



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **8 Ways to create less food waste this festive season – *the IWMSA provides valuable tips for reducing household waste***

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#### **Immediate Release**

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The festive season is notorious for being the most wasteful time of year. We buy too much, cook too much, eat too much and ultimately, discard way too much. But Dr Suzan Oelofse, President of the Institute of Waste Management Southern Africa (IWMSA) says there are simple, yet effective ways for ordinary people to be more waste-conscious. Here she shares eight tips to help reduce the amount of waste your family creates over the December holidays.

1. **Shop realistically** - It is part of the human condition to fear under-catering and leaving guests hungry. The truth is this seldom, if ever, happens! We tend to buy, bring, braai and cook up to twice as much as is needed. The way to combat this is to plan meals carefully. With specific shopping lists, you can budget accurately, buy only what is genuinely needed and avoid impulse buys.
2. **Take your own bags** - Do your bit to reduce plastic in landfill sites by taking your own material bags when you go shopping. This small habit can make a huge difference, so encourage your family and friends to do the same.

3. **Store food correctly** - Make sure you put cold foods into the fridge or freezer as soon as possible after purchase to avoid any unnecessary (and costly) spoiling. Store crackers, rusks and crisps in airtight containers once the box or packet has been opened and make sure any fruit is stored in a cool area, away from direct sunlight.
4. **Save it before it spoils** - If you can see that something is nearing its use-by date or starting to spoil, use it as soon as possible or turn it into something you can save for a later date. For instance, if the bananas are looking over-ripe, bake banana bread; if the butternut has reached its sell-by-date, make a butternut soup to freeze.
5. **Use leftovers creatively** - If you find you have cooked too much and there's a mountain of leftover food, don't throw it away. Even if you're sure nobody is going to want more of the same tomorrow, you can freeze things like rice, gravy and vegetables and re-use the meat - for instance in pasta, on sandwiches or as part of a hearty breakfast. Leftover salads can be served with fresh bread later as a healthy snack.
6. **Separate** - Even if you have never recycled bottles and plastics before, there is no better time to start than doing so this season. You could turn it into a holiday project and get all your visitors involved. You want five different waste containers, boxes or crates - whatever works for you. Label them CANS, GLASS, PLASTIC, PAPER and KITCHEN and then make sure everyone in the house separates accordingly. Kitchen waste can be turned into compost very easily, and at the end of the season, you can take your cans, glass, paper and plastic to collection sites. If this sounds like too much effort, try separating only the wet (food waste) and dry (paper, packaging material) waste. Perhaps it will be the start of a lifelong habit?
7. **Give to the less fortunate** - Before you throw something away, ask yourself if there is anybody out there who would see your rubbish as more than just waste. If the answer is yes, find a way to give it to someone who would appreciate it. This could be leftover food, building material, clothing – absolutely anything. If someone can use it, give it away!

8. **Green your gifts** - Think about ways to green your gifts. You could start by wrapping gifts in recycled paper and giving recycled cards. When buying gifts, try to buy locally-made items with recycled or recyclable packaging. You could even go a step further and buy gifts that will directly promote the reduction of waste, such as a Bokashi compost bin, or green shopping bags as stocking fillers.

For more information on the IWMSA visit [www.iwmsa.co.za](http://www.iwmsa.co.za)

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