

FOOD WASTE IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR OF MONTENEGRO: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Montenegro is an attractive Mediterranean tourist destination, with tourism representing one of the key pillars of its economic development. Gastronomy occupies an important place in the tourism offer and constitutes a significant element of the destination's identity. However, food waste is becoming an increasingly prominent issue, particularly in the hospitality sector, where it has notable economic and environmental implications. At the global level, it is estimated that more than 30% of food waste is generated in hospitality and catering, with substantial quantities arising at different stages of food preparation, cooking, and serving. Notably, over 20% of food waste occurs during the initial preparation phase, indicating the need to improve management practices at this level. The main research problem relates to the insufficiently systematized understanding of food waste in Montenegro's hospitality sector, as well as the identification of key factors influencing its volume. The aim of the study is to identify limitations in reducing food waste in hospitality, with a comparative overview of European and global practices. The research methodology includes an analysis of relevant scientific literature, with a particular focus on the environmental aspects of food waste, as well as the application of SWOT analysis. The paper examines opportunities for improving food waste management in Montenegro's hospitality sector, drawing on positive practices from European Union countries, particularly Slovenia, with the aim of reducing negative environmental impacts. At the same time, it highlights the potential for improving existing practices through their alignment with the principles of sustainable tourism, thereby contributing not only to the reduction of food waste, but also to a more effective response to contemporary consumer demands and to the overall reduction of the environmental footprint of the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Food waste, hospitality industry, food, environment, Montenegro.