

Balancing the needs and interests of customers, profitability, sustainability, waste reduction, seasonality, volunteers and suitable equipment can be a challenge. Consider the following to help juggle these priorities.

Planning and preparation

- Reduce the number of items available on the menu. This will reduce number of different ingredients required to purchase, store and prepare
- Consider what can be done by volunteers or buy pre-prepared foods to save money on labour
- Shop consciously so you can maximise on promotions, seasonality and prices.

Reduce waste

Make friends with your freezer

- Leftover fruit salad can be frozen and used in smoothies
- Decant flavoured milk into small cups with a popsicle stick and freeze
- Place leftover soup in small individual serves (rather than one bulk container) then only defrost the number needed on the day
- Peel over ripe bananas and freeze to use later in muffins, banana bread or pikelets
- Use ice cube trays or zip lock bags and freeze portions of large tinned items e.g. tuna, baked beans, spaghetti or pineapple.



Discounts

- Discount stock nearing its expiry date or offer a two for one deal – ensure you are still covering the cost price
- Have a quarterly stock take sale and advertise an 'everything must go' menu.

Bulk - consider if bigger is better

- Grease proof paper can be cut into many sizes for wraps, lining muffin trays or serving smaller food items
- Cook food in bulk and freeze individual portions e.g. pizza bases, pasta meals, curry and rice, muffins
- Strike a deal with other food businesses in your area (e.g. local school canteen) and negotiate buying packaging in bulk - 1000 containers is cheaper than 100; and only 1 delivery fee.

Make fruit and veg the hero

When comparing price per kilo, fruits and vegetables are cheaper than meat so it makes sense to make fruit and veg the hero of any dish. Top tips:

Choose the best option at the time

- Root to leaf cooking - use the whole fruit or vegetable e.g. cook potatoes with skins on, use the top/tail/peel of carrots in dips or soups, shred broccoli stems into coleslaw, grate and freeze citrus fruit rind before juicing, use herb stems and roots to flavour sauces and meals
- Choose the cheapest option per kilo. For example: loose spinach leaves are \$16/kg compared to the pre-packed bags which work out to be up to \$33/kg - plus, you choose how much you need
- Canned, frozen and dried fruit and vegetables can be good options. They are often cheaper than fresh, nutritionally just as good and reduce waste as they have a long shelf life.



Buy in season

Seasonal produce will vary across Australia, however the [Seasonal Food Guide](#) is a good starting point. The benefits of buying in season include:

- Freshness - high supply means it's freshest on the market
- Flavour - peak picking time is also peak eating time!
- Nutrition - many nutrients start to break down after picking.
- Price - high supply means that produce is at its cheapest
- Environment - locally grown produce means less food miles (good for the environment and your budget).

For great seasonal recipes for your food service, visit:

LiveLighter - livelighter.com.au

WA School Canteen Association Inc. (WASCA) - waschoolcanteens.org.au

