



From root to tip ...
How to stop food waste and save

The Journal



The real success story of the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts in the world.



By Sarah Tuite, Senior VP, Corporate Communications. Oct 1st, 2023
How did a company – whose first property was a modest motor hotel in downtown Toronto – evolve into the world’s leading operator of luxury hotels?



The story of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is a tale of continuous innovation, remarkable expansion and a single-minded dedication to the highest of standards. For more than 50 years, the Canadian-based company has transformed the global hospitality industry by combining caring service with the very best in international hotel keeping. In the process, Four Seasons has re-defined hospitality for the modern traveler.

The Story of Four Seasons

In 1961, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts opened its first property, a motor hotel in downtown Toronto, Canada. Designed to serve a new generation of international business travelers, the Hotel’s modest exterior belied its revolutionary offering: personalized service geared to easing the stress of business travel. The brainchild of Isadore Sharp, the company’s Founder and Chairman, the property set the stage for a new type of hotel experience.



Oscartek Gem series at the Four Season’s Westlake, part of the internal upscale modernization

The success of the company's first hotel in Europe, the Inn on the Park – now known as Four Seasons Hotel London at Park Lane – cemented the company's future course. Having entered a market dominated by large, traditional establishments, the Hotel's intimate size, spacious rooms and friendly staff attending to every wish made it an instant success. Four Seasons had found its niche: mid-size hotels of exceptional quality offering distinctive service.

As it expanded, Four Seasons became the first hotel company in North America to introduce now standard items such as bath amenities, robes and hair dryers. It was also the first to provide European-style concierge services and 24/7 in-room dining. Twice-daily housekeeping, one-hour pressing and round-the-clock laundry and dry cleaning are additional guest services introduced by Four Seasons long before any other luxury hotel operators, and still unique in many of the destinations where it operates.

The first custom made Four Seasons mattress debuted in 1984, and has been the standard bearer for a night of perfect rest in all of Four Seasons hotels since then. In 2014, Four Seasons further innovated their sleep experience by introducing a fully customizable mattress that allows guests to choose the firmness of their hotel bed.

In 1985, the company launched Four Seasons residential options, including Private Residences and Residential Rentals in both global gateway cities and resort destinations, combining the comforts of home with the personalized service of a Four Seasons hotel. With the success of these residential offerings, the company has demonstrated the same ability to set service standards in residential ownership as it has in hotels and resorts. Today, Four Seasons is the recognized leader and largest operator of luxury branded residential properties in the world, and more than three quarters of new projects under development contain a residential component. Four Seasons will debut its first ever standalone residential project in London at the historical Twenty Grosvenor Square.

In 2012, the brand took its service model to the skies with the introduction of private jet tours, and in 2015, the hotel industry's first fully branded private jet - the Four Seasons Jet - began transporting guests around-the-world on themed regional tours, with stays at Four Seasons hotels and resorts. Each year a new itinerary is announced, with explorations in new parts of the world and offering a range of Extraordinary Experiences.

Also in 2015, Four Seasons introduced its official App, making it easier for guests to check-in and out, book airport transfers and make dining reservations, all by the touch of a phone. In 2017, the mobile experience was further enhanced through the introduction of Four Seasons Chat, an award-winning platform that allows guests to connect with Four Seasons staff on their preferred messaging platform before, during, and after their stay, in more than 100 languages. Powered by Four Seasons people rather than a chatbot, Four Seasons Chat combines high-tech capabilities with high-touch service to deliver a personalized experience at all stages of the guest journey.

A first in the global portfolio, Four Seasons introduced the Maldives private island in 2016, joining existing properties at Kuda Huraa, Landaa Giraavaru, and Four Seasons Explorer, a three-deck catamaran that embarks on overnight cruises, exploring the beautiful undiscovered waters of the Maldives.

The Secret of Success

The company's finest achievement is the people it attracts: "Early in the company's history we decided to focus on redefining luxury as service, and that became our strategic edge," explains Sharp. "To deliver on that promise, we realized we needed to harness the 'best of the best' – employees who are dedicated, committed and inspired to deliver great service."

Several decades ago, Four Seasons introduced a mission statement based on The Golden Rule: To treat others as we'd wish to be treated ourselves. "The Golden Rule guides our interactions with our guests, our business partners and investors, but most importantly – with each other," says Sharp. "We also believe in investing in our employees and promoting from within. Many of our senior managers began their careers with Four Seasons and continue to be culture ambassadors."

As a result, Four Seasons has been included in FORTUNE magazine's ranking of the best companies to work for in America for 21 consecutive years. Four Seasons was also named a "Great Place to Work Legend," having been recognized on the list every year since its inception in 1998. The company consistently earns top rankings in traveller and industry surveys, reviews and awards, including the Travel + Leisure's World's Best Awards; Condé Nast Traveler and Condé Nast Traveler UK, China, and Middle East Awards, Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star designation; and DestinAsian Reader's Choice Awards

From root to tip ... how to stop food waste and save

September 29, 2023. Very little food waste goes into the compost bin in Conor Spacey's house. Instead, leftover cake goes in the freezer until it can be rebaked, carrot tops are used for pesto and the water from a tin of chickpeas makes a cream substitute.

