Upsell Benchmarks

How often guests add a starter, a side, a dessert or a drink, measured by type of restaurant across the UK, Ireland and Europe. Built from anonymised data across 2,000+ Tenzo restaurants.

Anonymised Tenzo till data · 29 June – 20 September 2026 · A companion to the Tenzo Workbook

How to read this benchmark

Each figure is an attachment rate: items sold as a percentage of covers. As in the Workbook, a cover is one main course. So "Desserts 22%" means 22 desserts for every 100 main courses sold. Drinks can be above 100%, because a guest can order more than one.

2,000+
Tenzo restaurants
Built from anonymised till data across the Tenzo network. No operator or site can be identified.

14
formats
Pubs, restaurants, hotels, cafés, bars and counter service.

3
regions
The UK, Ireland and continental Europe.

12
weeks
29 June to 20 September 2026: a summer trading period.

Reading the bars

Starters (% of covers)



40%
35%–53%

The **dashed band** is the typical range: where the middle half of sites sit, shown by the small numbers. The **orange marker** inside it is the typical value, shown by the large number. If you are inside the band, you are in line with similar sites. If you are below it, look into why.

All figures are indicative

Every figure in this benchmark is indicative and based on a sample of Tenzo sites. Use it as a starting point to tell quickly whether you have a gap, not as a target.

Items, not revenue

We count items, not euros or pounds. Food VAT fell in Ireland (9% from July 2026) and Germany (7% from January 2026), but drinks VAT did not, so value-based ratios would move for tax reasons, not because of anything your team did.

Find your format first

A burger restaurant and a hotel restaurant will never have the same dessert rate. Compare your outlet with the format closest to it, and with sites in a similar location.

Tenzo

Six things the data says

What surprised us when we compared restaurant formats side by side.

22–26%

dessert attachment

in table-service pubs, casual dining, steakhouses and small-plates restaurants with a real dessert menu. Burger and pizza restaurants reach about 3%, brunch cafés 1%. The menu decides more than the country does.

8–14%

hotel restaurant desserts

is the reference range for hotel restaurants. Many guests start with a starter but do not reach a dessert or a hot drink (10–25%). Asking every table is the fastest fix.

102%

side attachment

at steakhouses: just over one side for every steak. Sides carry strong margin, so they are the easiest add-on to protect.

2.0 vs 1.6

alcoholic drinks per bill

at London dining pubs against regional ones. London pubs take far more drink-only bills. Regional dining pubs sell more desserts (13% vs 8% of bills) and more hot drinks (12% vs 4% of bills) instead.

2.1–2.4

drinks per bill

at most table-service formats, whatever they serve. Steakhouses (3.0) and small-plates restaurants (3.0) sell more, and counter service about 0.5.

38%

food with coffee

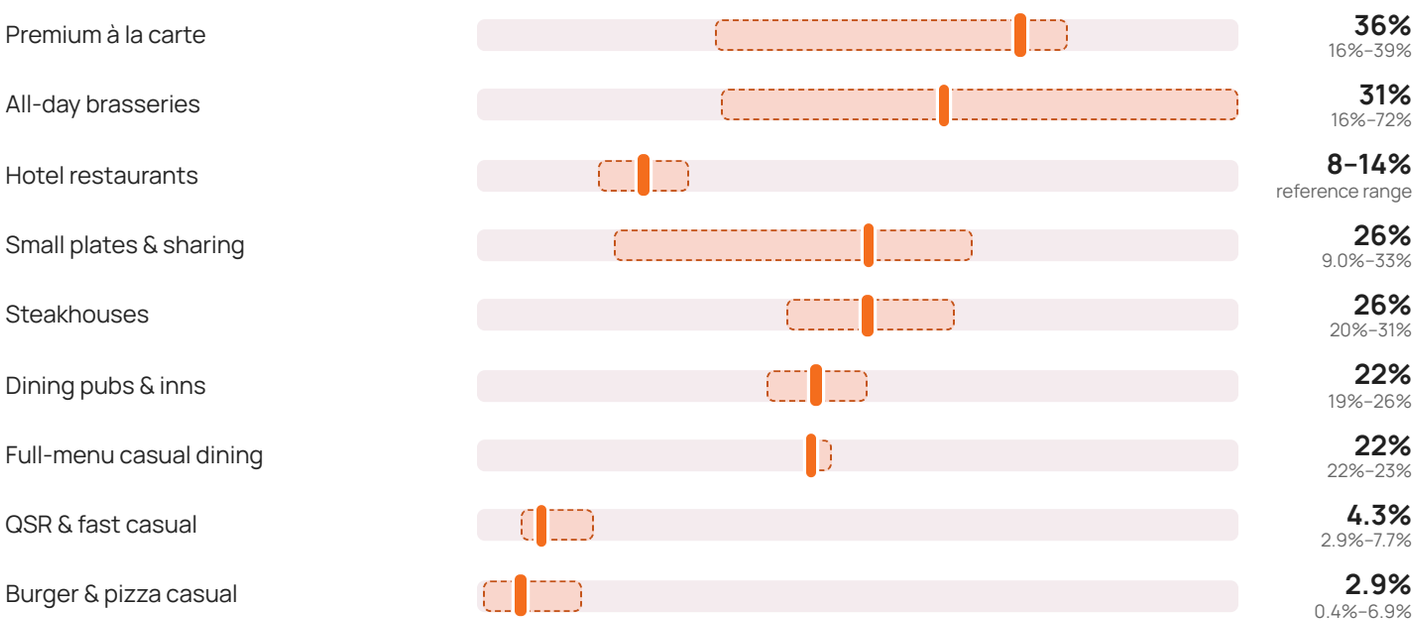
in coffee shops: food items as a % of hot drinks, against 196% in bakeries and delis. That is roughly one food item for every three coffees, the biggest gap of any format.

