

A graphic on the left side of the slide depicts a circular economy. It consists of several concentric, overlapping circular arrows that form a spiral-like pattern. The arrows are colored in shades of blue, green, and orange, and they all point in a clockwise direction, symbolizing a continuous cycle of production, consumption, and reuse.

# FOOD WASTE: ATTITUDES & BEHAVIOURS NATIONAL SURVEY 2022

Food Waste And National Attitudes;  
Part 1 of 5 series

EPA Circular Economy Programme and B&A

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## Overview of survey

Behavioural insight is a foundation of the EPA's Circular Economy Programme, providing evidence to inform policy, to inform behavioural change interventions and to inform awareness campaigns.

The EPA contracted Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A) to carry out this quantitative research which is a nationally representative survey on Irish citizens' attitudes, awareness and behaviours relating to food waste. The fieldwork for the online survey of a nationally representative sample of 1,013 adults ages 16+ was carried out in October & November 2022.

The survey topic areas are presented in a series of five sections:

- 1. Food waste and national attitudes**
2. Food management behaviours at home
3. Food management behaviours in the shop
4. Food management knowledge
5. Food waste concerns and future intentions



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## Food waste and national attitudes: *Infographic*

### We waste less food?



75%

of people say they waste none or a small amount of food and this is up from 69% in 2021.

### The most common food types we throw out



43%

of people say leftovers from the fridge, then bread (41%) and fruit (39%).

### Our key reasons for food waste



68%

of people say the passing of 'use-by' (68%), and 'best before' dates (45%).

### Think food waste



54%

of people always or regularly think about food waste.

### We all are responsible



88%

of people agree that everyone has a responsibility to minimise the food they throw away.

### Waste and cost of living



86%

of people agree that throwing away uneaten food is the same as throwing money in the bin.



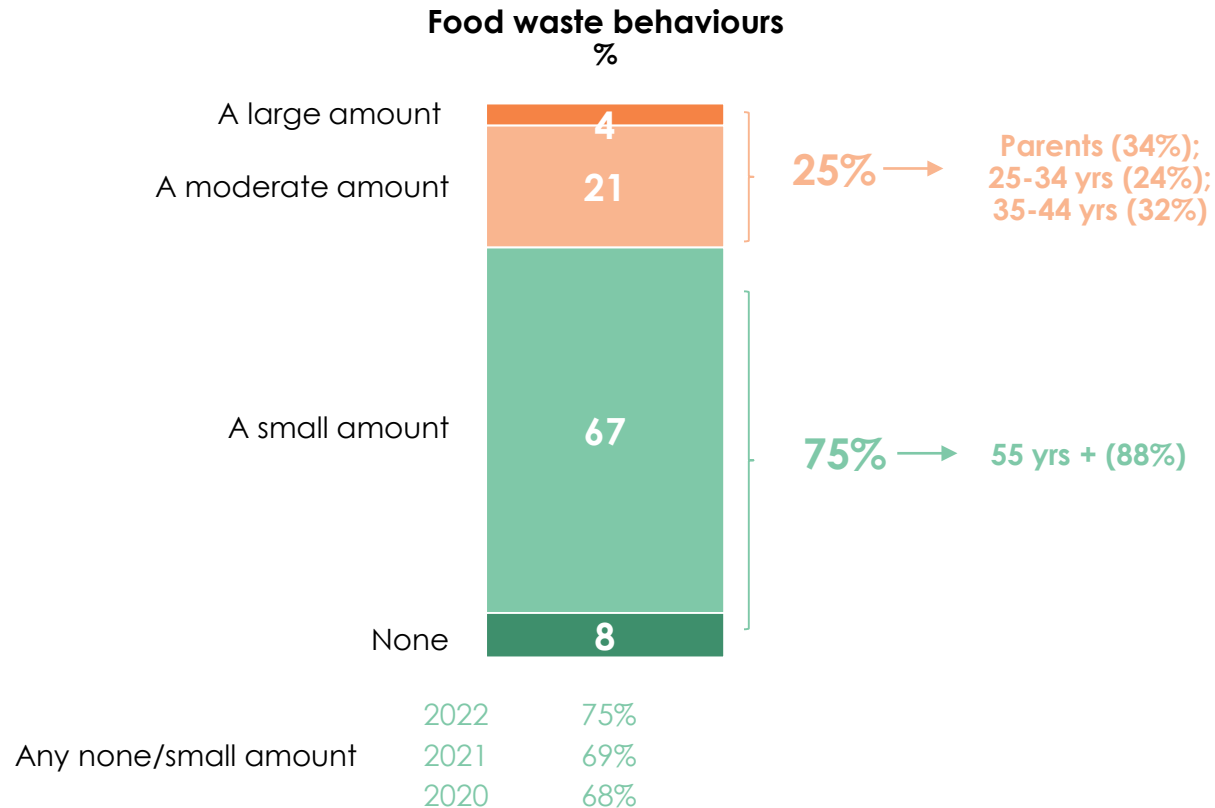
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## Food Waste: Self-Evaluation



