




HANDOUT 2, pages 1-3

Discussion

What is Zero Waste?

Zero waste means **using resources wisely to produce as little waste as possible**. In the kitchen, it means **reducing food waste, reusing leftovers, and recycling or composting** what cannot be reused.

Why is Zero Waste Important?

-  Food waste contributes to environmental problems like greenhouse gas emissions.
-  Wasting food wastes the energy and resources used to grow, transport, and prepare it.
-  Reducing waste saves money and helps protect the planet.

Key Zero-Waste Principles in the Kitchen

1. Plan Your Meals

- make a shopping list and buy only what you need
- plan meals around ingredients you already have to avoid buying extra

2. Store Food Properly

- keep fruits and vegetables fresh longer by storing them in the right place and containers
- use airtight containers to prevent food spoilage

3. Use Leftovers Creatively

- turn leftovers into new meals (e.g., soups, stir-fries, or smoothies)
- freeze extra food before it spoils to eat later

4. Reduce Single-Use Packaging

- bring your own containers and bags to the store
- buy loose produce instead of pre-packaged items

5. Compost Food Scraps

- compost vegetable peels, coffee grounds, eggshells, and other compostable waste instead of throwing it away
- composting turns waste into valuable soil for plants


The Problem with Single-Use Materials in the Kitchen


In many kitchens, people use **single-use items** like:


- plastic bags and cling film (plastic wrap)
- aluminum foil
- disposable gloves
- paper towels and napkins


These items are convenient but cause **a lot of waste** and harm the environment.

Why are these a problem?

 **Plastic bags and wraps** often end up in landfills or oceans, where they take hundreds of years to break down. They can harm wildlife and pollute water.

 **Aluminum foil** production uses a lot of energy and resources. While it can be recycled, many people throw it away after one use.

 **Disposable gloves** contribute to plastic pollution and increase landfill waste.

 **Excessive use of paper towels** leads to cutting down more trees and produces unnecessary waste.

Environmental Impact of Kitchen Waste

- **waste in landfills produces methane**, a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change
- plastic and foil waste often cannot be recycled easily, leading to pollution
- resource use for making single-use items depletes natural resources like trees, oil, and water

Alternatives to Single-Use Kitchen Materials: Reusable and Eco-Friendly Options:

- **beeswax wraps** or silicone lids instead of plastic cling film. These wraps are washable and last a long time
- **glass or stainless steel containers** for food storage instead of single-use plastic bags
- **reusable cloth towels or kitchen rags** instead of paper towels
- **washable gloves** for food preparation instead of disposable gloves
- **compostable or recyclable materials** when single-use items are necessary

Smart Kitchen Habits to Reduce Waste

- Buy products with **minimal or no packaging**. For example, use bulk bins with your own containers.
- Bring your own **reusable shopping bags** to avoid plastic bags.
- Avoid overusing disposable products by planning ahead.
- Repair or repurpose items instead of throwing them away.