

Barriers and opportunities for out of home food waste

Appendix –
Restaurants



Introduction

- The slides in this pack present key results from a survey conducted as part of the WRAP research study on out of home food waste prevention.
- The survey was conducted via ICM's online panel on behalf of Brook Lyndhurst and WRAP.
- A total of 1,153 individuals were asked about their experiences the last time they ate out in a restaurant; the results are based on the answers given by those individuals.
- Respondents were separated into two broad groups:
 - People who reported having not finished eating their meal on the occasion in question were classified as '**meal leavers**'.
 - People who reported not having left any food at the end of their dining experience were classified as '**non-meal leavers**'.
- As with any survey, the results are subject to statistical limitations, but the results presented give a powerful initial insight into who wastes food when eating out in restaurants; why; and what might be done about it.

Guide to the slides

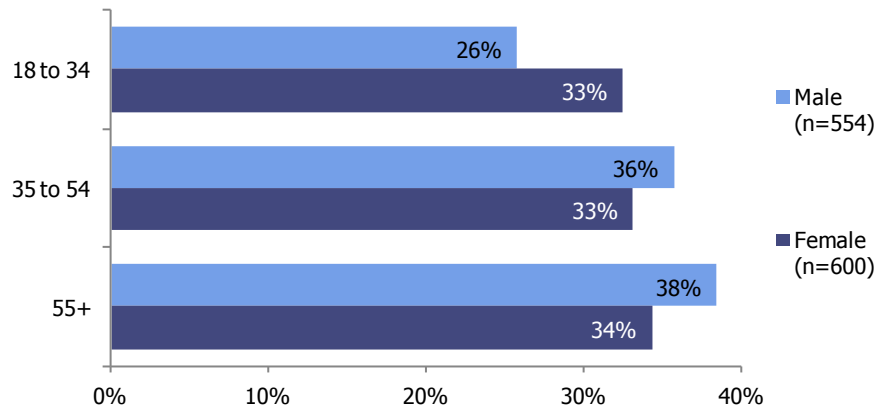
- **Slides 5, 6 and 7** present characteristics of the survey respondents who had eaten out in a restaurant and of the occasion to which their answers referred;
 - **Slides 8 to 14** focus on 'meal leavers' – who they are, what food they left, and why;
 - **Slides 15 to 21** present findings on the attitudes towards food waste of all the survey respondents, together with suggestions from respondents on what might be done to reduce food waste; and
 - **Slide 22**, finally, presents key points from across the findings.
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- The charts and tables in the slides follow a common format, so that:
 - Where there is a particularly noteworthy finding in a chart or a table, the relevant figure(s) have been circled in red
 - Where there is a statistically significant difference between meal leavers and non-meal leavers at the 5% risk level (95% confidence interval), this is highlighted in charts and tables using '*';
 - Where a 'Q' is followed by a letter (e.g. QE) or number (e.g. Q1) this refers to the specific question in the online questionnaire;
 - Irrelevant responses with low percentages (e.g. 'don't know' or 'not applicable') have been removed. This means that percentages for a single code question may not always add up to 100% or that counts/frequency do not add up to the base shown;
 - Due to rounding and weighting the counts may not always exactly add up to the base shown;
 - Analysis that drew from questions that were not prompted (i.e. open-ended) are marked; and
 - Where different bases are used this is highlighted in a footnote on the slide.

Statistical notes

- The achieved sample of those eating out in restaurants (1,153) was weighted to make it representative of the population known to eat in restaurants.
- The effective base tells us the impact of the weights on our sample. The effective base for this sample is 478.
- The weighting efficiency is the ratio of the effective base to the sample. The weighting efficiency for this sample is 41.5%.
- The range of weighting factors on this sample was 0.03 to 4.73.
- Margins of errors at a 95% confidence interval express the amount of random sampling error in a survey's result. The larger the margin of error, the less confidence one should have that the reported results are close to the 'true' values for the whole population. There is a 95% chance that the true value lies within the range given.
- In the most strict sense margins of errors should only be applied to randomly selected samples that are nationally representative. Below we list some examples of applying margins of errors to this sample.
 - When looking at a proportion of the total sample of those eating in restaurants (1,153) a response at 50% has a margin of error of $\pm 2.89\%$ while a response at 10% has a margin of error of $\pm 1.73\%$ for a 95% confidence level.
 - When looking at a proportion of the restaurant meal leavers sample (355) a response at 50% has a margin of error of $\pm 5.31\%$ while a response at 10% has a margin of error of $\pm 3.18\%$ for a 95% confidence level.
 - When looking at a proportion of restaurant non-meal leavers sample (812) a response at 50% has a margin of error of $\pm 3.42\%$ while a response at 10% has a margin of error of $\pm 2.05\%$ for a 95% confidence level.

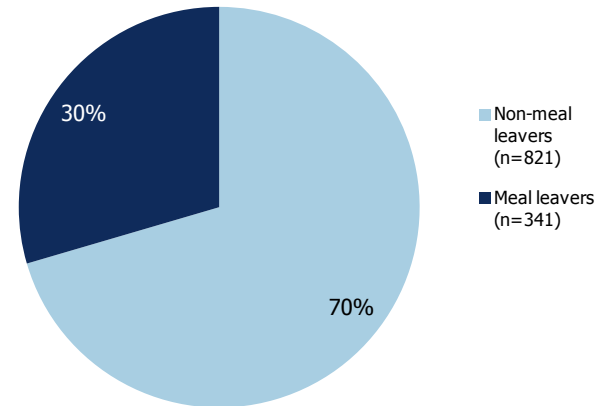
Who eats in restaurants?