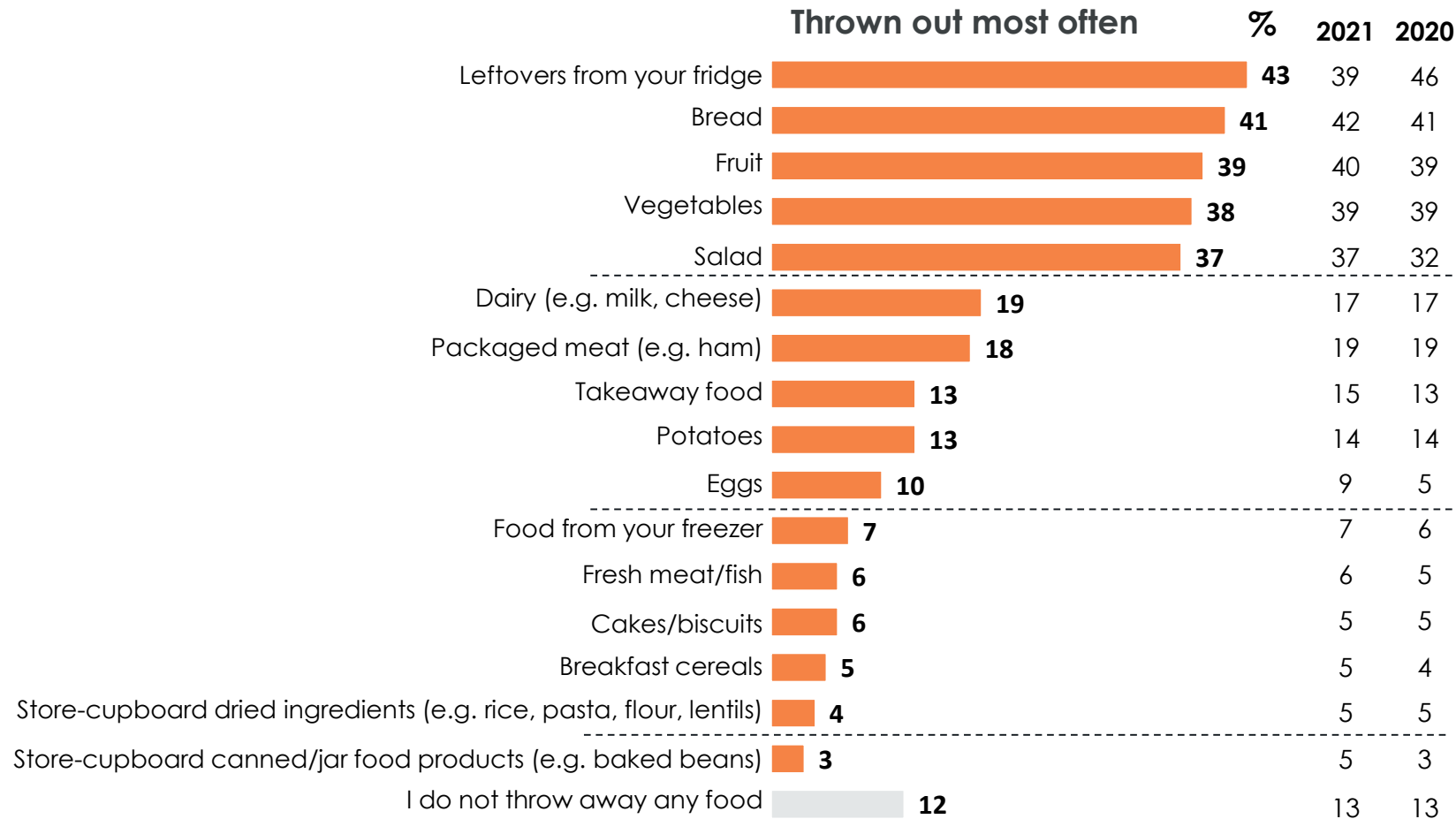
People say they are wasting less food compared to 2021.

