

# Fighting waste and encouraging a sustainable approach



## Background

Cyrus Todiwala's 110-cover Café Spice Namasté is a well-respected London restaurant and the longest awarded Bib Gourmand restaurant in the Michelin Guide. The award-winning restaurant embodies Cyrus's approach to food – fresh, flavoursome and highly sustainable.

Cyrus is a champion of education and local sourcing, as well as spearheading the fight against food waste for many years. Over the years, Cyrus has developed a range of solutions to fight waste and encourage a sustainable approach in the kitchen. All while delivering exceptional food.

Even back in the mid-90s, Cyrus was monitoring all food waste. Café Spice Namasté holds a Green Apple Award for Environmental Best Practice and today, the restaurant is close to achieving the goal of zero-waste to landfill.



## Key facts

**Making products precious** – By monitoring everything, every piece of food you have suddenly becomes precious, because you understand its true value. Only through monitoring your kitchen can you find a solution that will work for you

**Turning 2<sup>nd</sup> grade products into 1<sup>st</sup> class food** – Cyrus regularly procures 'second grade vegetables' and puts them to good use across his entire menu. By sourcing 'wonky' veg, it allows Café Spice Namasté to fight food waste beyond the confines of its own kitchen.

**Supporting community and education** – The restaurant works directly with a local school to educate children on food waste and healthy cooking. Kids take part in cookery and growing classes to get closer to food than ever. Every surplus product the school grows, however wonky, is bought and used by the restaurant.



*"Every restaurant should be doing this – realise how precious every piece of food you serve and every ingredient you use is, and suddenly you'll understand the true value of your food. Remember that in London alone half a million children go hungry. That alone will motivate you."*

**Cyrus Todiwala**



[www.cafespice.co.uk](http://www.cafespice.co.uk)

## Key actions 1

Monitor, amend and manage – there's no one-size-fits-all solution to fight food waste. Use WRAP's free Your Business is Food; don't throw it away toolkit and calculator to get started: [www.wrap.org.uk/ybifbusiness](http://www.wrap.org.uk/ybifbusiness). Day-by-day, week-by-week, make it your goal to hit zero-waste to prevent food being wasted.

## Key actions 2

Get all the team involved because when the lost profit is revealed, products suddenly become much more precious.

## Key actions 3

Connect with locally – whether it's a school or a nearby charity, take the fight against food waste out of your kitchen and into the hands of your community. The only way to stop waste once and for all is to get everyone on board. The TRiFOCAL project is working with community groups, schools, residents and businesses – visit the TRiFOCAL website to find out more: <http://trifocal.eu.com>.

## Results

A restaurant's fight against food waste starts in the kitchen, but the impact can reach far beyond it. Reducing food waste involves understanding how waste is happening (by measuring), finding solutions, and looking for alternatives such as wonky veg that may otherwise have gone to waste.

Cyrus's restaurant balances high quality cuisine with a sustainable ethos, showing that with the right strategy and approach, any chef can achieve this perfect balance. Wonky veg is used in their award-winning dishes and local schools are engaging children in preventing food waste.

## What Cyrus is doing next

Café Spice Namasté will remain as a perfect example of what a restaurant can achieve with a smart, sustainable mind-set and a creative force in food leading the way.

Cyrus will continue to be an advocate for the environment and sustainability in food. He is forming an alliance with head teachers and other stakeholders to explore how to bring these messages to children and link with the curriculum.

Cyrus has worked with WRAP to host events including 'Small Change Big Difference – the true value of food' to show food service operators how they can dramatically reduce the amount of food they throw away.

## Summary

The only way a restaurant can truly cut down on its waste is to honestly monitor the food it's throwing away, plan well and find way in which that waste can be minimised. Look at how much goes to waste and think about the cost that's having to your business.

Once you understand where your food waste is coming from, take action – amend your menu to embrace 'wonky' veg where you can and involve your whole team.

To Cyrus, this approach should be embraced by every restaurant, and there's no reason why it couldn't.

## Tips

Could wonky veg work for you? With the same flavour (but often for a lower cost), stopping second grade veg from being wasted could be a simple way for you to act sustainably and improve a meal's profitability.

To help get started on measuring food waste and making changes in your business, you can download the free 'Your Business is Food, don't throw it away' tools at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/ybifbusiness>

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