Age and gender profile



Base: All respondents (1,154)

Proportions of meal leavers in restaurants

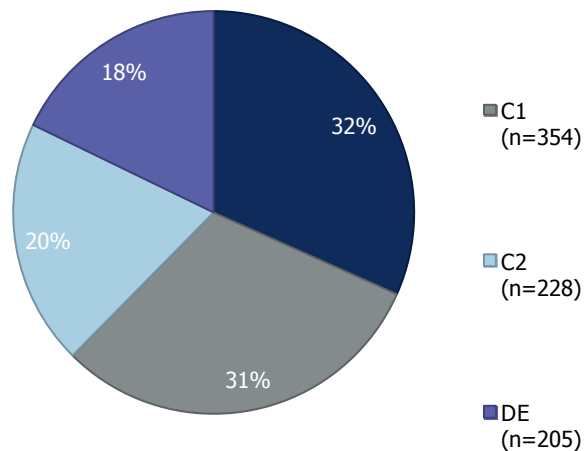


Base: All respondents (1,153)

- Roughly equal proportions of men and women ate in restaurants;
- 18-34 year old men were slightly less likely to eat in restaurants when compared to their female counterparts;
- 30% of those who ate in restaurants were meal leavers.

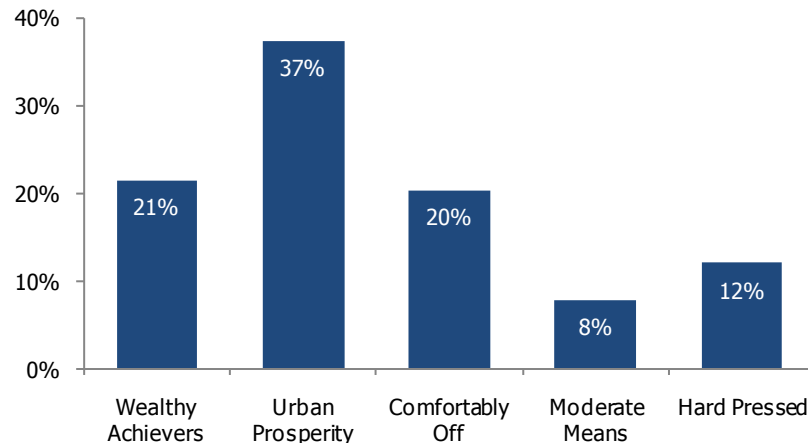
Who eats in restaurants?

Social grade



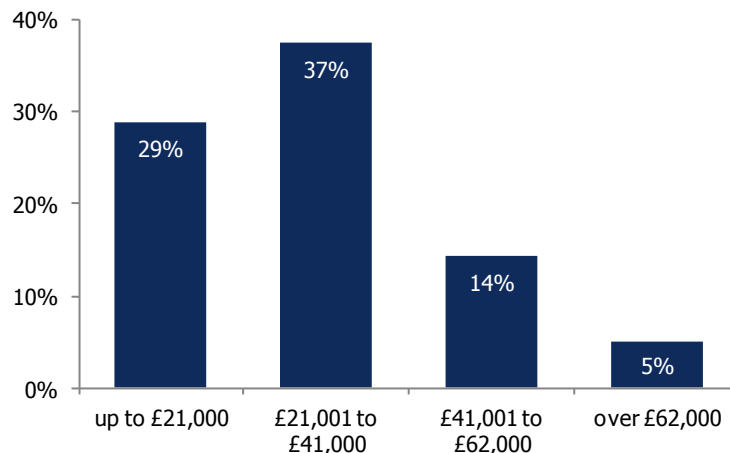
Base: All respondents (1,153)

Acorn classification



Base: All respondents (1,153)

Household income



Base: All respondents (1,153)

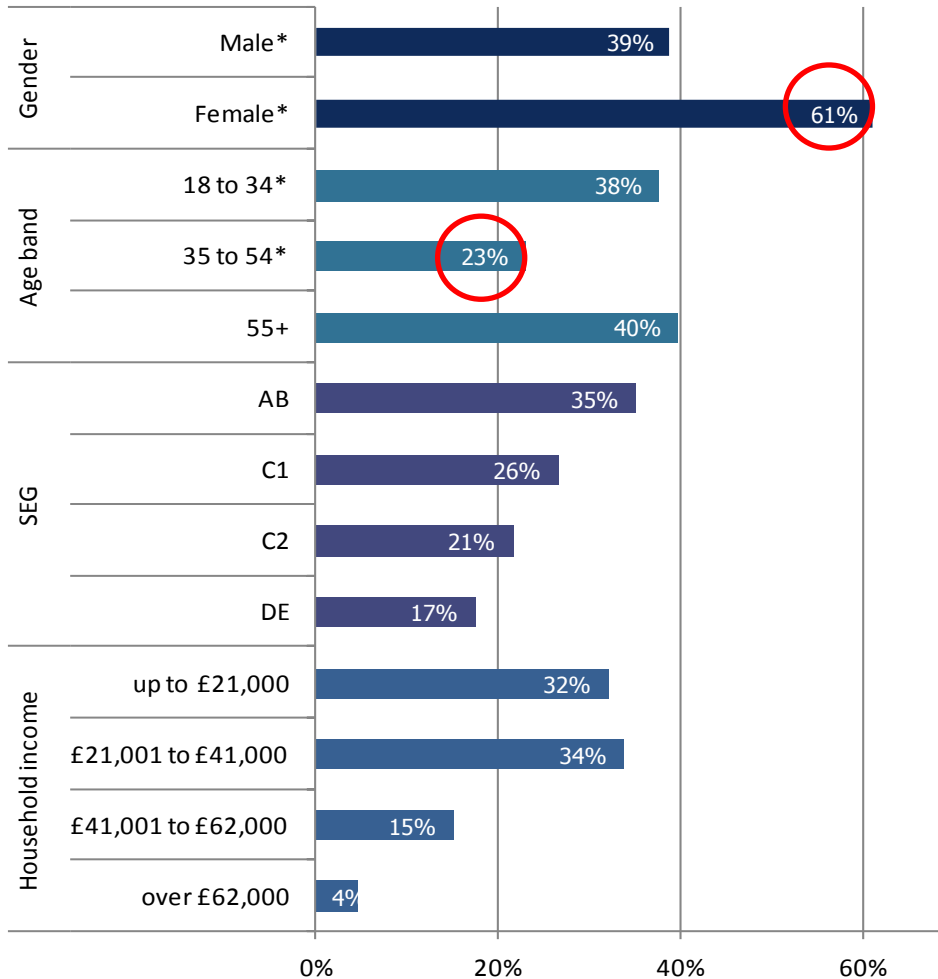
- The majority (63%) of restaurant diners belong to higher social grades (AB and C1);
- This is echoed by the Acorn classification which tells us that restaurant customers tend to be wealthy: 37% are 'Urban Prosperous' and 21% are 'Wealthy Achievers'.