Across formats

Desserts and drinks, side by side

Desserts (% of covers)

Hotel restaurant desserts are shown as a reference range, with the marker at its midpoint.



Drinks per bill

Drinks follow the bill, not the main course. Most table-service formats sit between 2.1 and 2.4.

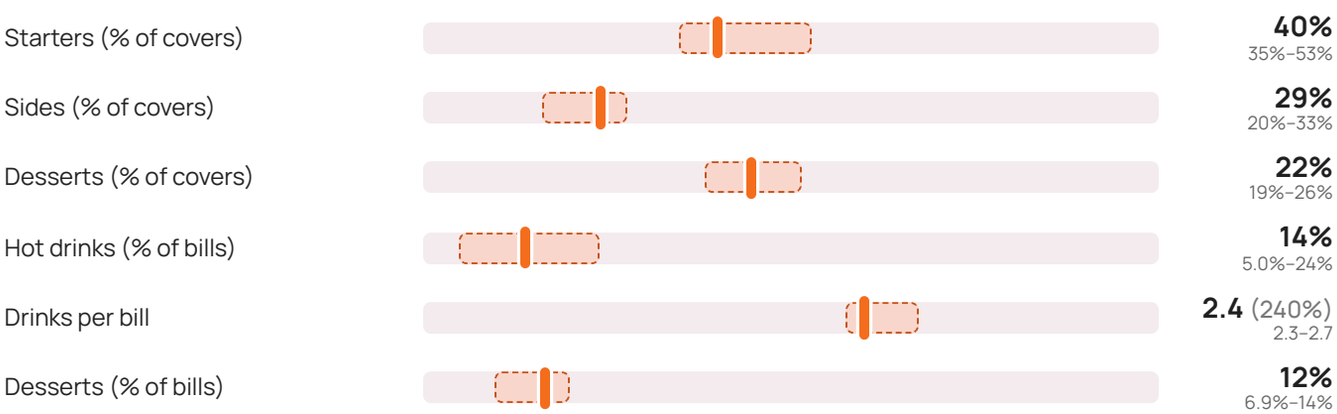


Indicative figures based on an anonymised Tenzo sample. Not targets.

Dining pubs & inns

UK regions · London

Food-led pubs and country inns with table service, often with rooms.



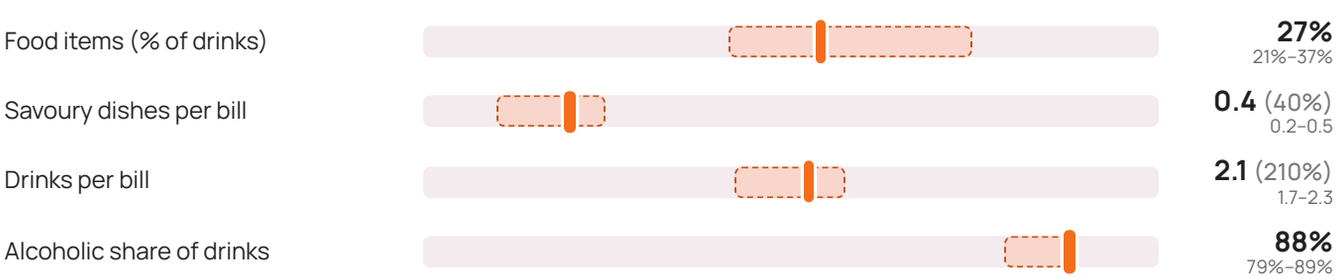
By location	Starters	Sides	Desserts	Hot drinks (% of bills)	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	47%	29%	22%	9.6%	1.8 (180%)	9.5%
Continental Europe	52%	24%	24%	11%	1.7 (170%)	11%

London dining pubs sell a little more alcohol per bill (2.0 against 1.6), helped by drink-only bar trade. Regional inns sell more desserts per bill (13% vs 8%) and more hot drinks (12% vs 4% of bills).

