



Steps to conducting a restaurant food waste audit

By now, you should already be aware of some of the reasons why conducting a food waste audit can be a valuable tool for reducing solid waste, saving money, and improving your restaurant operations. But how do you conduct a food waste audit in your restaurant? Below are the steps that you can take to gain insights into your operations, identify opportunities for improvement, and take action to reduce restaurant food waste:

- 1** Set goals and objectives: Define what you hope to achieve through the food waste audit like reducing solid waste, saving money, improving sustainability, and more.
- 2** Prepare the necessary materials. A big area that allows you to organize multiple bags of food waste is crucial. It's recommended to choose several bags from the same week to have a snapshot of waste generated. You'll also need a large table, different buckets to split your waste by type, protective equipment, and a scale to measure the weight of the waste.
- 3** Build a team and assign champions: Choose a team of individuals responsible for conducting the audit, including staff members from various teams like the kitchen staff, serving staff, and management.
- 4** Gather data: Collect data on the amount and types of excess food in various areas of the restaurant, including the kitchen, dining room, and storage areas.
- 5** Label waste: Categorize the waste into different types like spoilage, overproduction, trimmings, and leftovers.
- 6** Analyze the data: Analyze the data collected to identify trends and patterns in your waste generation like the most wasted food items, the time of day or week when waste is highest, and the reasons for excess food.
- 7** Find opportunities for improvement: Use data analysis to identify areas where waste can be reduced or avoided. This may involve applying new policies or procedures like zero waste policies, changing portion sizes and/or menu items, or training employees in waste reduction best practices.
- 8** Create an action plan: Develop an action plan to implement the changes identified, including timelines and responsibilities for each step.
- 9** Monitor progress: Regularly monitor progress to assess the effectiveness of the food waste reduction strategies and adjust them accordingly.
- 10** Consider using inventory management technologies: Consider utilizing comprehensive inventory and purchase-to-pay management solutions that aid in recipe management and provide insights into the financial impact of food waste on your profit margins. These tools enable you to manage tail spending and enhance your cash flow—resulting in improved profitability, operations, and more.
- 11** Use food waste apps: Food waste apps, such as Mimica Touch helps users indicate the freshness of a food item. The labels they produce use temperature-sensitive indicator technology on their labels which uses gelatin to mimic the decay process in food. When food is no longer suitable for consumption, the label forms bumps as it breaks down.