- 75% of people say they waste none or a small amount of food and this is up from 69% in 2021.
- This incidence of low food waste peaks among those aged 55+ (88%).
- Over a fifth of people (21%) say they waste a moderate amount of food, and a further 4% say they waste a large amount of food.
- This incidence of large/ moderate food waste peaks among parents (34%), adults aged 25-34 (34%) and those aged 35-44 (32%).

Q.2c Realistically, how much food do you think you waste? Base: All Adults: 1,013



## Types of Food Wasted in the Home



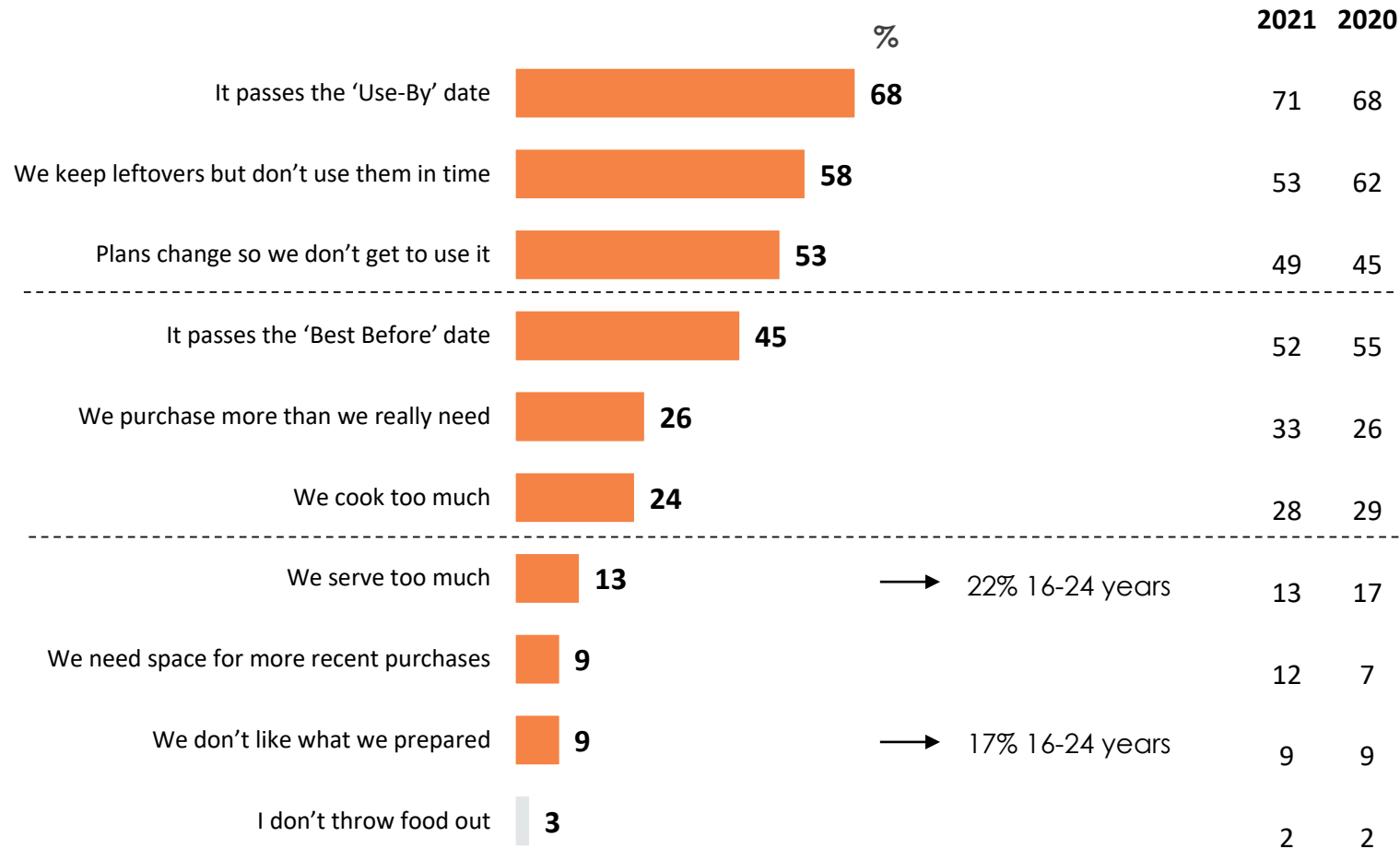
### Leftovers, bread, fruit, veg and salads remain the top food items thrown away.

