



The Value of Food, Responsible Consumption and Fighting Against Food Waste: Costa Cruises Food Waste Reduction Project

May 24, 2019

Costa Cruises has put food issue at the very heart of its sustainable development strategy, focusing in particular on the objective on cutting food waste.

This commitment is in line with the **United Nations 2030 Agenda**, which lays down 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets for humanity and the planet. Accordingly, Costa decided some time ago to focus on **Goal 12**, namely responsible consumption and on Goal 2, linked to the achievement of a socially aware food system. More specifically, Costa is striving to help achieve target 12.3 regarding the **cutting of food waste**, the ultimate aim being by 2030, to halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains.

4GoodFood is a 360° integrated project, ranging from the review of the preparation of dishes to the management of food surpluses, through the awareness and involvement of all stakeholders in the great global challenge of reversing trends. This project sets itself the ambitious goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2020, 10 years ahead of Agenda 2030.

Costa Cruises efforts in this area are designed to turn on solid solutions in order to establish an inherently sound arrangement that radically changes consumption patterns and generates important social and cultural benefits. The main focus regards the participation of the crew, the cruise guests, and local communities receiving donations of surplus food, involving fostering systems and processes aimed at "zero waste" and promoting a model of the circular economy. It is precisely the great attention that Costa decides to dedicate to all the processes and actions related to food to represent the company's desire to emphasize its value along the entire chain, from supply to consumption, and to spread this philosophy.

Tested on the flagship Costa Diadema, since 2016 laboratory and incubator of the project in all its phases, today Costa has completed the implementation of the 4GOODFOOD program on its entire fleet.

The Value of Food

In 2016 Costa Cruises laid down a marker for the shipping industry when it set out on the path to recognizing the value of food and responsible consumption in a complex setting like a cruise ship.

Key partnership of 4GOODFOOD programme is undoubtedly the collaboration with the **University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo**, as the inspirer of the rethinking process, with a long-term vision of the gastronomic experience and the appreciation of food on board.

The first stage of this process was the review of the gastronomic offer through the selection of quality products and raw materials and the and the fleetwide introduction of more than 500 dishes and recipes reflecting **Italy's** unrivalled **culinary heritage** and the Mediterranean Diet, and prioritizing the **seasonal availability** of produce.

The Company took a good hard look at the buffet service; while retaining its distinctive Italian culinary style and considering the expectations and demands of its international clientele, Costa defined a plan for the introduction of new dishes; this includes vegetarian food, more vegetable proteins (legumes and lesser known cereals) and the creation of a "crudité corner" full of fruit, vegetables and seeds.

In addition, in collaboration with the Banca del Vino di Pollenzo (Wine Bank), Costa has revisited the entire range of wines, preferring quality and caring about biodiversity.

As a result of this, an important work was also done on the purchasing system in the territories where the ships call, leading to a large result of about 15% of local supplies, which has an impact on the economies of the local area and reduces logistics.

The main objective of the joint work is to make passengers aware of the need for an increasingly healthy and conscious diet.

Innovation and digitalization of kitchens

Giving food value also means **reducing waste, starting from the food preparation process**. For this reason, in what was a first for the cruise industry, Costa Cruises began a partnership with the startup **Winnow**, a company specializing in optimization of processes in professional kitchens with the aim of ensuring continuous improvement and sustainability. The starting point for this project was to **analyze and quantify the amount of food thrown away** during preparation of meals; this was done using **innovative technology** enabling the measurement of food wastage and food losses.

Since there are no precedents in the cruise sector, the Anglo-Saxon catering model has been identified as a benchmark for the preliminary operations of mapping food waste and positioning compared to the industry. This comparison showed that Costa was a company that was already able to optimize in terms of wastage, but not content with it gave rise to the 4GOODFOOD program.

The established operational plan allowed the mapping of wastage regarding the preparation process, through the positioning of localized kitchen scales connected to a data sharing system for the quantification of food waste in specific kitchen stations on the ship. Throughout the flow, wastages are monitored and exactly quantified: excess products past their best before dates, food - such as fruit and vegetable peel - thrown away during actual preparation, mistakes while cooking in the galley, food prepared but not served, uneaten food on guests' plates and so on.

The introduction of the system allows a continuous improvement approach to reduce overproduction, deterioration and waste. The implementation of the tools provided by Winnow on the 14 ships was not only challenging, but also logistically articulated, because of the closed system and the limited space on a cruise ship.

The introduction of digital kitchen scales involved a significant investment in terms of resources, directly impacting on the transformation of some production processes with the direct involvement of chefs. Thanks to this system, all food waste is mapped and placed on Cloud systems provided by Winnow on a daily basis. Mapping allows chefs to take action and make corrective changes where necessary. In a logical of highly challenging change, also in terms of behaviour and habits, the acquisition of a new sensitivity of the galley staff is crucial for the development of a reactive environment, capable of constantly improving performance. To maintain such a system, especially in a context of high staff turnover, awareness raising and culinary crew training are essential. Creating a task force for the management of food waste means activating specific training and re-training programmes for staff. At the heart of the training plan there is not just the correct use of kitchen scales and categorisation of food, but above all a plan of empowerment aimed at motivating staff and encouraging proactivity, making them part of the commitment of the company and encouraging a change in culture.