Eating out experience

Base: 1,153 (All respondents)		
	Frequency	%
QE. Date of eating out occasion		
In the last week	375	33%
In the last 2 weeks	285	25%
Between 2 weeks and a month ago	251	22%
Between 1 to 2 months ago	176	15%
Between 2 to 3 months ago	66	6%
QF. Description of the restaurant		
Casual dining restaurant	694	60%
Café	237	21%
Fine dining restaurant	124	11%
Fast food outlet	92	8%
Q1. Type of meal		
Evening meal	514	45%
Lunch	463	40%
Other daytime meal or snack	118	10%
Breakfast	33	3%
Q7. Have they eaten there before?		
Yes - this restaurant/outlet	793	69%
Yes - another one in the same chain	122	11%
Q8. Familiarity with the menu		
Very	276	24%
Quite	537	47%
Not very	196	17%
Not at all	144	12%

- Most (58%) customers asked about their experience of eating in a restaurant or cafe ate in one in the last week or last couple of weeks;
- The majority (81%) described the venue as a 'casual dining restaurant' or a 'cafe';
- Most ate either an evening meal (45%) or lunch (40%);
- Most (80%) had previously eaten in the same restaurant or one in the same chain;
- Less than a third (29%) were unfamiliar with the menu.

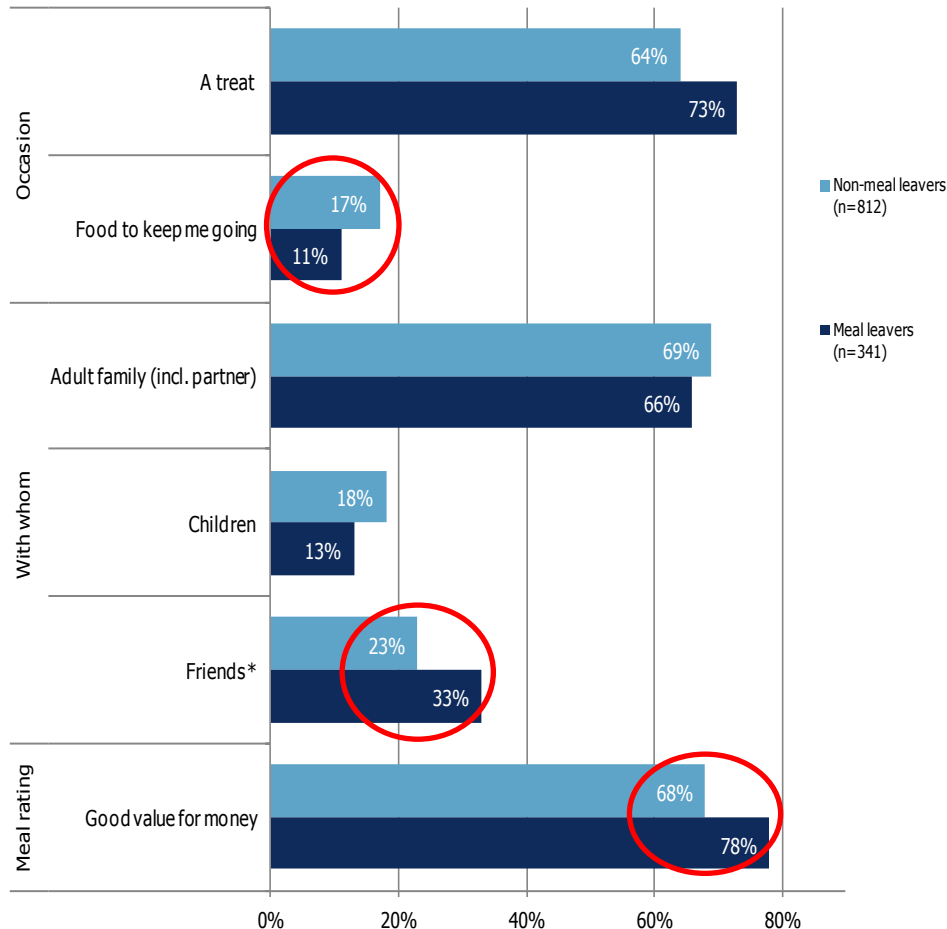
Profile of people who leave food in restaurants



This chart breaks down meal leavers by socio-demographics:

- Meal leavers in restaurants are predominantly women (61%);
- Only a quarter of those in the 35-54 age band are meal leavers.

