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CE4FOOD

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CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS GOOD FOR YOU

By Sofia Tsiortou, Drosostalida Social Enterprise, Greece.

2500 years ago, Hippocrates said: “Let medicine be your food and food be your medicine” as the foundation of rational medicine.

His words are heard today at a time when not only is poor nutrition associated with a multitude of diseases, but also when food waste has reached enormous proportions. According to the WWF, more than 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted annually, while more than 868 million people live in poverty.

The great social, ecological and economic imprint left behind by food waste is also associated with not only the mass industrialization of food, but also its distribution. Today, supermarket shelves and restaurant menus include tons of food that have travelled from the other side of the earth, on the one hand altering and homogenizing the food model, and on the other hand causing great environmental impacts from their emissions (for the transportation) and the overexploitation of natural resources for their production.

What is needed is to organise special awareness campaigns, empower restaurant kitchens to play a key role in re-educating consumers about responsible nutrition but also related to the principles of circular economy in the kitchen. A worldwide movement has been born in favour of the use of local and selected foods, a trend that also has representatives in Greece.

The restaurant **COOKOOVAYA** acknowledges the above and has pledged the following:



- Collaboration with small producers who know everything about the product they produce and market.

- Establishment of “Wise Food Stories”, where through various tasty suggestions, customers become aware of information related to the production and value of local Greek food.

- At the same time, with the wise food experience menu, one has the opportunity to try a local produce, whether it is fish, meat, vegetables or multiple dishes with different ways of cooking. Thus, from a big fish one part of it can be made raw, another steamed and another fried without leaving a single piece unused.

COOKOOVAYA RESTAURANT, ATHENS, GREECE

- In addition, they communicate to their clientele, the Greek breeds of some rare cattle, with enormous value for both the biodiversity of the country and its cultural heritage. These rare cattle have survived for thousands of years and are the best example of sustainability. Their consumption means an increase in demand and therefore an incentive for the producer to save them, therefore all production sectors are strengthened in a way that is safe and of high quality for society but also for the economy and the environment.

- Application of zero waste management principles while simultaneously educating the public in the identification of local ingredients and their use, but also in the principles of the circular economy. It is estimated that in the household economy the number of raw materials that end up in the garbage can be reduced by 60% while in restaurants even by 100%.

An example to learn from!



Rod restaurant and food waste

By Monica Muresan, CE4Food Project manager, CCIABN, Romania.

Rod Restaurant is definitely one of the most popular in Cluj-Napoca where customers can eat well and healthily. Whatever you choose from the menu is a refined culinary experience, dishes with Romanian origins, reinterpreted tastes and mousses made with local ingredients.

ROD is a predominantly à la carte restaurant, so the risks of food waste are low, whether it is a set menu, canteen or individual consumer. An important role in reducing food waste is the existence of an efficient supply system, careful monitoring of consumption rhythms, habits and consumer profile. There is also a good knowledge of food merceology.

“Knowing the shelf life of fresh products, how to store them, and how they can be kept in optimal conditions of consumption come to complement the application of specific cooking techniques, suitable for each preparation, the correct use of ingredients and others that are specifically related to the kitchen”.



An important detail in the restaurant's anti-waste policy is that it has chosen to use over 70% of the ingredients provided by local and regional producers. In addition to the fact that such a decision contributes to the support of local entrepreneurship, delivery time is very short and it allows for constant supply, in small quantities, according to the consumption rate, thus avoiding storage, degradation or erroneous assessment of the necessary ingredients. At the same time, the carbon footprint for transporting local and regional products is low.

These are, in general, some elements of intelligent management, which help the restaurant owners to limit, to control the waste of food, but also of energy, because the restaurant does not close any day with prepared and unconsumed portions. Of course, there are food scraps left on the plates, but they are recycled under a contract and do not end up in the food circuit for human consumption.





ROD RESTAURANT, CLUJ NAPOCA, ROMANIA

Finally, the restaurant shows solidarity with some disadvantaged groups in the region, their actions being designed to reduce unnecessary food waste by sending free meals to several students in a commune near Cluj or offering 20 pizzas a month to children with chronic kidney disease in collaboration with the Magic Help Association.

“Together with other partners we are happy to offer our food as a form of affection to those who do not come to our restaurant. There are different ways of expressing human solidarity, some do it through psychological support, others choose the spiritual path, a good word, a gesture, but we know that love goes through the stomach, as an old saying goes, and we do that by offering affection. in the form of a plate with taste and refinement.”

LOOK, SMELL, TASTE: USE YOUR SENSES TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

By Nelson Mendes, Project researcher, Lawton School, Spain.

In many European countries like Spain, about half of their population throw food away because they are not clear about the real meaning of the so-called “best-before date” and, most of the times, are not able to differentiate this one from what is known as the “use-by date”.

With that in mind, the now widely-known European institution Too Good To Go have set out to change this reality, so they recently launched a campaign called ‘DATES WITH MEANING: LOOK, SMELL, TASTE’, an initiative destined to clarify the generalized confusion over preferential consumption labels

According to data recently collected, date labelling of food is responsible for 10% of all food wasted in the European Union, i.e. almost 9 million tonnes per year.

Also according to research, 4 out of 10 consumers do not know that the best-before date is only an indicator of organoleptic quality (as opposed to the “use by” date, which is an indicator of food safety).

Essentially, this means that, once the best-before date has passed, that food can still be eaten and enjoyed.





Too Good To Go



Too Good To Go state that, as they do not wish to “stand idly by in the face of a challenge with such an easy solution”, also explaining that, this way we will only have to remember that using our senses of sight, smell and taste, we can evaluate food after the best-before date and avoid wasting it, if it is still in good condition.

Under this initiative, the Spanish branch of the organization have teamed up with some of the most significant brands in the food and drinks sector in that country, in order to include the new label on their “best-before date” products.

As they explain, “this way you will be able to identify them and, if their use by date has passed, it will be easier for you to remember that using your senses you can check if they are still in good condition and avoid pointless waste”.

Widely renowned through their mission of trying to “make an impact and achieve real change against food waste”, and presenting as their main aim “to contribute in every possible way to building a global movement against food waste”, Too Good To Go started their activity in Denmark back in 2016, when a group of entrepreneurial minds from across Europe came up with the idea of using technology to bring people together and empower them to reduce food waste. All these minds, who had the same ambition and passion to make more sense of our food system, decided to join forces and create a very simple solution: an app that connects people and businesses at the right time and in the right place to combat food waste.

The “WIN-WIN-WIN philosophy and the FOOD-PEOPLE-PLANET concept” are their leitmotiv and identify them as “a company that gives people the opportunity to do something good for the planet while enjoying it and helps businesses to grow in a fully sustainable way”.

It just goes to show that, sometimes, good intentions DO make good ideas!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

“Cutting food waste is a delicious way of saving money, helping to feed the world and protect the planet .”

- *Tristram Stuart*

“I credit my grandmother for teaching me to love and respect food. She taught me how to waste nothing, to make sure I used every bit of the chicken and boil the bones till no flavour could be extracted from them. “ - *Marcus Samuelsson*

“Imagine walking out of a grocery store with four bags of groceries, dropping one in the parking lot, and just not bothering to pick it up. That’s essentially what we’re doing.”

- *Dan Gunders*

“Respect for food is a respect for life, for who we are and what we do.” - *Thomas Keller*



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