Wet-led pubs & taprooms

London · UK regions

Pubs and taprooms where most items sold are drinks. Food is the add-on, so it is measured per 100 drinks.



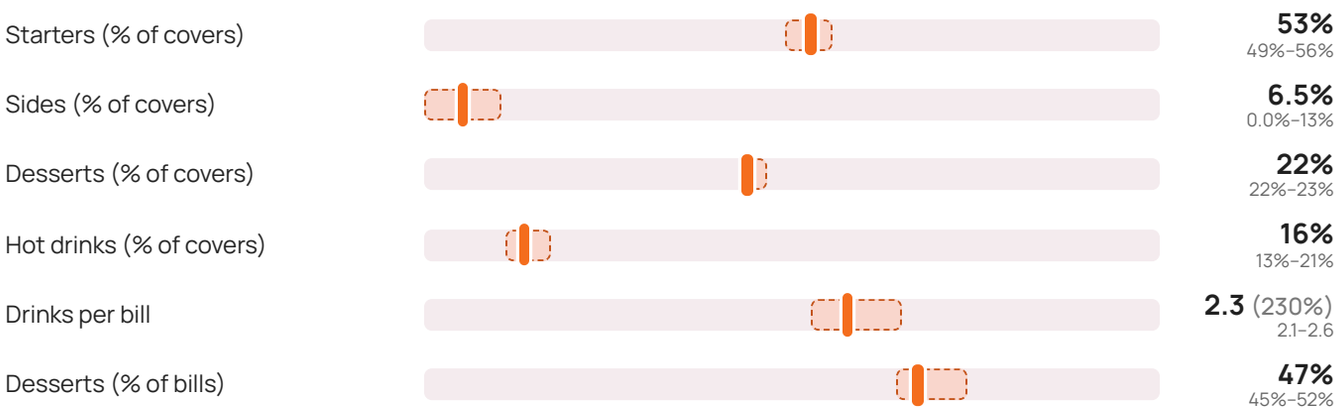
By location	Plates / bill	Alcoholic %
UK & Ireland	0.4 (40%)	87%
Continental Europe	0.4 (40%)	71%

London wet-led pubs sell about 1.9 alcoholic drinks per bill, against 1.4 in regional pubs. The upsell to track here is food items as a % of drinks.

Full-menu casual dining

UK regions · London

Mid-priced restaurants with a full starter, main and dessert menu (European and vegetarian cuisine in this sample).



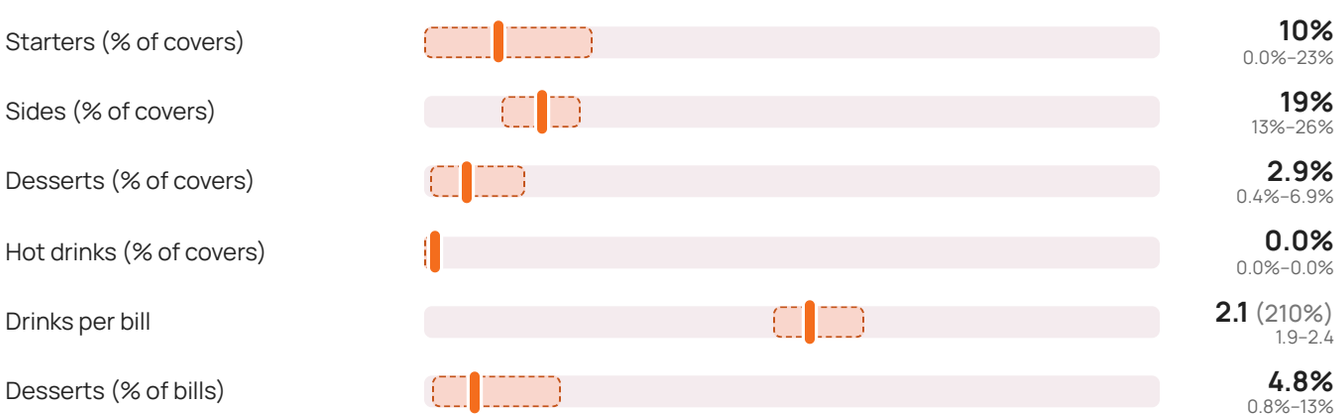
By location	Starters	Sides	Desserts	Hot drinks	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	53%	5.8%	22%	19%	1.0 (100%)	51%
Continental Europe	64%	5.2%	25%	17%	0.9 (90%)	59%

Starters on about half of covers (53%) and desserts on 22%. Sides are rarely sold separately on these menus.

