



Food Waste by Sector: Foodservice

Loss and waste happen across the entire food system—this is a snapshot of food waste in the foodservice sector. All estimates come from ReFED and are based on 2023 data (*the most recent year available*). For more facts and figures, visit the [ReFED Insights Engine](#).

1

73.9 million tons of surplus food* were generated across the entire food system in 2023.

2

In the foodservice sector, 12.7M tons were generated, accounting for 17.2% of the total.

- Of those 12.7M tons, 12.6M became food waste.
- 80% of food waste in the foodservice sector—10.1M tons—went to landfill.

3

Surplus food from foodservice accounts for 64.6M metric tons of CO₂e released into the atmosphere per year.

- That's equivalent to eight billion 10-mile food delivery trips.
- Methane emissions—which are more potent than other greenhouse gas emissions—generated from the foodservice sector equal 805k MT.

4

Surplus food from foodservice was valued at \$147B dollars in 2023.

- That's equivalent to over 13% of foodservice sales.
- Food sent to landfill has a valuation of \$117B.

5

The foodservice sector wasted 5.82T gallons of water in 2023.

- That's equivalent to 1000 showers per person in the U.S.

6

The equivalent of 21 billion meals went unsold or uneaten as a result of surplus food in the foodservice sector in 2023.

- The top three food types that go to waste are:
 - *Prepared Foods*: 11.4 million tons
 - *Dry Goods*: 263,000 tons
 - *Dairy & Eggs*: 216,000 tons

To see solutions for foodservice, visit ReFED's [Solutions Database](#). To learn more about reducing foodservice food waste, visit the [Foodservice Recommendations](#) page on the ReFED website.

*Surplus food is food that goes unsold or unused by a business or that goes uneaten at home—including food and inedible parts (e.g., peels, pits, bones) that are donated, fed to animals, repurposed to produce other products, composted, anaerobically digested, or otherwise wasted. ReFED bases its analysis on surplus food instead of food loss and waste in order to capture food that goes to donation, animal feed, and industrial uses, as a more holistic view of the food system.

