



# 12 WAYS TO DRASTICALLY CUT YOUR KITCHEN'S COSTS

Mini guide to help professional  
kitchens handle their expenses

*Tips from Winnow Experts and Customers*

winnow





# Control your Kitchen's costs

## Tips & Tricks

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In recent times, reducing cost has been on everybody's lips in the hospitality industry.

Cost, cost, and more cost are contributing to an operating environment that is as challenging for hospitality professionals as ever.

There are a number of competing forces at play here; rising food prices, increasing wages, and a competitive online marketplace add to the complexity.

This guide provides solutions to help kitchens reduce cost and increase revenue. Twelve proven solutions, provided by Winnow's extensive network of chefs and food and beverage professionals, share the pathway to drastically cutting your kitchen's cost.

In the last five years, the team at Winnow have met some

sensational chefs, operations managers and kitchen staff. While working with them to save millions of meals from the bin, we have seen how they have implemented easy changes to their operation to further lower costs.

These include monitoring waste, tracking inventory, purchasing, and staff training. The cost cutting benefits of many of the tips are supported by strong environmental credentials. Sustainable initiatives are of increasing interest to governments and consumers alike, and reducing food waste also reduces a business's environmental footprint.

We hope this guide can help hospitality professionals all over the globe to find new ways to drastically cut kitchen cost and increase profits in the years ahead.



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# MEASURE WASTE

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What gets measured gets managed. Understanding what type of food is being wasted and at what stage is important to take actions to reduce waste and save money. Winnow's data shows that professional kitchens can waste up to 20% of food purchased. Winnow data shows that this is mainly generated during meal overproduction:

	Overproduction	Spoilage	Preparation	Cooking errors
Breakfast	73%	14%	8%	5%
Lunch	87%	7%	2%	4%
Dinner	85%	7%	2%	6%



# 1 MEASURE FOOD WASTE

A big challenge that many restaurants and hospitality businesses face is finding the right quantity of displayed food when providing buffets. Invest in technology for better production planning and accurately measure food waste. Using a smart meter like Winnow can help your kitchen cut food waste in half.

*"Using Winnow I can reduce my food waste and better control production, which means significant cost reductions."* [Said Jeremy Cayron, Executive Chef, Sofitel Bangkok Sukhumvit](#)

# 2 AVOID OVERPRODUCTION

Small things such as switching from bulk production to smaller batches, revising order quantities regularly and preparing daily production estimates can lead to significant results in reducing overproduction. Also, avoid designing menus with a single dish that requires a specific ingredient. If customers do not order that dish, that ingredient would turn bad over time. By avoiding overproduction, [the team at Fairmont The Palm reduce food waste by 40%](#), in less than 4 months, in the hotel's buffet restaurant.

# 3 PREVENT SPOILAGE

Try not to overbuy fresh produce and keep everything labelled and organized. Date all products when you receive them and put new products at the back of the shelf so older food gets used first.





# TRACK YOUR FOOD COST & INVENTORY

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One of the most important components of managing your food cost is managing your inventory process effectively. By conducting inventory counts you can measure the amount of food, supplies and how fast the products are being used in your kitchen over time. This can be converted into cost which, in turn, can be compared to total sales for a given period. This will help you understand how much profit your business makes from the products sold.

## 4 CHECK YOUR INVENTORY WEEKLY

[The National Restaurant Association](#) advises operators to take inventory and calculate cost of sales each week. With a weekly inventory check you are able to identify problems quickly and react immediately.

## 5 CHECK YOUR TOP SELLERS DAILY

Every kitchen has a few items that are top sellers or especially important to their menu. These items should be inventoried on a daily basis to keep better track of them.

## 6 BE ACCURATE WITH INVENTORY

Accuracy is the heart of the inventory process. Count each item to get an accurate picture of your kitchen's financial health. Using accounting software makes taking inventory easier and more accurate than keeping your inventory data with pen and paper or on a spreadsheet. There are a growing number of businesses that are building products to help you manage your inventory easily. We have collected some of them for you to check out: [SimpleOrder](#), [OCMobile](#), [Syrus](#).



Photo credit: Alto Images via Stocksy



# PURCHASE WISELY

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Where to buy your products and on what conditions is one of the key decisions you need to make in your business. Your supplier needs to meet several requirements such as quality of the products, price and payment terms.

