**Call to use leftovers and cut food waste**

Return to wartime values and reduce emissions, say campaigners   
  
  
[Blog: Watching your waste? Share your tips for reducing the food mountain](http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/food/2007/10/leftovers.html)

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Bubble and squeak and homemade chutney are back on the menu as part of a campaign launched this week to urge people to return to the values of wartime food rationing and cut the mountain of food waste emerging from the nation's kitchens.

Research by the government's waste reduction agency, Wrap, found that one third of all food bought in Britain is thrown away - of which half is edible. Wrap will claim that this discarded food is a bigger problem than packaging, as the food supply chain accounts for a fifth of UK carbon emissions and decomposing food releases methane, the most potent of the greenhouse gases. Wasted food is estimated to cost each British household from £250 to £400 a year.

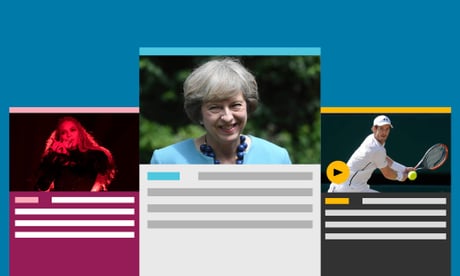
'If we stopped the amount [of food waste] that we could stop, it would be the same as taking one fifth of cars off the road,' said Liz Goodwin, Wrap's chief executive. The campaign will urge people to plan meals, write - and stick to - shopping lists, make smaller portions, and learn to prepare and cook leftovers and food which is past its prime.

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Among the supporters is the National Federation of Women's Institutes, set up during the First World War to help women make the most of the food available. It has provided a series of recipes including apple, orange and sultana chutney, cheese souffle bites, 'Christmas pie', and bread and butter pudding.

Thomasina Miers, MasterChef winner two years ago, food writer, presenter and campaigner, says: 'I grew up in a family where nothing was thrown away. My mother loved to have leftovers and relied on getting one "free" meal a week from them.

'She would fry an onion and artfully combine the contents of her fridge into a delicious bubble and squeak that could never be repeated. It is difficult to come up with a specific recipe, except to say fry your onion (and garlic if liked) and have a go. Alternatively you can just chuck your leftover veggies into a stockpot to make a delicious stock for soups.'



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The campaign will also encourage more people to cook to combat obesity, and address a growing disconnection between agriculture and food production and consumers.

'There are a variety of reasons [for the problem] but most of it is down to people not valuing food and not understanding where it comes from,' said Jeanette Longfield, co-ordinator of the food campaign group Sustain.

'People who are older tend to waste less: my mum and dad, for example, don't throw much food away because they remember the war, but if you've never known what food shortages are, why would you bother?'

Wrap found about half of food waste is scraps, peelings, meat bones and other inedible items such as used teabags and eggshells. Of the other 'edible' half, nearly one third was fruit and vegetables, about a fifth was bread and cakes, and other common items were uncooked meat and fish, and unwanted ready meals.

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