

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #214: Wasting Food

Hi! How are you doing? I'm doing really, really good.

One reason is because today, the day I'm recording this, is the first day of a new round of the Stop Binge Eating Program! Oh my goodness, there's so many people who are about to change their eating habits and themselves and I cannot wait to see it happen. It's gonna be so awesome.

And if you missed this round, don't worry, there will be another one, and many more, and you can always find the most updated info at coachkir.com/group.

And another reason I'm doing really good is because a couple days ago I just got back from one of the best trips of my life, to Ireland!

It was my first time going to Europe, which was so exciting, and I actually went with a tour group so it was very nice to not have to plan anything, to have our incredible tour guide sharing his stories and knowledge all along the way and to have our rockstar of a bus driver drive us from place to place.

We started in Dublin, then went to Cobh, Cork, and Kinsale, and then to Galway, stopping at the Cliffs of Moher on the way.

There was just so much beautiful scenery and architecture.

And on top of experiencing all the Ireland amazingness that I did, the group of people that I was with made it even better.

I had no idea what to expect when I signed up for the tour. I was a solo traveler in a group of 36 and before I went I was just hoping there would be at least one cool person for me to hang out with sometimes. I'm so happy to do things on my own, and I did a lot of the time and it was so great but ya know, when you're doing things as a group like dinners, bus rides, and tours it's nice to chat with someone you like. How awful would it be if everyone in the group was a downer or just not fun to talk to?

But I lucked out and there were so many awesome people! I made several new friends and I have no doubt that I will keep in touch with them and see them again in the future.

Overall, it was an amazing experience but I'm very happy to be back home too. So much good stuff is going on here both with work and in my personal life and it's so nice to come back from vacation and not dread entering back into my normal life.

So that's what's up with me! And! For my 40 nights away from home that I'm doing to celebrate my 40th this year, which you may have heard me mention before on the podcast, I'm at 24! More than halfway through. Time to get planning for the next ones!

Alright, enough about me, now let's talk about wasting food.

Not wanting to waste food is for sure something that can lead you into overeating and it can lead to a binge if you feel super guilty about having overeaten and then say screw it, I already ate that so let's keep going and you keep eating more.

Your desire to not waste causes you to eat the food instead of throwing it away.

You don't want to waste the food or you don't want to waste the money you spent on it.

Those are the two most common reasons I hear for why people eat food to not waste it.

But what happens when you eat past fullness to not be wasteful, you end up feeling too full. You don't feel good.

It's so interesting because your intention behind it, to not be wasteful, is a good intention and you're probably doing it to feel good about not wasting but the act of overeating the food then results in you feeling bad.

So for you, what might be happening is that the decision that it ultimately comes down to is whether to feel bad about wasting food or money or to feel bad about having overeaten, maybe binged.

But actually, what if you don't have to feel bad about wasting?

Now, let me be clear here, I'm not encouraging you to waste excessive amounts of your food and money. I'm not telling you to just order all the food and then throw it all away and feel great about it. This is not about being careless and intentionally wasteful. I'm not trying to persuade you to do that here.

But, you don't have to feel so guilty about wasting food and when you don't, you'll be more willing to do it and your health and well-being will benefit.

Because here's the thing. There's going to be times when it just doesn't make sense to take your leftovers with you.

For example, while I was in Ireland, I stayed in 3 hotel rooms and none of them had refrigerators and there were plenty of times that I was eating out and wasn't going back to my room anytime soon so even if I did have a refrigerator, I wasn't going to walk around for hours with my leftover food.

So it made more sense to just leave the food on my plate and move on.

And for some of you, the waste worry happens at home too, not just when you're out.

Expiration dates might be approaching or you might have fresh food that you know won't keep for much longer and you don't want to just throw it away. So you eat it.

Now, when it comes to eating to not be wasteful, it's not necessarily a bad thing. There may not be any negative consequences when you do it.

But when you're doing it over and over and it's leading you to feel way too full, or to binge, then it might be time to change your perspective on wasting food.

