

How Lisbon Marriott Cut Food Waste by 50% While Boosting Guest Satisfaction

Lisbon Marriott Hotel offers a blend of productivity and relaxation, making it a prime destination for conferences, events, and leisure stays. With 577 rooms and over 900 daily covers, it is one of the city's largest hotels. In 2024, the hotel set a goal to reduce food waste by 30%. Aligned with Marriott International's sustainability ambitions, including net zero emissions, the team viewed food waste as a key area for impact and ultimately surpassed their goal, achieving a 50% reduction in just nine months.

The Challenge

Buffet operations, necessary for serving such large groups efficiently, led to significant food waste. Despite manually tracking waste before Winnow, the data lacked the detail and clarity needed to drive actionable decisions. **"We were measuring things manually, but we weren't doing anything with that data. It was being collected but not being used to steer change."** said Steve Horvath, General Manager.

Making the Change

General Manager Steve Horvath brings nearly two decades of experience with Marriott, including leadership roles across Canada, the UK, and Europe. With a strong background in revenue management and hotel operations, he previously supported sustainability initiatives in the UK before taking the helm in Lisbon, where he identified food waste reduction as a strategic priority from day one.

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We've grown satisfaction in a very significant way while also reducing our waste by 50%. It's a little bit of an unexpected outcome from the strategy, but it's been really instrumental.

**Steve Horvath, General Manager
Lisbon Marriott Hotel**



Waste reduction results



50% reduction in food waste as a percentage of sales



16.9 tons of CO₂e saved



€31,000 annualized savings in food costs



10,000 meals saved per year

With Marriott's sustainability targets and an increasing number of clients prioritizing eco-friendly venues, the Lisbon team saw food waste as an immediate opportunity for impact.

Actions taken

Buffet Adjustments: Insights from Winnow revealed high waste volumes during the end of breakfast service. **"We were initially wasting 50 kilos of eggs a week.** That equated to nearly **€10,000** a year wasted—just in scrambled eggs. **"That's enough to make a three-egg omelette every day for 30 years."** says Dominic Smart, Executive Chef. By producing 70% of forecasted demand and cooking small top-up batches in real time, the kitchen cut scrambled egg waste by 65%.

Dominic also challenged kitchen norms like peeling potatoes, eliminating the need in dishes such as Bacalhau, Portugal's traditional salt cod recipe: **"We asked, do we really need to peel them? The skins add flavor, nutrients, and save two kilos of waste every two days."**

Zero-Waste Dishes: The kitchen leaned into traditional Portuguese techniques and dishes that repurpose ingredients. For example Migas, a rustic side dish made from sautéed leftover bread, garlic, and coriander was added to the menu. Salt cod offcuts from Bacalhau are steamed, hand-picked, and reused in new dishes.

Elevated Presentation: A key change was transitioning from bulk pastry baskets to elegant, local-style displays. A 94% reduction in bread and pastry waste resulted from more thoughtful, aesthetic setups that encouraged consumption and minimized leftovers.



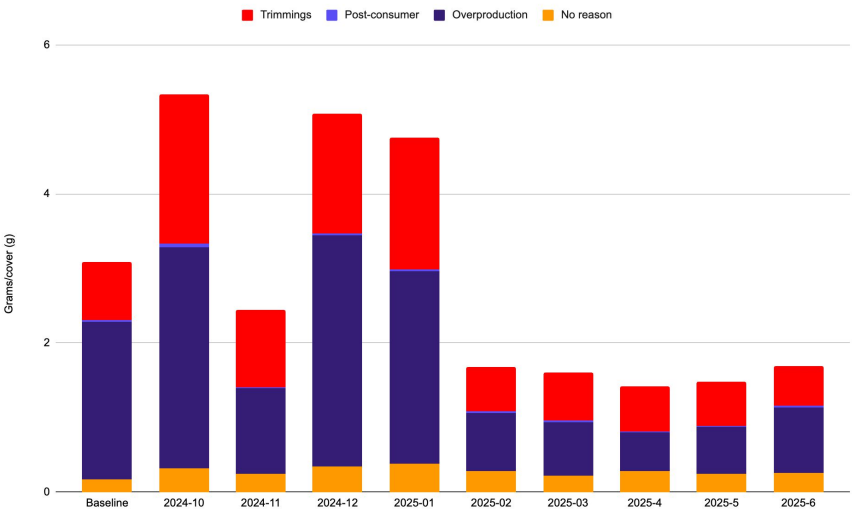
“We’re actually putting out less, but it looks better. It elevated the experience and helped drive down waste. That’s the kind of win-win we were looking for.” — Steve Horvath

Zero-Waste Staff Canteen: The team launched “Zero Bin Day” in the staff canteen, removing waste bins to nudge employees toward finishing all food taken. Initially held monthly, the initiative is now bi-weekly and widely supported.

Guest Satisfaction

By shifting from overfilled buffets to beautifully curated platters, the hotel created a more visually appealing and culturally rich environment. Bilingual signage and thoughtful layout enhanced both clarity and ambience, giving guests a sense of care and attention to detail.

These improvements directly contributed to an **11.5-point increase** in overall food and beverage guest satisfaction scores **“If it looks appetizing, people are more likely to enjoy it and less likely to leave it behind. We put less out but made it look better”** explained Horvath.



Financial Benefits

The changes were not only popular with guests, they made sound business sense. More precise portioning and presentation, paired with data-driven decisions, contribute to a 7% improvement in food and beverage profit margins. By significantly reducing overproduction, the hotel cut down on food purchases while maintaining high-quality service.

Advice to Industry Peers

“There’s a lot of low-hanging fruit. Once you start asking why things are done a certain way, you’ll find easy wins. Even a 30% reduction will look good on your P&L—and make your team feel great.” — Steve Horvath

Lisbon Marriott Hotel’s journey demonstrates how leadership, data, and cultural change can converge to create a more sustainable, efficient, and guest-centric hospitality operation. Their success story sets a compelling example for the industry.

About **Winnow**

Winnow develops Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help chefs in large businesses like hotels, contract caterers, casinos, and cruise ships to run more profitable, and sustainable kitchens by cutting food waste in half.

Measuring food waste is a challenge for all commercial kitchens with up to 20% of all food purchased going to waste. Winnow offers a solution for every kitchen.

Our analytics platform and reporting suite help teams pinpoint waste quickly, allowing enterprises to drive significant waste reductions at scale.

Kitchens that use Winnow cut food waste by half on average, driving food purchasing costs down by 3%-8%, improving margins whilst doing the right thing. Winnow is deployed in over 90 countries with offices in London, Dubai, Singapore, Cluj, and Chicago.



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