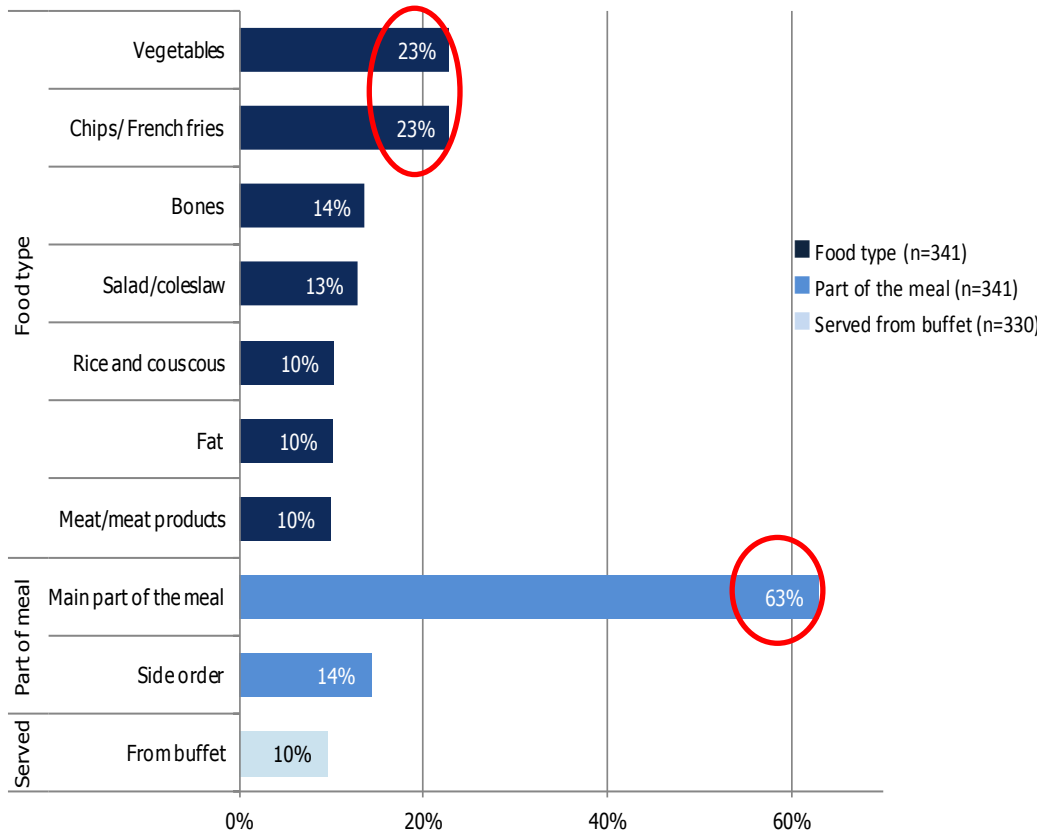
Profile of people who leave food in restaurants



This chart breaks down both meal leavers and non-meal leavers in the sample by details of the eating out occasion:

- Only 11% of meal leavers ate to keep themselves going, compared to 17% of non-meal leavers;
- A third of meal leavers ate with friends, compared less than a quarter of non-meal leavers;
- More meal leavers than non-meal leavers felt that their meals was good value for money.

Food left in restaurants



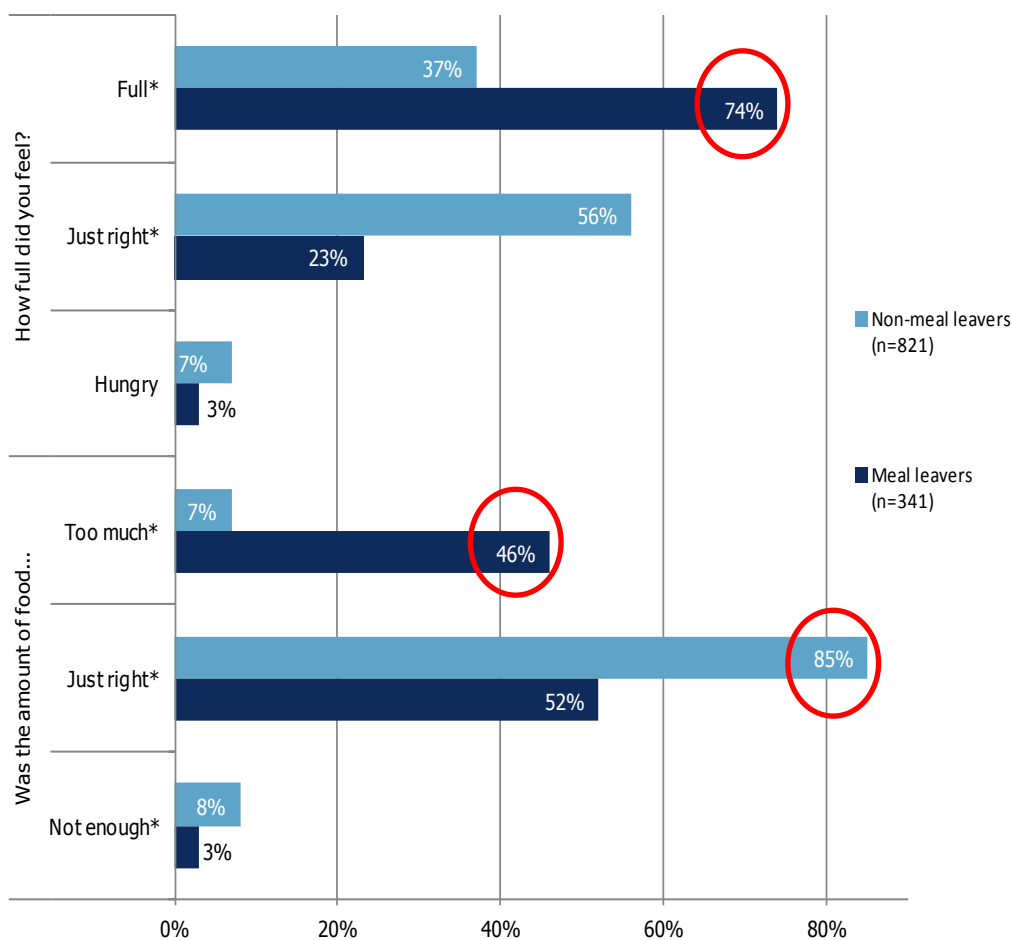
➤ Vegetables and chips were the most wasted foods, with 23% of meal leavers leaving them on their plates. Bones (14%) and salad or coleslaw (13%) were the next most commonly cited items;

➤ Meal leavers are more likely to leave food from the main part of the meal than from any other course. 63% of meal leavers left food from their main.

