

# **Waste less at home: Methods for reducing household food waste**

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# THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE OF EATING

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We've collected the newest thinking from 30 consumer behavior researchers into the inaugural issue of the Journal of the Association for Consumer Research.

## I. HUNGER AND SATIETY



**SKIP DINNER IF YOU'RE NOT HUNGRY:** Spikes in your blood sugar can lead to weight gain. <sup>1</sup>



**DON'T CALL IT HEALTHY:** You overeat food called "healthy" because you think it's less filling. <sup>2</sup>



**MAKE LESS - WASTE LESS:** Low-income families prepare too much food in fear of "running out." <sup>3</sup>



**MIRRORS = MINDFULNESS:** Kitchen mirrors make you dislike unhealthy food. <sup>4</sup>

## II. SHOPPING AND DINING



**HAPPY MEALS CAN BE HEALTHY MEALS:** Brain scans show that small prizes keep you happy when eating less food. <sup>5</sup>



**DISNEY HELPS DIETS:** When juice and fruit came with meals, Disney World goers consumed 11-24% more of them. <sup>6</sup>



**READ CAREFULLY:** Per-serving calorie labels can lead to mindless overeating. <sup>7</sup>



**SLICE SMALLER:** Smaller portions (and bigger tables) lead to smaller meals. <sup>8</sup>



**FOOD PANTRY SOLUTIONS:** Behavioral economics in food pantries lead to healthier shopping. <sup>9</sup>

## III. MINDLESSLY EATING BETTER



**USE SMALL PLATES:** You serve 20-25% less when using small plates - but only if a researcher is not watching! <sup>10</sup>



**THE LESS FANCY THE PLATE,** the Less You'll Eat. We may eat the least off paper plates. <sup>11</sup>



**FORKS OVER SPOONS:** Forks (versus spoons) make you overestimate calories. <sup>12</sup>



**AVOID NEGATIVE MESSAGES:** Telling dieters "Don't eat cookies" can double how much they eat. Use 2-sided messages instead. <sup>13</sup>

## IV. THE FUTURE OF FOOD RESEARCH

FROM FRINGE TO FOCUS:

The Behavioral Science of Eating: Encouraging Boundary Research that has Impact <sup>14</sup>

Boundary Research: Tools and Rules to Impact Emerging Fields <sup>15</sup>



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[FOODPSYCHOLOGY.CORNELL.EDU/JACR](http://FOODPSYCHOLOGY.CORNELL.EDU/JACR)



- <sup>1</sup> Gal, JACR 2016
- <sup>2</sup> Suher, Raghunathan & Hoyer, JACR 2016
- <sup>3</sup> Porpino, JACR 2016
- <sup>4</sup> Jami, JACR 2016
- <sup>5</sup> Reimann, MacInnis & Bechara, JACR 2016
- <sup>6</sup> Peters, Beck, Lande, Pan, Cardel, Ayoob & Hill, JACR 2016
- <sup>7</sup> Elshiewy, Jahn & Boztug, JACR 2016
- <sup>8</sup> Davis, Payne & Bui, JACR 2016
- <sup>9</sup> Wilson, JACR 2016
- <sup>10</sup> Holden, Zlatevska & Dubelaar, JACR 2016
- <sup>11</sup> Williamson, Block & Keller, JACR 2016
- <sup>12</sup> Szocs & Biswas, JACR 2016
- <sup>13</sup> Pham, Mandel & Morales, JACR 2016
- <sup>14</sup> Van Ittersum & Wansink, JACR 2016
- <sup>15</sup> Wansink & van Ittersum, JCB 2016

Findings of the inaugural issue of the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*. Credit: Cornell University, Food and Brand Lab

Consumer food waste carries the highest environmental impact compared to losses earlier in the food chain, and it is no longer a problem concentrated only in higher income countries. How can household food waste be reduced? The proper answer might come from more research to identify which communication and marketing initiatives work better to decrease waste.

In a new paper published in the *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, researcher Gustavo Porpino, from the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) provides some solutions and a framework for conducting future research on this global issue of remarkable social and environmental relevance.

Porpino analyzed previous research findings from 24 peer-reviewed papers, and empirical data from a study conducted in households in the US and Brazil. He concluded that additional studies aimed at testing the impact of communication initiatives on behavioral change are needed. Also, a standardized methodology to measure consumer food waste is necessary. These paths for further research would benefit public policies aimed at increasing the awareness of [food waste](#), and would contribute to more effective nutritional education initiatives since messages could be framed based on insights tested in scientific studies.

"If we consider that wasting edible food might contribute to infringing on opportunities for others to feed themselves, then there is a link between this phenomena and hunger relief programs", says Porpino.

**More information:** Porpino, Gustavo (2016). Household food waste behavior: avenues for future research. *The Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 1.

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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