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# Aussie mum's invention can help slash your grocery spend by up to $3,000 a year

By Lily Mae | 2 hours ago

Emma Maas is Sue Ellen Kimberley's frugal friend and her inspiration for the invention.

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Being part of a blended family with six children has certainly taught Pete Pina about food waste.

"We've only got two living with us now, but our food management was a big issue when we were all under the same roof," Pina tells 9Honey.

Food waste had always been a concern for the Aussie mum, who grew up with a "sustainably-minded" family on average in Sydney's west.

"We lived on a Kookaburra, in a beautiful area. Obviously this was 50 years ago when I was living there, we had our a lot of animals and we had a vegetable patch," she says.

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Pete Pina says food management was a "big issue" in her household. (Supplied)

"We didn't have any food waste. Everything got used to the best of our ability.

"We didn't have any garbage collection, we were responsible for all our waste and there was everybody's veg patch. There wasn't a lot of food packaging there was today. Our milk was delivered in glass bottles."

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"Having a grandmother who's lived through the Great Depression, they got taught by that period to appreciate everything that had to be the best of their ability and then we inherited them and Dad just like this practice.

"Fast forward to being a mother and seeing how much waste there is in this modern world of ours. We've just got abundance at our fingertips. We're fortunate in this country.

"Now there are some people struggling with the cost of living, but we have been through an abundant time period and we had some of our waste aversion instilled into our parents and grandparents hard."

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Fruit and vegetables are thrown out the main by Aussie households, which is a huge waste and an offence. (Getty)

Her concern over food waste, and being sick of throwing out rotting fruit and vegetables, led Pina to create a product called The Swag.

"I noticed they would turn so quickly. Everything in the vegetable crisper would go bad and I were I was buying them reasonably fresh."

Pina took a closer look and noticed condensation in the plastic bags her fruit and vegetables were stored in.

## "I was just sick of throwing out rotting fruit and vegetables"

"They were sweating and losing valuable nutrients," she explains.

"With our packaged lettuce, you can see the condensation. It is suffocating. It's trying to breathe, and when we bag them in air tight containers without access to water and what they are quickly."

"Families can save up to $3,000 a year by reducing food waste," she says. (Pete Pina's Instagram/Facebook)

Fruit and vegetables are thrown out the most by Aussie households, along with bread and leftovers.

"Families can save up to $3,000 a year by reducing food waste," she explains.

Pina recalls her mother wrapping herbs in a tea towel in the crisper, and when she asked about it, she was told it was a trick she'd picked up from her own mother.

"I started doing it too and I'd get an extra day or two of freshness," she says.

"I started playing around with different materials and researching the best, most natural materials to have as hygienic food and it's now cotton.

"This cut me off on an adventure in an area I'd never worked in before. I decided I wanted to bring my product to market."

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Pina created The Swag to help customers keep their fresh produce fresher for longer. (Good Thanks Media)

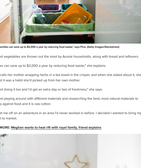
The Swag has been scientifically proven to keep fruit and vegetables fresher in the fridge. Carrots can last a month, broccoli can last two weeks and cauliflower can last up to two weeks.

"This gives families extra time to eat their produce where it has most of its nutritional value."

The Swag has now partnered with Australian charity SecondBite ahead of Stop Food Waste day on April 26.

SecondBite launched in 2005. It was started by couple ex and Simone Cancun who, together with a group of friends, would visit market stalls in Melbourne at the end of a day, collect surplus food, and drop it to a local charity that ran a food program.

They have since expanded, forming a national partnership with Coles.




Pina says Coles has been instrumental in helping her business grow.

"It's always looking to collaborate with partners who are like-minded and aligned with The Swag's mission to reduce food waste and to be able to provide fresh produce to people who are disadvantaged, and improvement food security and reduce the pressure on food and water resources," she says.

This year, Stop Food Waste Day aims to encourage Australians to reflect on how much food they are wasting and the results of food consumption.

"Then we want Australians to take action around the amount of waste they are putting in bins each evening," she adds.

The Swag is also selling a special SecondBite bundle with money from every bundle sold going towards paying for meals for vulnerable Australians.

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