Percentages less than 10% are not displayed

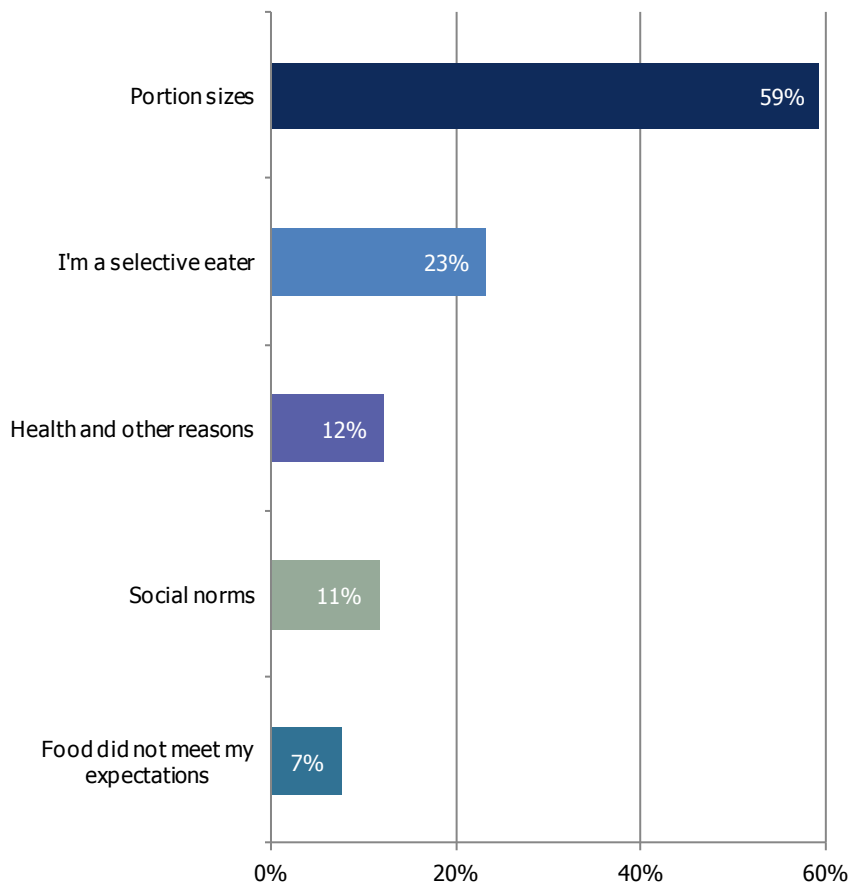
(1) Base for this specific question is all meal leavers who served themselves from a counter or buffet, and all meal leavers who cited a type of food left at Q29.

How full are you after a restaurant meal?



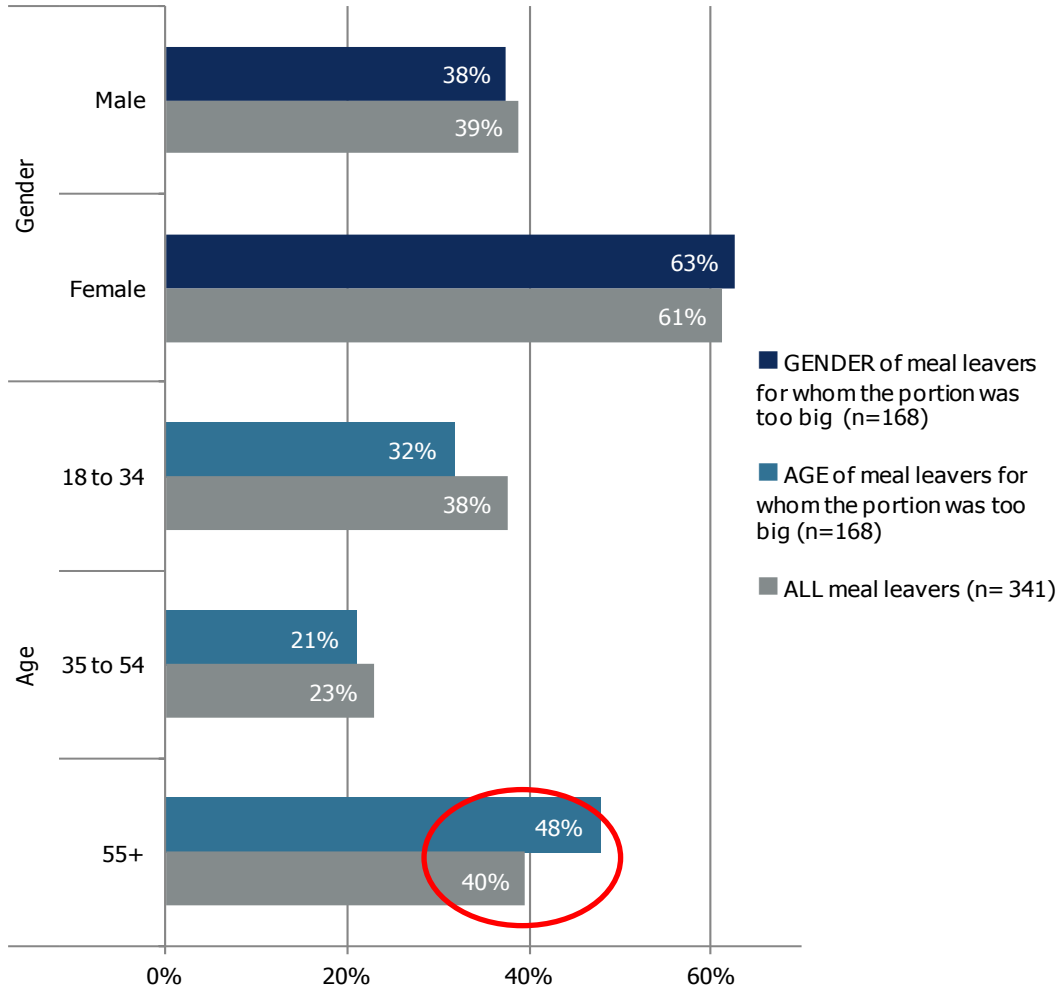
- Nearly three quarters (74%) of meal leavers felt full after their meal, compared to just over a third of non-meal leavers (37%);
- Non-meal leavers were much more likely to say they felt 'just right' after their restaurant meal;
- Nearly half of meal leavers (46%) said the amount of food they were served was 'too much'.

