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Eastern NYC Restaurant Charges Patrons For Unfinished Food



Reporting
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NEW YORK (CBS) — Your mother may have told you to clean your plate, but one local restaurant is taking that a step further: they're charging customers for food they don't finish.

At Hayashi Ya Japanese Restaurant on the Upper West Side, it's all-you-can-eat for \$26.95 – unless your eyes are bigger than your stomach. Then, like their sign says, it will cost you extra.

Patrons say they don't mind the surcharge because it helps with their waistline, while the manager says he implemented the extra cost two years ago to help with the restaurant's bottom line.

"Tens of billions of dollars are wasted each year on food that is purchased and not eaten," Joel Berg said.

Under the Clinton Administration, Berg oversaw a program to reduce food waste. Now, he's the executive director of the NYC Coalition Against Hunger.

"Americans would be shocked to know how much food is wasted," Berg said.

It's estimated 27 percent of all food is thrown out, which works out to a pound of food every day for every American.

"Most of the food that's wasted ends up in landfills," Berg said. "That's not only bad for the environment – some of it could have gone to feed hungry people."

With food prices at their highest in 17 years, Berg says it's time for Americans to rethink the way they eat.

"One little blemish on their food and Americans who can afford to do so throw out that apple," Berg said.

Many chain restaurants, like TGI Friday's, are also responding by cutting portion sizes.

"One in six residents can't afford enough food at all," Berg says. "We certainly don't need, on the other side of the spectrum, fancy restaurants offering ridiculous excess portions."

To cut down on waste in your own home, skip buying produce in those big wholesale clubs and try going shopping inside the pantry in your own house. Make some creative dinner menus, use up the extra items, and watch the savings add up.

A recent study found that roughly 30 million tons of food is wasted each year.

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