The success of the project depends largely on the level of awareness of one's specific role and contribution to waste prevention.

One year on from the announcement of its objective, the whole fleet of Costa has achieved a 37% reduction in food waste. This has an impact both on productivity growth and resource efficiency.

Awareness raising: Taste don't Waste

Awareness raising and involvement are key parts of the Costa's project and include direct actions on all passengers, guests and crew members. With this in mind, in order to increase awareness of a balanced diet and an increasingly critical and responsible consumption, "Taste don't Waste" communication programme has been implemented fleetwide. A real *call to action* for responsible consumption realized with the aim of favor the value, emotional and non-prescriptive aspect that takes into account the multicultural audience and the holiday context.

Information provided to guests, using a range of tools and channels, is directed not only at promoting the benefits of healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, but also at conveying key messages so as to encourage **responsible behaviors and the proactive engagement of guests, who play their part as informed and conscientious consumers.**

The guest really comes into their own in the buffet area, where the individual's choice of which food and what size portions to put on their plate plays a fundamental role both in the enjoyment of the experience and in decisions regarding preparation of the dishes to be offered in the future.

The test of the campaign was entrusted to Cittadinanzattiva, an association that has always been committed to spreading models of virtuous behaviour also in terms of reducing waste. In particular, *Cittadinanzattiva* helped **monitor the pilot project onboard Costa Diadema** with the objective of determining the guest's level of awareness, understanding and willingness to take an active part.

The results were positive and thanks to this, "Taste don't Waste" campaign has been implemented in the buffets of the entire fleet. A promising result is also the reduction of waste from guests and crew, which registers 36% (guests) and 30% (crew) respectively.

Return to the community

The concept of proactive participation is an integral part of Costa project to reduce food waste. Central to this is the **idea of returning resources to the community**, this being directly linked to the "Taste don't Waste" consciousness-raising campaign. In fact, the reduced negative impacts generated by the responsible behavior and actions of guests on board can be calculated by Winnow and translated into a tangible, measurable result allowing Costa to reinvest both in the quality of food and in supporting the project "Orti in Africa" promoted by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity.

In 2018, Costa made possible the creation of the first 50 gardens in Mozambique (12), South Africa (14) and Tanzania (24) and the development of a network of responsible farmers committed to biodiversity and sustainable agriculture.

Of these 50 gardens, 29 are 'communal', designated for the whole community and 21 are 'school gardens', entrusted and managed by schools to teach tomorrow's farmers the main cultivation techniques. Based on a sustainable model, with composting techniques and efficiency in the use of more advanced resources, the gardens are progressively developed thanks to the process of education of young people and farmers by local coordinators. The project has the ambition not only to make a contribution in the short term, but to offer a form of economic support for the future, encouraging respect for the principles on which the entire program is based, and above all to create a real network of conscious farmers who will take care of their land.

Recovery of food surpluses and interconnection with communities

The processes implemented on Costa ships are aimed at preventing food waste from occurring in the food production and consumption chain. In the cruise ship industry, not all surpluses can be avoided, so it is not structurally possible to achieve the zero-waste objective. Costa has found the solution to prevent surpluses, such as prepared and unconsumed meals, from becoming waste. An integral part of the 4GOODFOOD programme is to give value to food through the donation of surpluses produced on board.

The introduction of **Law no. 166 of August 19, 2016 on food waste, promoted by Italian MP Maria Chiara Gadda**, made it possible to retrieve

leftover food and donate it to communities in need. For the first time in cruise industry, Costa Crociere together with the food bank charity **Fondazione Banco Alimentare** introduced a surplus food donation scheme involving the retrieval of "ready to eat" meals prepared on board but not served in the ship's restaurants: these "leftovers" are in fact excellent quality food with great nutritional value.

Given that this project was unprecedented, it required the creation by Costa Cruises of specific **new procedures** for the preparation of the food for offloading, **in close consultation with the Customs Office** as well as the local **Border Control Public Health & Safety Agency**.

The program - started for the first time in July 2017 in Savona - is now active in Italy in the ports of Savona, Civitavecchia, Bari, Palermo, Genoa and has been exported as Italian best practice in France and Spain, in Marseille and Barcelona, and since last December also in Guadeloupe and Martinique. In 22 months, more than 100,000 portions of food have been distributed to a total of twelve associations that deal with people in need, a project that sets no boundaries or limits. In this way, a significant international network between the territory, the communities and the ships has been activated, strengthening their interconnection.

In addition to the importance represented by the recovery of food, which would otherwise be wasted, the fact of being able to regularly offer controlled meals of high nutritional value to the facilities, has many aspects of value. The impact on the lives of benefiting individuals and families is concrete and goes beyond simply providing for their nutritional needs. The consumption of diversified food of the highest quality and the possibility of tasting flavours far from one's own culture and out of the ordinary, can in fact have a beneficial and re-qualifying effect within the communities, increase well-being and encourage conviviality among people in difficulty.

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