Reasons given for leaving food



Base: 341 (All meal leavers) Q32 Multicode		%
Portion sizes		59%
The portion was too big		49%
I ordered too much/served myself too much		13%
Full (unspecified)		2%
I'm a selective eater		23%
I am a fussy eater		10%
I left things I didn't like		14%
I didn't like the taste		4%
Health and other reasons		12%
I'm watching my weight		7%
Inedible		3%
Didn't have enough time		2%
Social norms		11%
It's normal to leave a bit of food		8%
I didn't want to appear greedy		3%
Food did not meet my expectations		7%
The food was/went cold		2%
The food wasn't what I expected		4%
Food was poor quality		2%
Food was badly cooked		2%

Who finds the portions too big?



This chart breaks down those who found the portion too big by socio-demographics.

- Men account for a *smaller* share than women of meal leavers in restaurants (39% v 61%) and a *smaller* share of those that found the portion too big (38% v 63%);
- In terms of age bands, the pattern for older eaters is particularly noteworthy: those aged 55+ form 40% of meal leavers, but 48% of those that found the portion too large.

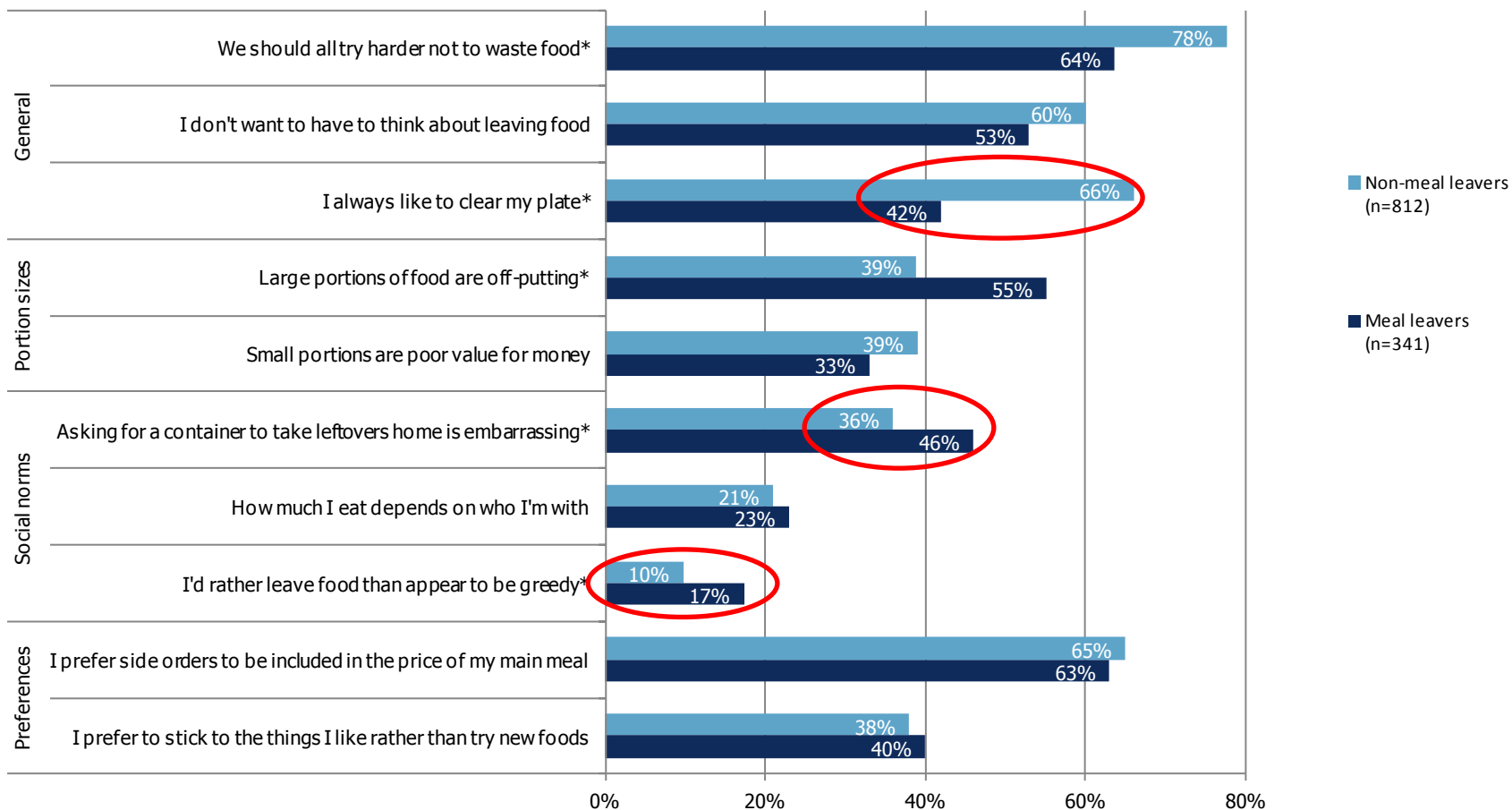
NB: Sample of those who found the portions too big includes a small number of individuals who wasted drinks rather than food

How are portion sizes experienced?

