

# 12 Ways To Drastically Cut Your Kitchen's Costs

Mini guide to help professional  
kitchens handle their expenses



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## Control your kitchen's costs

### Tips & tricks

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.

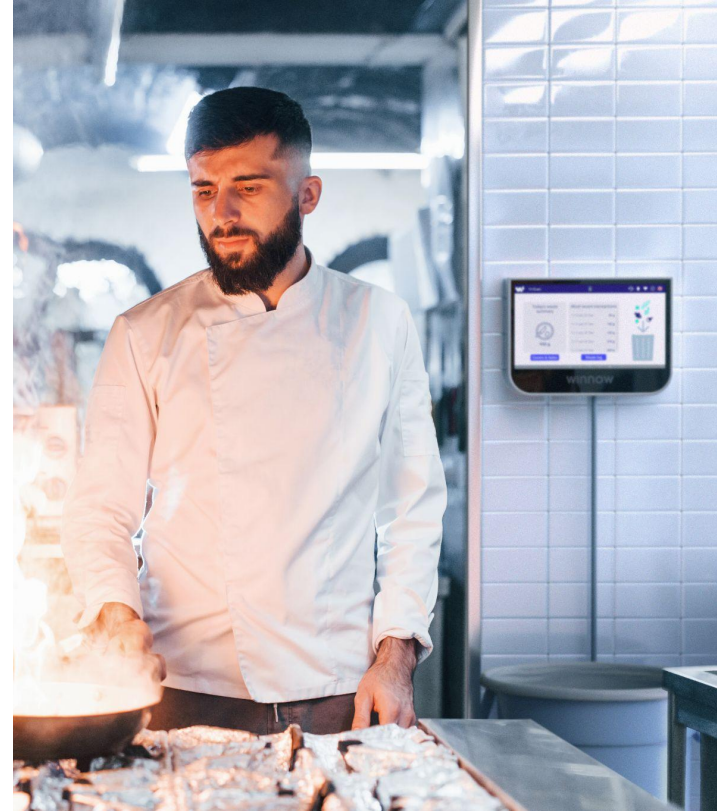
Twelve proven solutions, provided by Winnow's extensive network of chefs and food and beverage professionals, share the pathway to drastically cutting your kitchen's cost. In the last five years, the team at Winnow have met some sensational chefs, operations managers and kitchen staff.

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.



# Measure waste

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.

Jeremy Cayron | Executive Chef  
Sofitel Bangkok Sukhumvit



#2

## Avoid overproduction

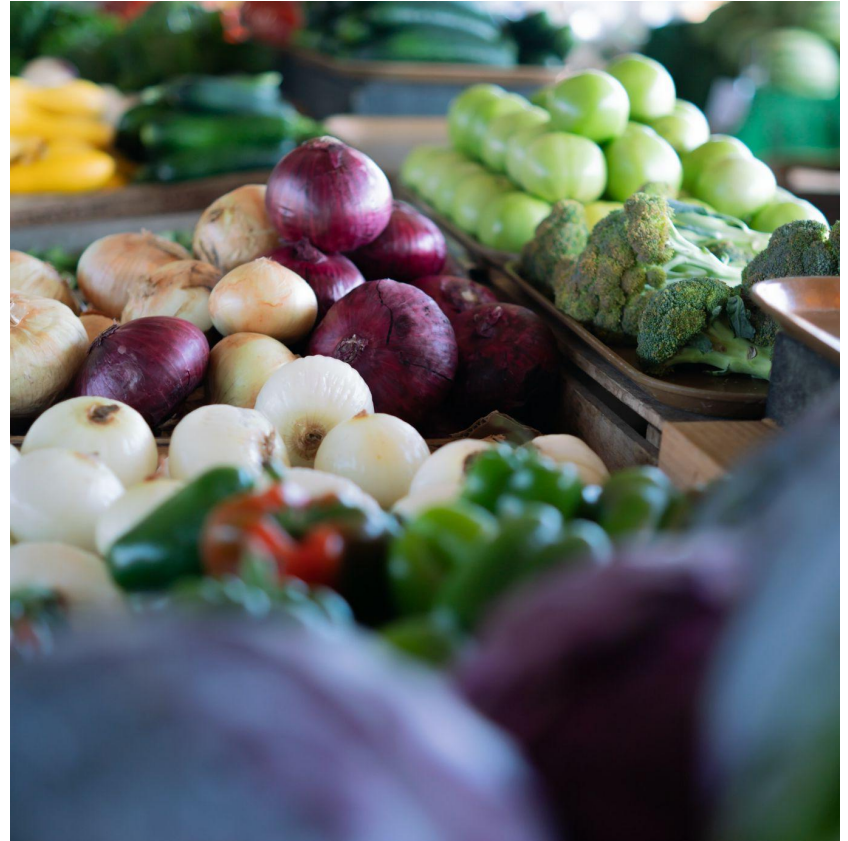
Small things such as switching from bulk production to smaller batches, revising order quantities regularly and preparing daily production estimates can lead to significant results in reducing overproduction. Also, avoid designing menus with a single dish that requires a specific ingredient. If customers 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

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](#).

# Purchase wisely

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.



## Train employees

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.

#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.

Jirayu Konogjan | Executive Chef  
Novotel Phuket Kamala Beach

# 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

Winnow was founded with a simple belief that food is too valuable to waste. Yet measuring food waste is a challenge for all commercial kitchens with up to 20% of all food purchased going to waste (typically 5%-15%).

Our mission is to connect the commercial kitchen, create a movement of chefs, and inspire others to see that food is too valuable to waste.

Winnow develops Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help chefs run more profitable and sustainable kitchens by cutting food waste in half.

From city centre hotels to casinos and cruise ships, Winnow offers a solution for every kitchen. Our analytics platform and reporting suite helps teams pinpoint waste quickly, allowing enterprises to drive significant waste reductions at scale.

Our hardware options range from simple digital measurement tools to our AI enabled Winnow Vision which 'learns to see' food being thrown in the bin. 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.

Get in touch to continue the conversation  
[info@winnowsolutions.com](mailto:info@winnowsolutions.com)



## Can Winnow Help You?

1. Interested in reducing food waste and cost?
2. Want to gain better understanding of food waste in your kitchens?
3. Are you spending ~100K\$/year on food in each of your kitchens?
4. Do you prepare some or most of your food in advance?
5. Does your organisation have more than 10 sites with kitchens?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, speak to one of our food waste experts to find out what reducing food waste could mean for your business.

[Get a Free Consultation](#)