

Loving Your Leftovers

With over 8.3 million tonnes of food being thrown away by UK households per annum, reducing food waste is now a major environmental and economical issue. For example wasting food costs the average family with children £680 a year and if we all managed to stop wasting food that could have been eaten, the CO2 impact would be the equivalent of taking 1 in 4 cars off the road!

Food wastage is a serious challenge for us all especially given our hectic life styles and the way much of our food is marketed and packaged with all too tempting 2 for 1 offers in abundance. With this in mind we decided to seek the assistance of Sue Le Gallais of Cordon Bleu Catering Ltd who has not only provided us with some practical tips to make more of your leftovers but also created some wonderful recipes into the bargain.

Sue's Top Tips for using your Leftovers:

Egg Whites:

Did you know that egg whites freeze well? Put in a freezer proof container and label with how many egg whites. Thaw and use to make meringues or pavlova.

Root Vegetables:

Heat up left-over root vegetables with chicken or vegetable stock (Marigold Bouillon Powder is good); blitz in a liquidizer or with a hand held blender for delicious soup. Add a dash of curry paste if more flavour is called for.

Bread and Cheese:

Use up odds and ends of cheese and stale bread by grating the cheese and using it to top the bread to make cheese on toast to accompany your homemade soup.

Pasta Sauce:

If you have left-over Mediterranean vegetables - courgettes, peppers, onions, aubergine - mix them with freshly cooked pasta, a tin of chopped tomatoes, or jar of tomato pasta sauce. Add fresh herbs, toasted pine nuts and mozzarella or feta cheese for a delicious vegetarian supper.

Sunday Roast:

Meat left over from a Sunday roast? Chop it up and reheat in a jar of ready made curry sauce.

Too much fruit or veg?

Use apples, pears, plums, peaches, raspberries, blackberries to make delicious crumbles. Invest in a juicer and turn pineapple, kiwi, mango, strawberries etc into nutritious juices. Or whiz fruit with natural yoghurt in a liquidizer to make home made smoothies - so much fresher and cheaper than shop bought cartons.

Excess raw vegetables can also be put through a juicer - my favourite is a combination of carrot, celery and apple with a little fresh root ginger! Leftover cooked vegetables can be given the Thai curry treatment- add a can of chick peas or beans, a can of coconut milk and a spoonful or two of red or green Thai curry paste and maybe some fresh coriander leaves. Alternatively mix left-over vegetables with cheese sauce, bake in a gratin dish and top with crispy bacon for a left-over version of cauliflower cheese.

Plan Ahead

Unfortunately it is all too easy to go round the supermarket buying all sorts of ingredients for every eventuality. If you can try and plan your menus you will only buy ingredients for the dishes you know you are going to cook.

Weekly Leftover Challenge

Get in the habit of preparing a meal at least once a week of the ingredients you have in your fridge or store cupboard - hopefully some of the ideas I suggested above will help you with this challenge.

