

# Food Waste | From Excess to Enough



## Morals over money: the surprisingly powerful link between moral motivations and consumers' food waste

Why do we waste food? Many feel guilt about hunger, others worry about cost, the environment. Some just don't want to be seen as a person that wastes food. Yet, households are the largest food wasters. What truly motivates us to reduce waste?

We conducted a study to find out which motivations—financial, social, environmental, or moral—effectively reduce food waste. Our study used real waste audits, not just self-reports, to get accurate insights.

Which motivation would you bet your money on?

Results? Moral motivations were the standout factor in reducing waste. Families driven by moral concerns wasted significantly less food. Surprisingly, financial and social motivations had little effect. This suggests that ethical considerations might be the key to effective waste reduction campaigns.

Our findings highlight the need for policy makers and campaigners to emphasize moral messages in their efforts

to cut down food waste. Similarly, businesses can incorporate ethical considerations into their marketing campaigns and internal communications to resonate with both consumers and employees to reduce food waste.



### Source

Ribbers, D., van Herpen, E., Pandelaere, M., & Geuens, M. (2024). Morals over money: the relationship between moral motivations and consumers' food waste. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*