Base: 1,153 (All respondents) % of respondents who have done/agreed with the following	Total	Meal leavers (n=341)	Non-meal leavers (n=812)
Q42. General behaviours			
Ever asked for advice on portion size	29%	32%	28%
Ever asked for a smaller portion*	33%	43%	28%
Ever asked to have a starter as a main meal	53%	57%	51%
Q12. When ordered- this occasion:			
Knew what size the portion was going to be	64%	65%	63%
There was a choice of portion size*	22%	28%	19%
Asked for information on portion size*	3%	7%	2%
Q14. Staff behaviours-this occasion:			
Asked if you wanted sides or extras	42%	48%	39%
Suggested specials*	19%	26%	16%
Offered any advice on portion size	4%	5%	3%
Q19. The amount of food served was:			
Too much*	18%	46%	7%
Just right*	75%	52%	85%
Not enough*	7%	3%	8%
Q22. At the end of the meal, you felt:			
Full*	48%	74%	37%
Just right*	46%	23%	56%
Hungry	6%	3%	7%

Attitudes towards leaving food when eating out

% of respondents who agree with the following statements:



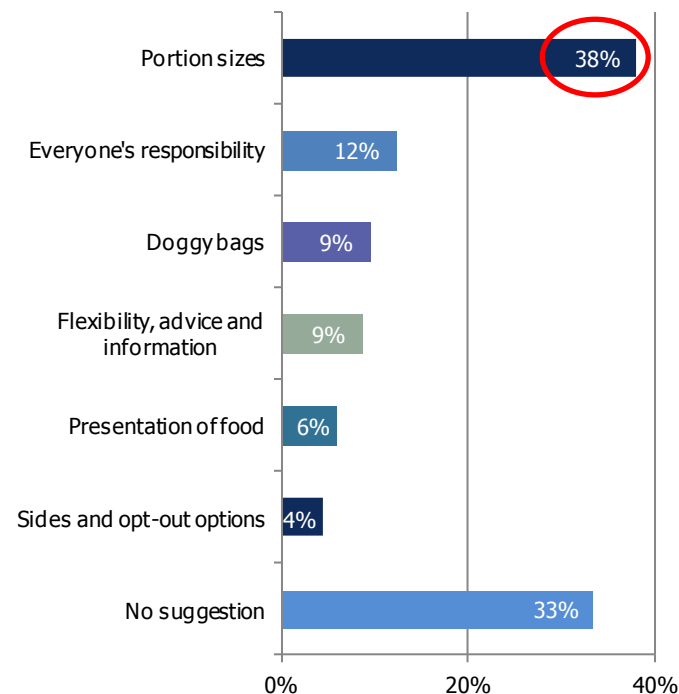
Attitudes towards leaving food in general

Base: 1,153 (All respondents)	Total	Meal leavers (n=341)	Non-meal leavers (n=812)
Q36. Often leave food:			
At home			
Eat a meal cooked at home	21%	25%	19%
Eat a take-away meal at home*	9%	16%	7%
Out of home			
Served at your table*	7%	17%	3%
From a counter/self-service*	4%	7%	2%
Q37. 'Bothered' if leaving food:			
At home			
Eat a meal cooked at home	29%	23%	32%
Eat a take-away meal at home	26%	20%	28%
Out of home			
Served at your table	33%	28%	35%
From a counter/self-service*	27%	19%	30%

Concern about food waste

Q38. Top 5 reasons for being bothered % of those who said they were bothered	Total (n=649)	Meal leavers (n=190)	Non-meal leavers (n=459)
It's a waste of good food	72%	71%	73%
It's a waste of money*	72%	64%	76%
It makes me feel guilty	22%	22%	22%
It's bad for the environment	21%	25%	19%
It shows I haven't appreciated the food	12%	9%	13%
Q39. Top 5 reasons for not being bothered % of those who said they were not bothered	Total (n=465)	Meal leavers (n=180)	Non-meal leavers (n=285)
I've paid for it so it's up to me if I want to leave some	38%	46%	33%
I'd rather leave food than eat too much	38%	35%	40%
It's not something I think about	23%	23%	23%
Don't consider it a problem	22%	25%	20%
If I don't like it I can't do anything about it	21%	26%	17%

What can be done to help reduce plate waste?

