Repurpose food waste into animal feed

by Anurag Jain



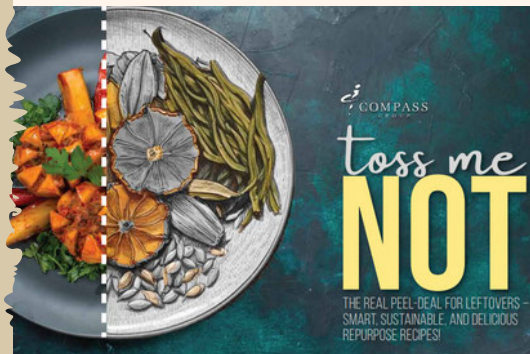
- Major Anurag Jain, Co-founder of a health and nutrition company, advocates repurposing food waste into animal feed or organic manure.
- Repurpose unused food into animal feed or organic manure, if unsafe for human consumption.
- Support from consumers, industry, policy makers, and investment in food waste collection infrastructure will be critical to encourage widespread adoption of food waste as animal feed in India.





## 21. Try zero-waste cooking

- Compass Group India launched "Toss Me Not" — a zero-waste recipe book that turns everyday fruit and vegetable peels into award-winning dishes.
- From carrot peel pesto to pumpkin peel soup, these recipes turn peels into culinary stars.
- Perfect for anyone passionate about cutting food waste!



## 22. Choose eco-friendly, cost-effective composting methods

by Dr. Himanshu Talwar



- Choose an eco-friendly, cost-effective composting method to turn unavoidable food waste into nutrient-rich fertilizer in small-scale commercial kitchens.
- Cut scraps (excluding meat and dairy) into smaller pieces and separate them from contaminants using segregated bins. Use compost only when fully decomposed, dark, crumbly, and earthy smelling.
- To control odours, maintain proper aeration, moisture balance, a balance of green and brown materials, and add odour-absorbing agents like baking soda or dry leaves.

## 23. Set goals, communicate and take feedback within teams



- Establish specific goals for waste reduction and monitor progress towards these goals over time.
- Hold regular and frequent team meetings after service to review what worked, what didn't, and where the wastage occurred.
- Encourage open discussions so staff inside and outside the kitchen feels comfortable sharing ideas to reduce waste.

## 24. Reduce water wastage

- Harvest rainwater, treat it, and reuse in the facility.
- Recycle treated wastewater from the kitchens.
- Adopt smart water management tools to monitor and help minimize waste.
- Use technology like dewatering using screw presses or compactors, cyclonic gas stripping, and membrane filtration to separate water from food waste and reuse it.



## 25. Start 'em young

### REDUCING FOOD WASTE IN SCHOOLS

#### RAISE AWARENESS



Campaigns, competitions,  
and workshops

#### CONDUCT AUDITS



Track and monitor  
food wastage

#### INTEGRATE IN CURRICULUM



Lessons and activities



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CALLS FOR SCHOOL  
CHAPTERS

- Generate awareness very early on among young children in schools through campaigns, creative competitions, and workshops.
- Conduct food waste audits and involve students in tracking food wastage.
- Integrate food waste awareness into curriculum through interactive lessons and activities.
- Introduce plate waste trackers, pedagogic meals, and kitchen workshops in daily learning.



# Conclusion

This compendium is more than a guide — it's a movement to reimagine the way we handle food across India's kitchens, canteens, cafeterias, and corporate spaces. This compendium brings together practical, scalable, and culturally resonant best practices that combine innovation, local insight, and behavioural change.

Each of the 25 best practices presented reflects a holistic approach, from mindful sourcing and smart storage to plate design, waste tracking, and technology interventions. They prove that reducing food waste isn't just about operational efficiency; it's about building a responsible ecosystem where every stakeholder, including administrative heads, procurement leads, chefs or culinary staff, consumers, and even school children, plays a role.

Behaviour change, especially early in life, emerged as a powerful lever for lasting impact. At the same time, tools like water-saving technology, repurposing of cooking oil, composting and food redistribution strategies show how sustainability can be built into daily operations.

As we look ahead, the path is clear: India Inc. must lead by example. With conscious consumption, collaborative action, and consistent communication, we can transform the food waste crisis into a sustainability success story.

Let this compendium be your roadmap to make every meal count.

*Together, let's shape a happier, healthier and sustainable world every day.*



# *Let's work together*

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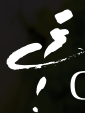


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