

Food Waste in Canteens

Factsheet

REDUCING
COMMERCIAL
FOOD WASTE
IN IRELAND

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



Workplace canteens are responsible for 27,000 tonnes^a of food waste, costing the sector an estimated €95 million per annum.



Canteens (or institutional food service) have the lowest rate of food waste generation compared to other types of food service businesses.



Tight margins and low price points in this sector make reducing food waste an excellent opportunity to improve gross profit. It is also an area worthy of CSR initiatives.



Food Waste Benchmark:

Based on research carried out in 2016-2018, Irish canteens waste on average

78 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 canteens.

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

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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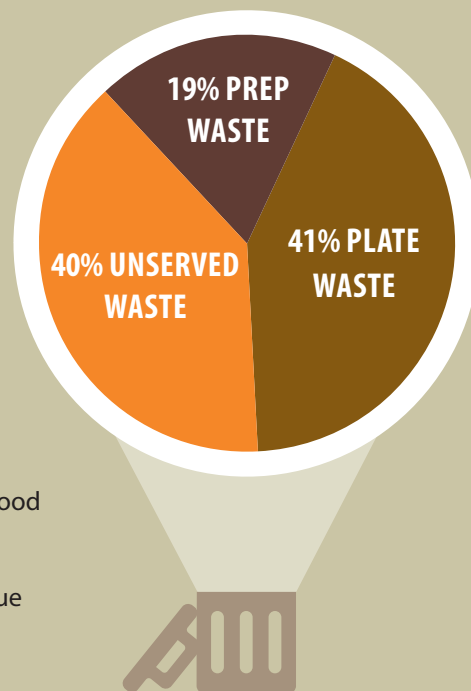
Where is food waste coming from in canteens?

To get a better understanding, food waste can be measured according to source. For canteens leftovers on customers' plates (plate waste) and food that is prepared but never served (unserved waste) are the main types of food waste.

Unserved waste: 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. Food in this sector is typically pre-prepared in large batches. Although there are generally well-understood trends in the number of customers, there is a level of unpredictability in this sector.

Plate waste: Leftovers on plates is the largest contributor to food waste in this sector. On average, plate waste makes up 41% of total food waste. This represents an excellent opportunity for food waste reduction and cost savings.

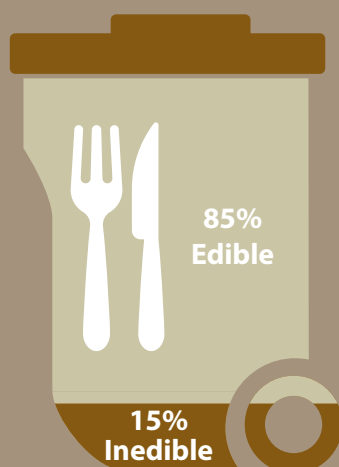
Preparation waste: This waste type is typically low in canteens due to the use of pre-prepared ingredients.



What food is getting wasted in canteens?

It has been found that 85% is food that could have been eaten. The exact make up of food waste varies from one canteen 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 15% to overall food waste in canteens.

Top four types of avoidable food waste



Cost per kg of food waste in canteens

€3.50
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 140 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 @ €3.50/kg for 52 weeks = approx €15,000 per year