



## Public fridges **Madame Frigo** Interview



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By Daniela González on 2022-06-08 Major OBM

Your comments have been heard, and today, we will learn more about **Madame Frigo** as you requested. Therefore, I interviewed Moritz Lüchinger, who oversees Marketing and Communications.

Can you tell me what **Madame Frigo** is?

We are an organisation; we want to help people avoid homemade food waste. So, almost the third part of all food produced is wasted. It gets lost between the producer's path to our homes and plates. I think roughly 30% is lost just in the households. The problem is that the further you get in the value chain of food products, the higher the sustainable or environmental impact because there is more resource input. Every time it is transported, every process carried out increases the number of resources. That's why most of the environmental issues that happen because of food waste, is I think it's 40% overall is just by private, by private people. We try to tackle this with public refrigerators across Switzerland.

We will open our number 100 site in three weeks. There will be 100 public refrigerators. The idea is that everybody can use them; you don't need a key, lock, code or be a member. Anybody can bring the food they don't need anymore, and somebody else can take it.

How much do public



Image source: [migros-engagement.ch](https://www.migros-engagement.ch)

We roughly count that last year, 2021, we saved around 150 tonnes of food with all our fridges. Indeed, in the coming weeks, we will publish our annual report and have more numbers there. Roughly 411 kilos per day were saved, like 1.6 tonnes per fridge yearly. And this year is going to be more because we have already opened almost 20 new locations this year.

What is required to install a public fridge ?

We open a new fridge when somebody initiates it. People come to ask us if they can open a public fridge.

What we need are space, electricity and a team. You can open up a fridge yourself, but it is easier to have a team around you, so you share the responsibility. Easier to take shifts to take care of the public fridges and have someone to back you up. Three to five people to take care of the fridge. It needs to be cleaned, check what is inside, and take out the stuff that is not allowed. Because you can't just leave any food in public refrigerators: meat, fish, alcohol, and cooked meals are not allowed. It must always be clear when foods expire, and if they are, for example, dairy products, they must be sealed. You can't leave a leftover lasagna, but you can leave fruits, vegetables, bread, canned foods, a bag of pasta or anything closed.



Image source: [publibike.ch](http://publibike.ch)

To install a fridge, we provide the fridge and its house, and we handle legal requirements or paperwork, but in the end, there are people responsible for the refrigerator. They take care of it, cleaning, checking the foodstuff that is not expired, the space and electricity.

It is about having a public refrigerator for the **community**. Usually, somebody thinks it would be nice to have a fridge in the neighbourhood, so they contact us. They have a team of volunteers, so we deliver the infrastructure and know-how and support them when the fridges are running. They become part of our network, but our volunteers handle the day-to-day activities related to the fridges, we have more than 400 hundred volunteers.

What would you tell yet ?

**Madame Frigo** is an effortless way to avoid food waste. If you are leaving for vacation and still have food in your fridge, you can make it available to somebody else. Is this idea of the everyday use of goods. Sometimes I just on my way home and I take a look into a public fridge, and I see particular fruit or vegetable, and it inspires me on what I would cook that evening, so I don't go and buy groceries; I cook what I found, it makes me creative. I take what is in there and cook, is an excellent way to reduce your food waste, and in the end, you can also save some money.

If I like **Madame Frigo** but don't have a fridge close, how can I help?

The easiest way to support us is being a team member volunteering. And if you can donate, we depend on donations to keep going. Donate a way to support the organisation.

Many thanks to **Madame Frigo** for the exciting exchange!

For more information about **Madame Frigo** and their fridges, visit their website: [www.madamefrigo.ch](http://www.madamefrigo.ch)

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Options against food waste

**\*\*PART 2\*\***

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