- 43% of people say leftovers from the fridge are thrown out most often.
- After leftovers, bread (41%), fruit (39%), vegetables (38%) and salad (37%) are the most common types of food that people say are thrown out in the home.
- Of those who waste large/moderate amounts of food, they tend to throw out more bread (54%), vegetables (45%) and fruit (44%).

Q.6 What types of food do you throw out in your household most often? Base: All Adults: 1,013



## Reasons for Food Waste



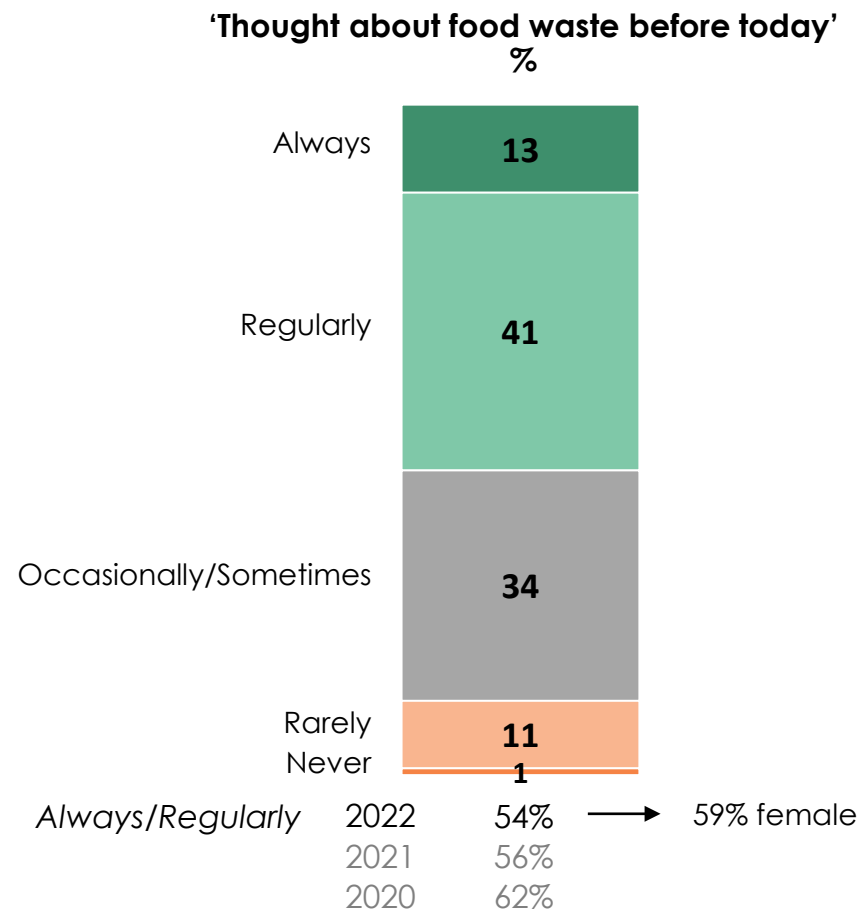
**The main reasons for food waste appear to be driven by poor planning.**

- The key reasons given for food waste focus on passing the 'use-by' dates (68%), changing plans (53%) and not using leftovers (58%).
- Buying, cooking and serving too much are seen as less prominent reasons.
- Younger adults (16-24 years) are more likely to say 'they serve too much', and 'don't like what they prepared'.
- Less people in the past 12 months say 'we purchase more than we really need' and 'we cook too much' - both perhaps reflecting cost of living challenges.

▶ Q.7 For the list below, what are the main reasons you throw out food in your household Please list your top 4? Base: Those who throw away food: 895