While Spacey, a chef from Wexford in south-east Ireland, doesn't eat meat, he has learned from butchers the value of using every piece of an animal, and applied it to fruit and vegetables.

His "vegetable butchery" means beetroot skins are used for chutney, over-ripe bananas for ketchup, stale bread for hummus, and any other leftover veg is mixed with spices and turned into kimchi.

But putting anything into the compost is seen as defeat.

"I get that putting things in the compost bin is better than it going to the general waste, but it is an easy way to go, 'it'll help someone.' I have a goal of making it so that everything can be used," he says.

The cost of living crisis and concerns about sustainability have brought more calls for homes to reduce waste. A study from the climate action organisation Wrap reveals that more than 70% of food that is wasted in the UK comes from households – an amount worth £14bn every year. And researchers from the University of Sheffield recently found stark differences in the amount of food wasted by households that grow their own food, and those that buy everything from the supermarket.



Conor Spacey's book aims to show how every part of a vegetable can be used in cooking.

Researchers Jill Edmondson and Boglarka Zilla Gulyas found that those who grow their own in fruit and veg in gardens and allotments typically waste just 3.4kg every year, compared with a national average of 68kg.

“The study suggests that someone who values, grows and is invested in food will be less likely to waste it, because they have invested time and effort in it,” says Edmondson. “If an apple had a bit of mould, the general population would probably chuck it away, whereas this cohort is more likely to use it.”

Research carried out in the past in Germany and Italy has suggested that the greatest amount of food waste comes from people who buy their groceries exclusively in large supermarkets.

Vegetable magic

Spacey has worked at reducing food waste over the last 15 years and has just brought out a book, *Wasted*, with a selection of “root-to-tip” recipes which aim to use every part of the vegetable. The main body of a carrot can be used for piccalilli, crisps or soup, and the leaves for salads and pesto; a beetroot can be pickled, while the stems and leaves can be used for salads. Leftover scones and banana bread can be mashed up and rebaked into “Chester cake”, or “donkey’s gudge”, typically sold cheaply by bakers.

A tray of plants in the hands of a gardener wearing green gardening gloves

People who grow their own food are less likely to waste it because they have invested time in it. Photograph: Guy Harrop/Alamy

Inspiration comes from recent history – pickling vegetables, for example, was very popular two or three generations ago – and some unlikely sources. The idea of using banana skins in recipes came from a chef in Brazil, who was promised ham for a pasta dish to feed the needy but had to make do with banana skins.

When he teaches groups about avoiding food waste, Spacey says half are there for sustainability reasons, the other half to save money. “However, [even] if inflation drops back to 2-3%, and food prices start to fall back to where they were two years ago, I think people are more conscious now around the planet.”

He says supermarkets should bring out their own ranges of condiments and dishes based on food that would otherwise be wasted. And he has called for government intervention in the case of supermarkets which do not do enough to eradicate waste.

In August, the UK government was criticised for dropping new food waste legislation which, campaigners say, could have reduced prices as well as helping tackle the climate crisis by cutting waste. It would have made food waste reporting mandatory for large and medium-sized businesses in England.

Start with the kids

With heightened interest in food sustainability issues, children are also being targeted with the minimum-waste message. Ocado, the online retailer, recently published a short cookbook for children in association with the Beano. Featuring a comic strip with

Bananaman and Dennis the Menace, it has recipes which utilise some of the most frequently wasted kitchen ingredients, such as bananas and bread.

“Nearly gone-offee pie” uses bananas which are brown, while “soft ’n’ squishy tomato pasta” involves tomatoes that are no longer firm, and “Jammy Dodger french toast” uses slightly hard bread. Lesson plans on the same theme for primary school children have also been produced.

Recipe: how to make banana skin chutney

Ingredients

vegetable or rapeseed oil 1 tbsp

diced onion 250g

fresh red or green chillies 2 chopped

ground turmeric 2 tbsp

mustard seeds 1 tbsp

coriander seeds 1 tsp

green cardamom pods 2

over-ripe bananas 6, skins finely diced

regular banana 1, skin finely diced and fruit chopped

light brown sugar 1 tbsp

salt pinch

whole cloves 4

star anise 2

cinnamon stick 1

orange juice 500ml, plus extra if needed

Directions

Heat the oil in a pot over a medium heat. Add the onion, chillies, turmeric, mustard and coriander seeds and cardamom pods. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5 minutes, until soft.

Add the banana skins, chopped banana, brown sugar and a pinch of salt. Wrap up the cloves, star anise and cinnamon stick in a small clean cloth and tie it with string, then add this to the pot.

Pour in the orange juice, reduce the heat to low and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the skins have softened to a jam-like consistency.

Remove the cloth with the spices, then blend the chutney with a hand blender until semi-smooth. If it's too thick, add a little more orange juice or water.

Allow to cool completely, then transfer to a sterilised jar and keep it in your fridge for up to two months.

From Wasted by Conor Spacey (Blasta Books)



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