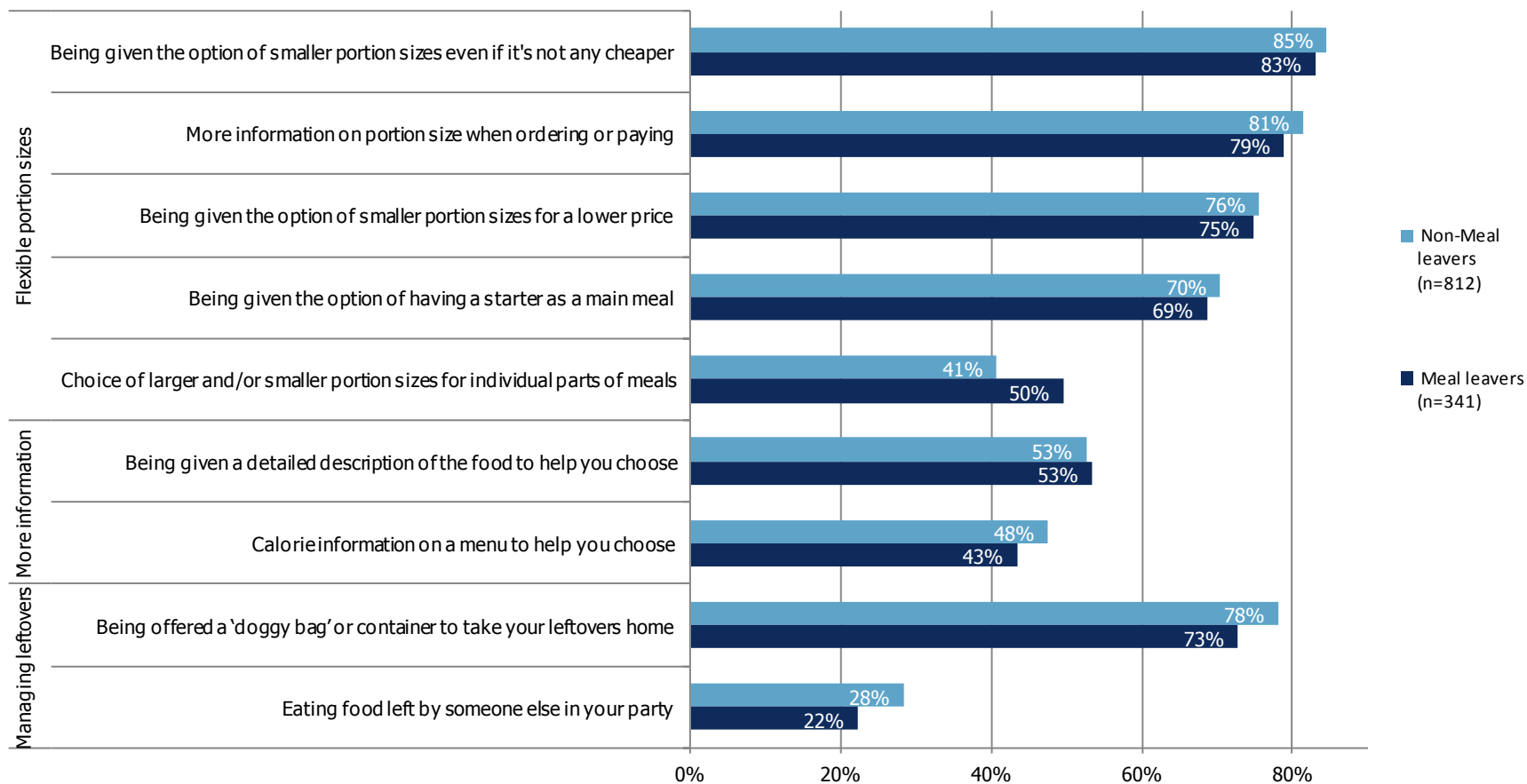


Base: All respondents (1,153)

Base: 1,153 (All respondents) Q40 Spontaneous response	Total	Meal leavers (n=812)	Non-meal leavers (n=341)
Portion sizes	38%	42%	36%
Smaller portions	19%	24%	17%
Offer a choice of portion sizes	15%	14%	16%
Everyone's responsibility	12%	12%	12%
It is down to choices individual diners make	7%	9%	6%
Order less and don't overload plate	3%	2%	4%
Share a meal/offer part of a meal to someone else	2%	0%	2%
Doggy bags	9%	9%	10%
Make doggy bags available	6%	5%	7%
Actively offer or automatically give doggy bags	3%	4%	3%
Flexibility, advice and information	9%	9%	8%
Advice about/description of portion sizes	7%	7%	8%
Presentation of food	6%	9%	4%
Change quality/presentation of the food	3%	4%	3%
Sides and opt-out options	4%	6%	4%
Offer sides (e.g. veg, salad) as optional	3%	3%	3%
No suggestion	33%	27%	36%
Don't know	10%	9%	10%
Never/don't waste food	8%	2%	11%
No response/none/nothing	8%	8%	8%
Rarely waste food	3%	3%	3%
Other	3%	3%	3%

Proposed options

% of respondents who are in favour of the following:



What do customers ask for when eating out?

Base: 1,153 (All respondents) Q42 Single code % of respondents answering 'Yes' when asked 'Have you ever done any of the following?'	Total	Meal leavers (n=341)	Non-meal leavers (n=812)
Information Asked for a detailed description of the food	31%	30%	31%
Portions Asked for advice on portion size when ordering	29%	32%	28%
Asked for a smaller portion*	33%	43%	28%
Meal options Asked to have a starter as a main meal	53%	57%	51%
Asked not to have part of the meal*	60%	68%	57%
Doggy bags Asked for a doggy bag/ container to take food home*	56%	64%	53%

Behaviours and attitudes towards doggy bags

Base: 1,153 (All respondents)	Total	Meal leavers (n=341)	Non-meal leavers (n=812)
Q40. Spontaneous mention of doggy bags as an option to help you waste less food	9%	9%	10%
Q41. Are in favour of being offered a doggy bag	77%	73%	78%
Q42. Ever asked for a doggy bag/container to take food home	56%	64%	53%
Q44. Are embarrassed to ask for a doggy bag*	39%	45%	36%

Key points

- Meal leavers account for 30% of those who had eaten in restaurants.
- Nearly two thirds of meal leavers in restaurants were women, and individuals under 55 were more likely to leave food than the others.
- One in five meal leavers left accompaniments (e.g. vegetables and chips) and nearly two thirds (63%) left food from their main course.
- Nearly half of restaurant customers felt full at the end of their meal, a figure that rose to 74% for meal leavers.
- 46% of meal leavers felt that their meal was 'too much', compared to just 7% of non-meal leavers;
- Those who left food did so despite the fact that they were more likely to ask for a smaller portion or to ask not to have some part of the meal.
- Those who left food are more likely to say that they found large portions of food off-putting (55%) and that they rather leave food than appearing greedy (17%).
- Only two thirds (64%) of meal leavers found that leaving food is a waste of money against three quarters (76%) of non-meal leavers.
- Nearly half of meal leavers (46%) say they are not bothered about leaving food since they've paid for it while only one third (33%) of meal leavers agree with such a statement.
- Although half of meal leavers (46%) are more likely to be embarrassed when asking for a doggy bag, 65% of them have already asked for it.
- More than a third of customers felt that reducing portion sizes would reduce plate waste in restaurants, even if it not any cheaper.