

# How Naples Grande Beach Resort Cut Food Waste by 58% Within 4 Months

Positioned along Florida's Gulf Coast, Naples Grande Beach Resort is a luxury destination celebrated for its world-class hospitality and culinary excellence. With 450 rooms, 50 villas, and five diverse dining venues, the resort sought a bold, data-driven solution to tackle food waste. By partnering with Winnow, the team achieved a 58% reduction in food waste in just four months—an extraordinary result fueled by visionary leadership and advanced technology.

At the heart of this transformation is Executive Chef Juan Carlos "JC" Mendez, whose culinary path—from local kitchens in Minnesota to heritage butchery in Mexico—now drives a zero-waste philosophy that defines the resort's operations.

## Driving Change

Originally from Mexico City, JC spent 10 years in Minnesota, working first in smaller restaurants before transitioning to high-volume kitchens. There, he honed his skills in portion control and operational consistency. Later, a return to Mexico led him to train in traditional cooking and butchery. **"Two years of learning butchery taught me the value of every part of your ingredients."** This

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It's important for me to look at Winnow's reports everyday and ask why these things are being thrown away. I look particularly at the images.

Executive Chef **Juan Carlos Mendez**  
Naples Grande Beach Resort



## Waste reduction results



58% reduction in food waste by weight



39 tonnes of food waste avoided annually



169 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions prevented



\$50,000 in savings in 4 months



98,000 meals saved annually

experience cemented his ethos: respect every ingredient, educate the next generation, and eliminate waste. For Chef JC, reducing food waste goes far beyond business efficiency—it's a personal mission. **"For me personally, it's important to reduce food waste—so many people are not eating in the world, and it's important to save."** He leads with purpose, cultivating a kitchen culture where chefs think intentionally about every ingredient and action.

## The Challenge

Before implementing Winnow, food waste at Naples Grande was driven by overproduction, bulk ordering, and a lack of visibility. Without detailed data, large-scale reductions simply weren't possible.

Today, Chef JC and his team start each morning by reviewing Winnow's daily image reports, which offer clear insights into what is being wasted and why. One early insight involved berries repeatedly ending up in the bin. The solution? A compote made from leftover fruit. **"Waste is no longer overlooked—it's analyzed, understood, and repurposed."** explains Chef JC.

## Dish Spotlight: Birria Tacos

One of Chef JC's standout dishes is his Birria taco special, inspired by his Mexican heritage. Rich, slow-braised beef is transformed into flavorful tacos, and the braising liquid is transformed into a consommé used as a dipping sauce for quesadillas. **"We serve the braising liquid with the taco—nothing goes to waste."** The dish reflects a broader zero-waste approach: designing menus based on available surplus.

### Practical Solutions

**Chili Management:** To prevent spoilage from bulk chili orders, the team taste-tests each batch and freezes the chilies according to their spice level. **"If they're really spicy, we freeze them and use them later for salsa."**

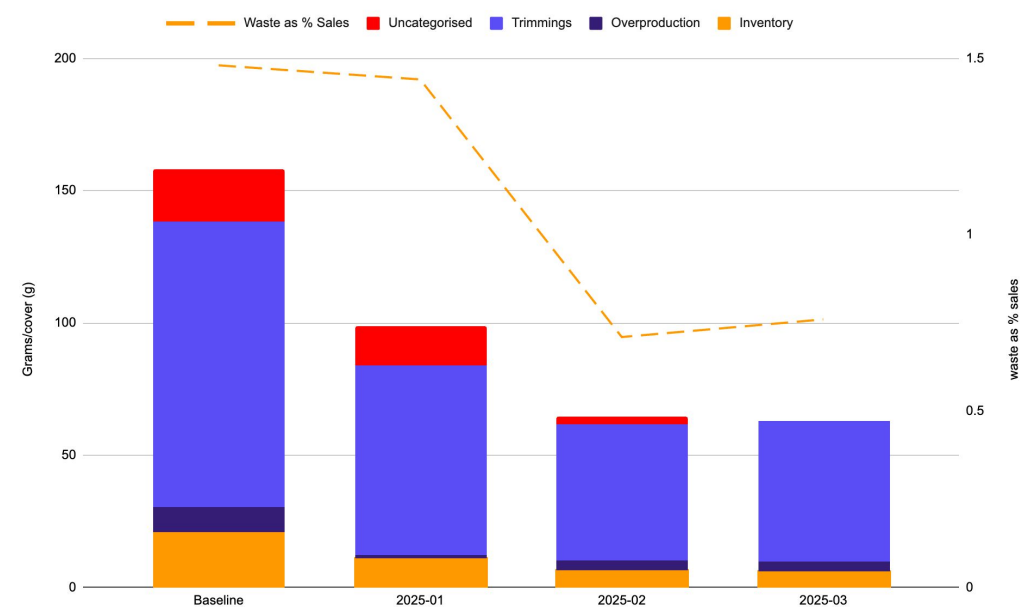
**Ingredient Repurposing:** Tomato tops are used to make marinara or tomato bisque, often paired with a truffle grilled cheese. Asparagus ends are turned into rich, flavorful soups.

**Smarter Ordering:** Ordering has been refined to align purchasing with actual guest covers

**Adaptable Menu:** The team adapts menus daily to incorporate surplus ingredients

### Team Engagement and Culture Shift

JC's leadership has sparked a mindset shift in the kitchen. What started as a new system has become



second nature. Staff are now engaged, inquisitive, and focused on waste prevention. The kitchen is not just more efficient—it's more conscious.

### Future Plans

The success at Naples Grande Beach Resort shows that reducing food waste isn't just about technology—it's about leadership, culture, and creativity. Looking ahead, Chef JC plans to audit and optimize the breakfast buffet. With the guidance Chef and the support of Winnow's insights, the resort has turned everyday waste into a story of innovation and impact.

## About Winnow

**Winnow develops Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help chefs in large businesses like hotels, contract caterers, casinos, and cruise ships to run more profitable, and sustainable kitchens by cutting food waste in half.**

Measuring food waste is a challenge for all commercial kitchens with up to 20% of all food purchased going to waste. Winnow offers a solution for every kitchen.

Our analytics platform and reporting suite help teams pinpoint waste quickly, allowing enterprises to drive significant waste reductions at scale.

Kitchens that use Winnow cut food waste by half on average, driving food purchasing costs down by 3%-8%, improving margins whilst doing the right thing. Winnow is deployed in over 90 countries with offices in London, Dubai, Singapore, Cluj, and Chicago.