## Attention Towards Food Waste



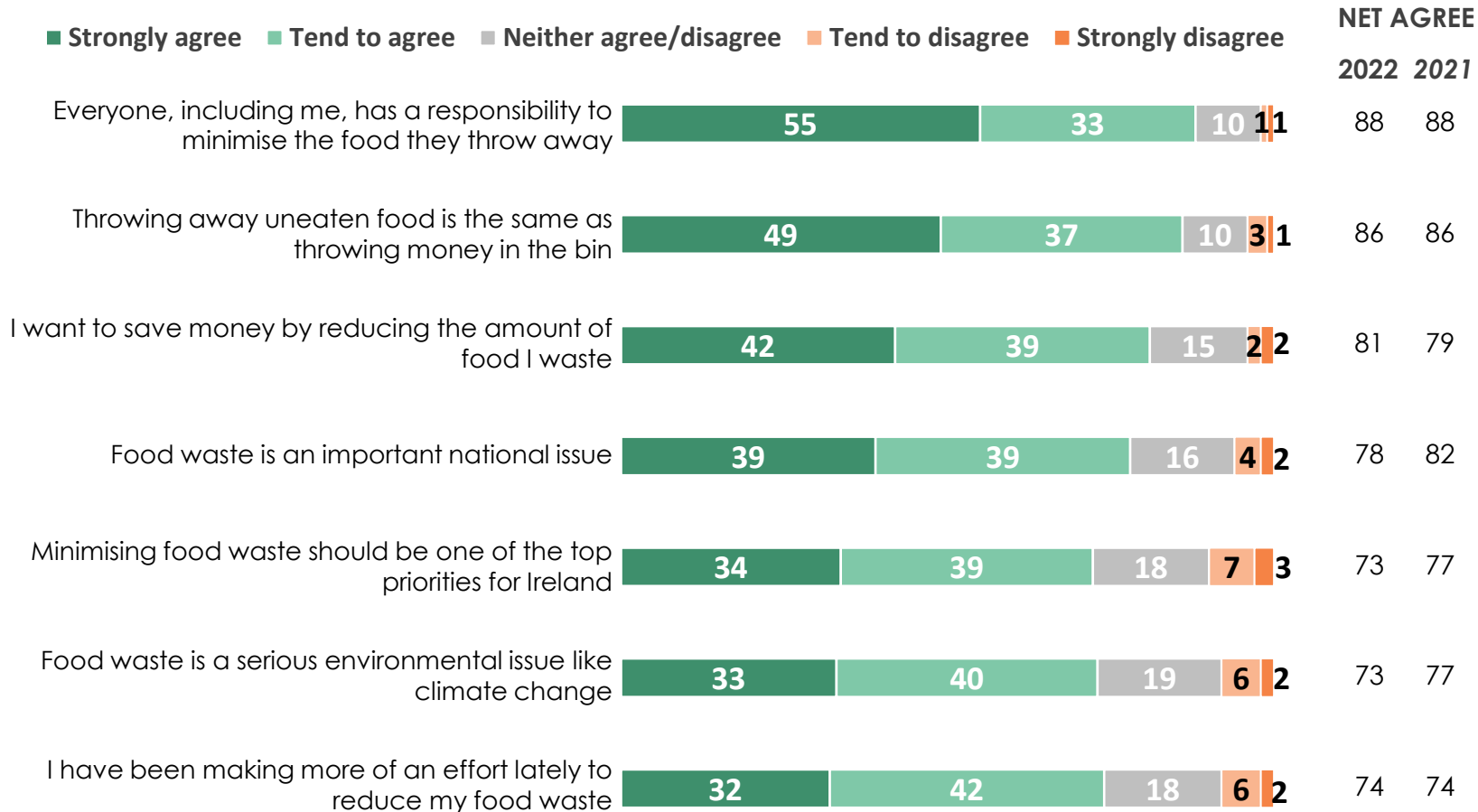
**Attention towards food waste is largely stable year-on-year, albeit in decline since Covid.**

- In general, the population can be divided into two broad groups: those who have higher attention to food waste (those who always or regularly think about food waste) at 54% and secondly those who have lower attention to food waste at 46%.
- Those who have higher attention to food waste have declined from 62% in 2020, where Covid and more time at home may have focused our attention.
- Women are most likely to have higher attention to food waste.

Q.2b To what extent had you thought about food waste before today? Base: All Adults: 1,013



## National Attitudes Towards Food Waste: the Top 7



**Most of the population see food waste as an important issue that needs to be tackled.**

- **88%** agree that everyone has a responsibility to minimise the food they throw away.
- **78%** agree that food waste is an important national issue.
- **73%** agree that food waste is a serious environmental issue like climate change.

**People are also sensitive to the personal cost implications.**

- **86%** agree that throwing away uneaten food is the same as throwing money in the bin.
- **81%** agree that I want to save money by reducing the amount of food I waste.

Q.13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: All Adults: 1,013







## Food Waste 2022

### TO FIND OUT MORE:

Download Survey Excel data [here](#).

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Check our website: [www.epacirculareconomy.ie](http://www.epacirculareconomy.ie)

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