

# Food Waste in Quick-Service Restaurants Factsheet

REDUCING  
COMMERCIAL  
FOOD WASTE  
IN IRELAND

In Ireland, it is estimated that 250,000 tonnes<sup>a</sup> of food is wasted each year in the commercial sector (the retail sector and all food service businesses).



Restaurants (both quick-service and full-service) are responsible for 40,000 tonnes<sup>a</sup> of food waste, costing the sector an estimated €115 million per annum.



Quick-service restaurants were found to typically have lower rates of food waste than full-service restaurants or hotels.



Tight margins and low price points in this sector make reducing food waste an excellent opportunity to improve gross profit.



## Food Waste Benchmark:

Based on research carried out in 2016-2018, Irish quick-service restaurants waste on average

# 146 GRAMS OF FOOD WASTE PER COVER\*

This includes all food disposed, including:



PREPARATION WASTE



UNSERVED WASTE



PLATE WASTE



Use this figure to compare your performance to other businesses in Ireland.

## Compare Your Business

See how your business is performing by calculating your food waste benchmark and comparing it to the average for quick-service restaurants.

$$\frac{\text{Total food waste}}{\text{Number of covers}} = \text{Food Waste Per Cover Benchmark}$$

To calculate this value, divide the total weight of food waste for a period of time by the number of covers served in that time.

\* A cover constitutes a person served regardless as to whether it is a full meal or a smaller item like a scone or pastry.

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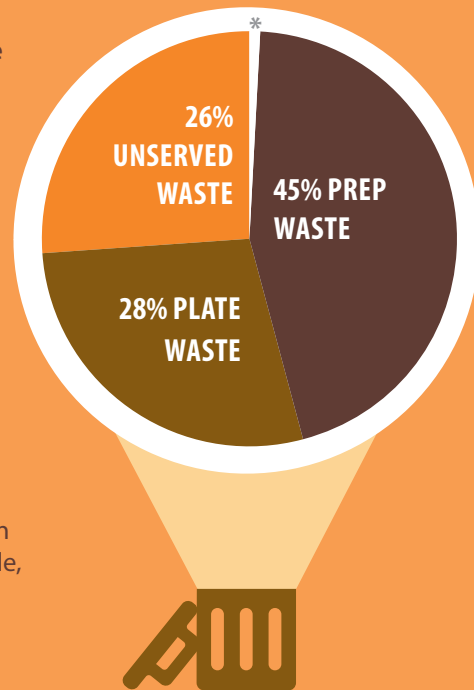
## Where is food waste coming from in quick-service restaurants?

To get a better understanding, food waste can be measured according to source. For quick-service restaurants, plate waste and unserved food waste make up over half of all food waste. The remaining waste is from food preparation in the kitchen.

**Unserved waste:** The nature of quick-service requires some or all food products to be pre-prepared. This can lead to unserved food waste from products that are not sold. Unserved food waste holds all of the costs of purchasing, preparation, storage etc., yet has not generated any income. This is a key area to consider for cost savings.

**Plate waste:** Leftovers on plates is much lower in quick-service restaurants than in other sectors. But at 27 grams per cover on average, there is still some room for improvement.

**Preparation waste:** This is the largest contributor to food waste in quick-service restaurants. While much of this waste is unavoidable, improving preparation practices can reduce it.

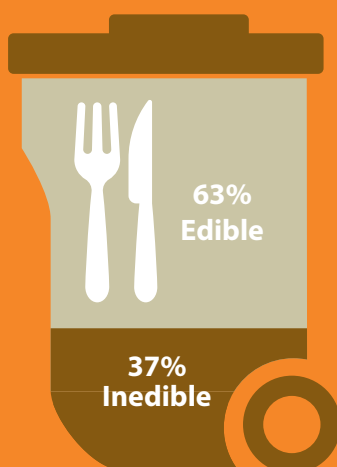


\*1% RESIDUAL FOOD WASTE (FROM SINKS)

## What food is getting wasted in quick-service restaurants?

It has been found that 63% is food that could have been eaten. The exact make up of food waste varies from one quick service restaurant to the next but the identified trend is given below.

### Type of food waste in brown bins



Unavoidable or inedible foods (e.g. banana skins, tea bags, veg peelings) contribute 37% to overall food waste in quick-service restaurants.

### Top four types of avoidable food waste



### Cost per kg of food waste in quick-service restaurants

€2.73  
per kg\*



\* This is based on purchasing cost alone. It gives a zero value to the inedible fraction of food waste.

### What is food waste costing you?

For example, one 240 litre wheelie bin of food waste typically weighs ~85 kg. If you have one of these a week it could be costing you:

85 kg/week @ €2.73/kg for 52 weeks = €12,000 per year