

WHEN WE MAKE MORE THAN WE CAN EAT

BY ZEENATH HASA

Ending up with more than we can eat is a curious occurrence of our times. While the existence of food waste can be said to be an outcome of industrial production and materialist consumption, the emergence I would like to trace here is that of interventions into waste production by citizen action. In this I will share my thinking behind initiating Sweden's first food waste catering service, Rude Food Malmö, to bring you the story of current initiatives into food waste intervention. I will end this narrative with two recipes to highlight food waste both as an age old occurrence and as a sign of our times.

To begin with outlining the sites of intervention into food waste, I shall delve into three turbulences from a citizen action perspective:

1. Line of Resistance
2. The Needy Knows
3. Emergence of the Food Waste Entrepreneur

1. LINE OF RESISTANCE

Freeganism as an organised resistance to counter food waste was an outcome of the anti-globalisation movement in the mid-90s. It emerged as an anti-consumerist move to quickly gain stronghold as a subculture or a preferred way of life by a conscientious few. Freegans resist the underuse of necessities like food and housing through self-organised tactics of dumpster diving, squatting, or guerilla gardening. Knowledge is passed on in the form of a buddy system. Collectively mapping prospective supermarket bins,

dumpster divers follow self-made rules for their dumpster diving action, cautioning each other to, 'Leave it cleaner than you found it!' Thriving at the borders of legality, dumpster diving in Sweden is given a side glance by authorities for whom a follow up with legal action is a financial drain that does not deserve precious executive time nor the public outcry that it might chance up.

2. THE NEEDED KNOWS

Soup kitchens are a meeting point for those that want to give and those that have found themselves in a position to receive. Frequently organised by charities, churches and community groups, the soup kitchen is channel for food to those who need it. The food is sourced from commercial kitchens, donated, or prepared by volunteers. The eater here is one who lives at the edge of others' excesses.

3. THE EMERGENCE OF THE FOOD WASTE ENTREPRENEUR

Rescue, intercept, glean are some of the terms that are being employed for the more recent interventions into the curiously modern practice of creating food waste. Whether dumpster diver turned social entrepreneur, citizen making good, the food waste entrepreneur is re-making the restaurant business. The Real Junk Food Project / UK, Instock / Amsterdam,

Spisehuset Rub & Stub / Copenhagen and Rude Food / Malmö are some examples.

Here's where we come to the story of Rude Food Malmö. I initiated Rude Food Malmö in October 2014 by inviting 3 friends from the civil society sector around a blueprint for a volunteer run, not-for-profit, food waste restaurant where excess is routed to relevant charities. Today we number upto 35 active volunteers who serve food waste brunch every Saturday and provide catering for anywhere from 20 to 400 eaters at a time. Rude Food lays claim to be Sweden's first food waste catering service and one of the few climate positive restaurants in the world.

Organic farms, supermarkets and bakeries provide their excess regularly to the Rude Food kitchen. Our menu is lacto-vegetarian and vegan. The restaurant kitchen infrastructure for the initiative was provided by my restaurant kitchen project Taporí Tiffins, a space I started in July 2013 to question the idea of the restaurant as a restaurant.

Why do we call our food waste catering service Rude Food? Food that has been ignored comes right back onto our plates. The Rude Food initiative is a socially innovative way to re-think the food on our plates.

And now to end with two recipes as a way to look back and a way forward at interventions into food waste as everyday practice.



Sweden's first food waste catering service

CHORCHORI / DISCARDED VEGGIE PARTS IN MUSTARD PASTE

Some classics never die

This recipe is from my childhood in Kolkata, India. The Bengalis hate to throw away perfectly good food, instead opting to make a celebration with the supposedly discarded in their kitchen. So gather your organic cauliflower stems, carrot peel, spinach stems, pumpkin peel and aim to make this dish at the end of the week or whenever you have enough discarded veggie parts to cook yourself a meal.

Portion: For 2 moderate eaters

Time to prepare: 10 – 15 minutes

Eat with: Chapati / Flat bread or with Rice

Equipment required: Blender with a small jar or a coffee grinder

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp, mustard seeds

1 piece, potato, with the skin on of course, provided it is organic

2 cups, discarded veggies

1 piece, tomato

3 pieces, green chilli

1/2 tsp, turmeric powder

1/4 tsp, chilli powder

3 Tbsp, oil

salt to taste

1/4 tsp, organic brown sugar

(A) Boil together potato, tomato and discarded veggies in just enough water until al dente.

(B) Make a wet paste in a blender, of the mustard seeds and one green chili. Best to use a small blender jar if you have or a coffee grinder. You can also make a bigger amount of this paste and freeze it in portions.

(C) Heat oil in a wok, for an even spread of heat. Chop and fry the remaining green chillis.

(D) Add the boiled veggies.

(E) Add the powdered spices.

(F) Add salt + sugar.

(G) Add the mustard-chilli paste and cook till the water evaporates and you are left with a smooth thickness emanating from the pumpkin and potatoes.

(H) Ready to serve.



100% RAW BANANA ICE CREAM

Environmentally informed food innovation
Vegan and Gluten-free

So heres the deal with bananas. Spotty ones are better for us nutrition-wise than those deceptive bright yellow ones. The low shelf life of bananas means that they are the leading loss incurring product for supermarkets with some opting out of fair trade bananas. As conscientious consumers-cooks-eaters we need to get into our supermarkets and say, 'Gimme me my spotty banana! And make that a fair trade one while you're at it'

Our supermarket food waste partners at Rude Food rescued 70 kgs of bananas. As a food waste entrepreneur this should come as no surprise. As a food waste cook, the challenge is to make wonders out of a single ingredient. So for food waste brunch, we split the banana pile into half and made Caribbean Banana Curry (the recipe to which you will just have to wait out for when the Rude Food Cookbook gets out :) And the other half we made into Raw Banana Ice Cream. We're contemplating incubating Raw Banana Ice cream vendors this summer in Malmö. Do you want to be a food waste entrepreneur?

Time to prepare: 15 minutes of active doing by you. 8hrs + 2hrs of freezing time.

Equipment required: A pretty good blender or food processor

Ingredients:

Bananas!

Optional additions,

1 tsp, peanut butter per banana

or

1 tsp, raw cocoa, per banana

or

1/2 tsp, powdered fennel seeds per banana, if you're into that licorice fetish.

The bananas need to be peeled, chopped into bite size pieces and frozen for a good 6-8 hours at least. Remove from freezer and defrost at room temperature for upto 2 hours. Pop the semi-frozen pieces, adding your chosen flavour, in your blender. Give it a good whirr until you see creaminess taking shape in your blender. An ice cream miracle taking shape in front of your eyes. The pectin the banana gives it a good hold. No cream needed :)

Portion your 100% Raw Banana Ice Cream and refreeze for another 2 hrs at least.

Alternatively, the ice cream can be frozen and removed from the freezer at least 1.5 hrs before you intend to eat them.

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<http://www.rudefood.se/>