## 7 PLAN IN ADVANCE

It is important to plan your menus in advance in order to source the right amount of product avoiding last minutes orders, which usually comes with extra rates. Start thinking in the spring what the summer menu is going to look like. [At IKEA Belgium](#), the team carefully forecast how much food they need, and only order the necessary amount to prevent waste and costs due to urgent orders.

## 8 PURCHASE IN BULK

When meeting growers, find out how much they are able to produce, where their produce is coming from, and how far it will have to travel. If there aren't many local choices available, you may want to join with other businesses in the area to bulk buy from further sustainable businesses. It will help keep costs lower.

## 9 GROW YOUR OWN VEGETABLE GARDEN

Commercial kitchens can have delicious sustainable ingredients, reduce transportation cost to zero and dramatically reduce operating costs by growing their own fruits, vegetables and herbs. Urban farming can also bring greater impact in the community by contributing to the local economy, creating functioning ecological spaces.



Photo credit: Fotolia



# TRAIN EMPLOYEES

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Investing in training of kitchen staff to improve efficiency of food preparation and storage procedures will help you reduce food waste, obtain the optimal number of dishes from the purchased ingredients and as a consequence reduce your costs. With proper employee training, your business can prevent overspending while your staff still provides excellent quality dishes and service.

## 10 GET CREATIVE WITH LEFTOVERS

Train kitchen staff to make the most out of the product you buy. Don't throw away what you have as leftover if it's still usable.

*"If we have leftover bacon from the breakfast buffet, the chefs quickly think of ways to reuse it instead of throwing it away like they used to do. We often use cooked bacon in quiches or pies, and the result is delicious."* [Said Anne-Cecile Degennes, Executive Chef at AccorHotels](#)

## 11 REDUCE OVER-TRIMMING

Provide training to kitchen staff on proper food trimming and cutting techniques. Over-trimming typically occurs in the preparation of bulk meats and vegetable peeling. Check the garbage for signs of over-trimming, and retrain your prep staff if necessary.

## 12 CROSS TRAINING

Cross train your staff to provide them a wide range of skills. This allows management to schedule less staff while achieving the same production and service standards and saving labour dollars at the same time.

*"I am now constantly re-training the team to make sure we perform the best that we possibly can."* [Said Jirayu Kongjan, Executive Chef at Novotel Phuket Kamala Beach](#)



Photo credit: MaaHoo Studio via Stocksy



# Waste Recipe - More Taste, Less Waste

*Inspired by the Executive Chef at Novotel Warsaw Centrum*

## Chocolate cake with leftover coffee

Preparation (min): 40 minutes

200g leftover coffee beans  
100g poppy seed  
300g powder sugar  
150g butter  
6 eggs  
6 tbs semolina  
400g whole apples  
1 tsp baking powder

Method:

Mix the egg yolks with the sugar.  
Add the other ingredients in this order:

- Butter
- Coffee leftovers
- Poppy seed
- Semolina
- Shredded apples
- Baking powder
- To finish, mix the whipped egg whites

Bake at 175 C for about 30 min

After the cake has cooled down, you can cover it with chocolate ganache



# About Winnow

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We believe that chefs deserve the information in an easily accessible way to make their kitchens more productive, freeing up time to focus on being creative with food. Our pioneering smart meter helps chefs cut their food waste in half, dramatically improving their profitability.

We believe that what gets measured gets managed, and by using technology and information intelligently, kitchens can be made more efficient.

We believe that it is all of our responsibility to make the most from our food.

Our team at Winnow have worked with hundreds of kitchens – we have learned a lot on the journey so far. We understand that achieving and improving profitability in a professional kitchen can be a challenge.

We will work with you every step of the way.



*"Food is too valuable to waste, and technology can help us change the way we make food"*

Marc Zornes  
Co-founder, Winnow

## FIND OUT MORE

By telling us a bit about your business we can give you a detailed estimate of how much your operations could save using our Winnow System to cut food waste:

[www.winnowsolutions.com/demorequest](http://www.winnowsolutions.com/demorequest)

We are proud to be part of  
[Friends of Champions 12.3](#)



We are proud to be part of the  
[Courtauld 2025 Commitment](#)





# We would love to hear from you!

We'd love to hear your tips and tricks about how you manage your kitchen and reduce your costs. If you've got any other great ideas not listed here please get in touch to continue the conversation:

[Get in touch](#)





[www.winnowsolutions.com](http://www.winnowsolutions.com)