So many of us have been taught that it's admirable to clean your plate.

Or that if you don't eat all your food then you're not being grateful or appreciative and there are starving people in this world.

But you eating past fullness isn't going to stop anyone else from starving. It's just going to cause you to eat to avoid guilt instead of eating for hunger or even eating to experience joy and pleasure.

And, you can still be grateful and appreciative without stuffing yourself with all the food.

And maybe cleaning your plate was what was best for your parents or grandparents and maybe you grew up in a home where food was scarce and eating what you could when you could was necessary.

But is it what's best for you and necessary for you now?

Sometimes we hold on to beliefs, like that you should clean your plate, and we never take a moment to question why we even believe that.

I remember talking with someone about this and they said, "That's just what my parents always said."

And I asked them, "do you like that reason for not wasting food?"

And they said no.

They realized that they didn't really have a reason to eat the food instead of throwing it away that was better than their reason to not eat it and throw it away.

And that's what you want to consider for yourself.

You have two options, eat or throw it away, and you have reasons for choosing each option. Which reasons do you like better?

Take a moment to think about that for yourself and get clear about what your reasons are.

Now, the two I mentioned earlier, the starving people and clean your plate examples are usually easier for people to let go of.

But what about wasting money?

Say you paid for a meal and you're full before you finish it.

You might think that if you don't eat all the food then you're wasting money.

But I want to offer you another way to think about it.

The money you're paying isn't only for the quantity of food.

Say your meal was \$20.

You're paying that money to fuel your body, to eat delicious food, to enjoy the atmosphere of where ever it is that you're eating, if you're with people you're paying to enjoy the company you're with, you're paying someone to wait on you and to cook your food for you.

\$20 for all that. That's what you're paying for.

And if you think about it that way, then you won't see it as wasting money. You got your money's worth because you got so much from that \$20, even though there was still food left on your plate.

That's an option for you, to think about it that way and it's what I do so I don't feel like my money is wasted. I got what I paid for.

Then, back to wasting food by throwing it away, let's look at a difference perspective for what it means to eat it instead.

Like I said before, it's not necessarily a bad thing, just like overeating sometimes isn't a bad thing.

Your body will eventually use that extra food that becomes stored in your body as energy.

But what happens when you do it a lot? When you overeat often?

That stored energy doesn't get used. It just sits there in your liver and fat cells. It's being wasted in your body because instead of using it, you're using newly ingested food as energy without giving that old food a chance to be used.

I like to think of it like you're putting food in your freezer chest down in the basement and you keep adding to the chest without ever eating the food. Instead, you just keep ordering take out, getting the quick and easy food, and the storage in the freezer just sits there, not being eaten.

So if you look at it that way, you're either going to waste the food in the trash or waste it in your body.

And if you want to take it further, which some people find to be helpful when they think about this, is that you're treating your body like a trash can.

I know some people might find that a bit harsh so take it or leave it but I just wanted to offer it to you in case you might find it to be helpful.

All of these perspectives I'm offering to you are just here to help you to be more willing to let the food go.

You can think about that leftover food in a different way that's not going to make you feel guilty about throwing it away so you will be able to do what's best for you and your body.

Because again, circumstances are going to present themselves that are going to make keeping the food an undesirable option.

I want you to be able to feel good about your decision to throw the food away when those circumstances arise.

And, there could be an upside to it in the end too.

You could allow yourself to throw away the food, and in doing that, learn about how much food you actually need by doing this. So then in the future, to avoid even being put in the position of wasting food, you order or buy less because you're learned about your body's capacity and have gotten used to it. You could become less wasteful in the future by practicing being wasteful now.

Interesting way to look at it, right?

So when neither throwing it away or eating it are ideal, because of course we don't want to be wasteful but we also don't feel to feel too full, then a choice needs to be made.

Know your reasons and choose the reasons you like better.

Feel good about your decision.

Alright, that's what I have for you today, I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.