

Zero waste lunch



Organising a zero waste lunch is an innovative idea to show all participants how to change their daily behaviours in a way that substantially reduces the amount of waste they produce. At a zero waste lunch the objective is to significantly reduce, and eventually completely eliminate, the amount of waste that we send to energy recovery or disposal. As it is difficult to completely avoid producing anything that gets sent to landfill or incineration, the aim of the zero waste lunch should be to reduce this quantity as much as possible.¹

Zero waste lunches can be organised by anyone and can target all different kinds of audiences: school children, citizens, employees, or others. The principle stays the same: Zero waste lunches mean having a lunch with **zero food waste** and **zero packaging waste**. This requires adequate planning as well as having the right tools available.

A zero waste lunch can also easily be transformed in a zero waste dinner or picnic.

This is just one example for a food and packaging waste reduction action implemented in a group of friends, colleagues, neighbours, or other. If you would like to find out more about this or other related actions, please do also have a look at the factsheet “less food waste” and “less packaging waste” in the targeted communication toolkit for citizens.

Objectives

- ▶ Make European citizens aware that actions to reduce food waste can be taken on a daily basis
- ▶ Raise awareness among European citizens about good habits for food waste reduction

What does it mean?

- ▶ Zero waste lunches mean having a lunch with zero food waste and zero packaging waste.
- ▶ There are different options of organising a zero waste lunch: all participants could prepare their own zero waste lunch at home or all participants cook and prepare their zero waste meal together.
- ▶ The same basic idea is also represented in [Disco Soupe](#) events as well as with the “smiley in a lunch box” idea. Thereby smiley stickers are put on the bottom of lunch boxes if kids eat up all their lunch and do not throw any eatable food away.

What you need

- ▶ A **location**
- ▶ **Information and communication material:** Advertise for your zero waste lunch activity by putting up promotional posters on strategic points or via other communication means. Inform target group about the action by giving out information on [why and how](#) before the event.
- ▶ The right **tools:** reusable lunchboxes, drink containers and cutlery; cloth napkins, food measurer if available

¹ Other understandings of zero waste exist, but for this factsheet the above-mentioned description will be applied.



Preparing the action

Before the EWWR (at least one month beforehand)

- ▶ Decide on your target audience: Who do you want to reach with this zero waste lunch? School pupils, their parents and teachers? Your colleagues? The general public in your neighbourhood/town/city?
- ▶ Depending on your target audience: decide on the location of your action: Where you want to implement the zero waste lunch: In the school or business canteen? In the coffee room of your department? In the city hall? On a market? Or somewhere else?
- ▶ Prepare a poster to advertise for your zero waste lunch
- ▶ Prepare or get information material informing about the do's and don'ts for the zero waste lunch ([EWWR factsheet](#)), send the information per mail to your target group or print it and give it out to them; together with the [EWWR factsheet about food waste](#)
- ▶ **Conduct a food waste trash audit** ([EWWR food waste calculator](#)) to evaluate the average waste produced during a regular lunch before the zero waste lunch
- ▶ Invite people to participate in your event

Pre-EWWR (one or two weeks beforehand)

- ▶ Enhance advertisement of your event, remind people about the event and invite them again to take part
- ▶ Give clear "do's and don'ts" instructions to participants ([EWWR factsheet](#))

Implementing the action = day of the action!

- ▶ Implement your zero waste lunch
- ▶ Use the event to inform about the problematic and to give out tips and tricks to participants on how to reduce food and packaging waste in everyday life
- ▶ Take pictures and videos
- ▶ **Conduct a food waste trash audit** ([EWWR food waste calculator](#)) to evaluate the waste produced during the zero waste lunch (as little as possible!). You can then evaluate how much waste was avoided (in comparison to your first food waste audit before the EWWR action)
- ▶ In order to boost food waste prevention measures you could also set up a competition for your zero waste lunch, to see who of the participants produced the least food and packaging waste.
- ▶ Communicate the results of your food waste audit to the participants!

Evaluation and feedback

After the EWWR

- ▶ Give feedback to your Coordinator: number of participants, amount of waste avoided, etc.
- ▶ Send pictures and videos of your action to your EWWR Coordinator
- ▶ **Conduct another food waste trash audit** ([EWWR food waste calculator](#)) to evaluate the average waste produced during a regular lunch after the zero waste lunch to see if the event had a long-term impact



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More information

► Information material

- Food waste and its impact: [Do you dare to be aware?](#)
- Practical guide: [Zero Waste Lunch](#)
- Tips to reduce food waste:
 - [Shopping & Planning](#)
 - [Storing](#)
 - [Cooking & Eating](#)
 - [Use-by / best-before dates](#)

► Examples of actions

- A Waste-free Lunchtime (UK):
www.ewwr.eu/sites/default/files/EWWR_2011-Case%20studies_School_Belfast-UK.pdf
- 0 waste lunch (FR):
www.ewwr.eu/sites/default/files/EWWR_2010_Case_Study_Other_France.pdf

► EWWR Coordinator's website/contact: www.ewwr.eu/list-organisers

► European Week for Waste Reduction: www.ewwr.eu contact@ewwr.eu

► Interesting links

- European Commission: [Stop Food Waste](#)
- [European Environment Agency](#) (EEA)
- [European Environmental Bureau](#) (EEB)
- [Every Crumb Counts](#)
- [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO)
- IGD: [Food redistribution](#)
- [Love Food Hate Waste](#)
- Love Food Hate Waste: [Food waste recycling - What to do with the food you can't eat?](#)
- OECD [Food Chain Network](#)
- [SAVE FOOD initiative](#)
- [Slow Food Movement](#)
- [The European Consumer Organisation](#) (BEUC)
- [Think.Eat.Save.](#)
- Trash is for Tossers: [Hosting a Zero Waste Dinner Party](#)