

opinion

I'm shocked at the amount of food waste created by Tier 2 rules

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If there's one thing 2020 has taught me, it's to not be so wasteful. Prior to the pandemic, I've always seen myself as a fairly frugal person (I'm always meal planning and freezing leftovers so very little goes to waste in my household). But the panic buying frenzy that swept the nation back in March and April really put things into perspective.

The news was filled with scenes of people buying up everything in the supermarkets, leaving nothing but dust on the shelves. With all of the positive scenes of people pulling together and that real sense of community spirit we've seen throughout the year, the panic buying was no doubt one of the ugliest moments to come out of the Covid crisis.

Fast forward a few weeks later, and the news was filled yet again with images of food. But this time, it was all of the stock that had been panic-bought, now piled up on top of bins. Whole packets of chicken breasts and sausages, pints of milk, loaves of bread – any perishables you can think of were thrown out after the dust from the panic buying frenzy had settled.

You'd have thought we as a nation would have learnt our lesson and valued food a bit more, and become more mindful over how much we buy and how much we waste. But we thought wrong.

Food wastage has reared its ugly head yet again, as people across Tier 2 regions are heading to the pub for a few drinks, and ordering full 'substantial meals', only to pick

at them and not eat the majority of what's on their plates.

These new rules come only a few months after more than 300 Conservative MPs voted against providing free school meals to some of the hungriest and most disadvantaged children across the country during this ongoing crisis.

Don't get me wrong, I don't entirely blame the punters, as they're only doing what they're being told to. If you want to be able to see your friends in a social setting this month (since the mixing of households indoors is still banned up until the Christmas grace period), your only choice is to book a table outside, order a substantial meal and order your drinks that way.

But the rules seem to be encouraging substantial amounts of food to go to waste. These rules weren't in place in the summer, and from what I've seen the few times I've been out this month, people are still getting as drunk as they usually would, they're now just leaving their food and drinking as normal.

It's shocking to see how much food is being ordered and thrown into the bin at the end of the night. Think piles of chips, burgers with a few bites taken out of them, and sandwiches pulled apart and moved around on the plate.

There's just got to be a better way to do this. We all want our pubs to stay open, and we all want to be able to go out and support our locals during this tough time. But being made to order large amounts of food, most of which gets wasted, is not the way forward. Especially when said food can't be donated to charities at the end of the night now due to the hygiene risks.

Don't get me wrong, I feel for



The latest Tier 2 rules have seen a lot of customers ordering food and barely eating it, in order to be able to drink at the pub

the pub owners themselves, as their hands are tied. They're having to serve substantial meals in order to stay open, and I can imagine they hate seeing all of this food go to waste as much as I do. Some have even been pretty vocal about the

matter on social media over the last few days.

I'm sure many pub owners and punters will agree with me that the Tier 2 hospitality rules need a massive rethink and overhaul. Especially for those pubs and bars that don't have kitchens

and haven't been able to reopen this month. In the meantime, maybe don't go to the pub unless you're actually hungry - it's not fair on the hardworking kitchen staff, the suppliers, and those who have to go to bed hungry some nights.