Burger & pizza casual

UK regions · Ireland · London · Continental Europe

Table-service burger and pizza restaurants. Fries often come with the main.



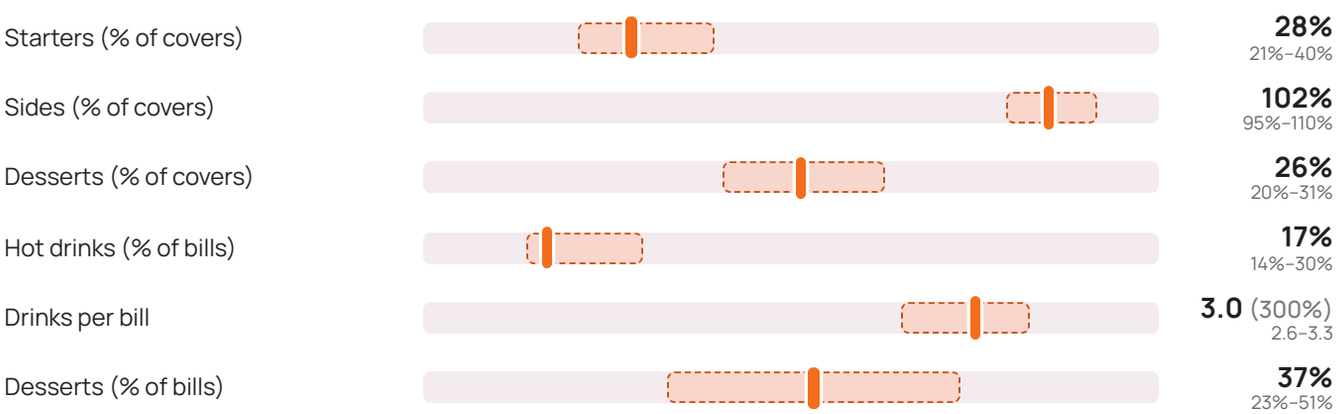
By location	Starters	Sides	Desserts	Hot drinks	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	0.0%	13%	2.2%	0.0%	0.7 (70%)	4.5%
Continental Europe	0.0%	11%	2.5%	0.0%	0.7 (70%)	5.2%

These menus offer few or no starters and desserts, so rates are low (desserts about 3% of covers). Bundled fries are not counted as a side.

Steakhouses

London · UK regions · Ireland

From steakhouses in tourist areas to premium grills.



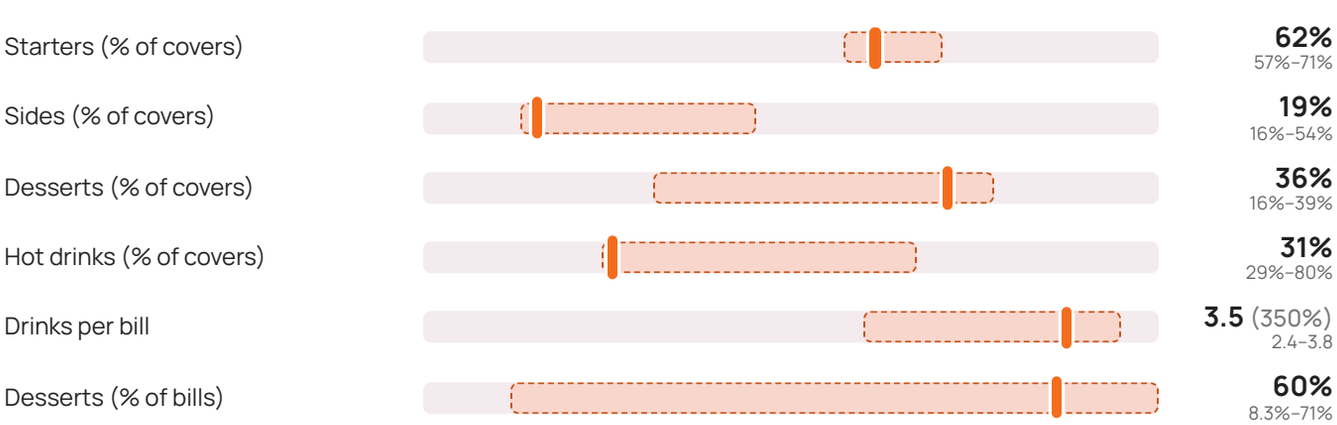
By location	Starters	Desserts	Hot drinks (% of bills)	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	35%	26%	17%	1.9 (190%)	43%
Continental Europe	42%	30%	20%	1.9 (190%)	50%

Just over one side for every steak (102% of covers). Sides carry strong margin, so they are the easiest add-on to protect.

Premium à la carte

London · Continental Europe · UK regions

Higher-priced brasseries and restaurants with a classic three-course menu.



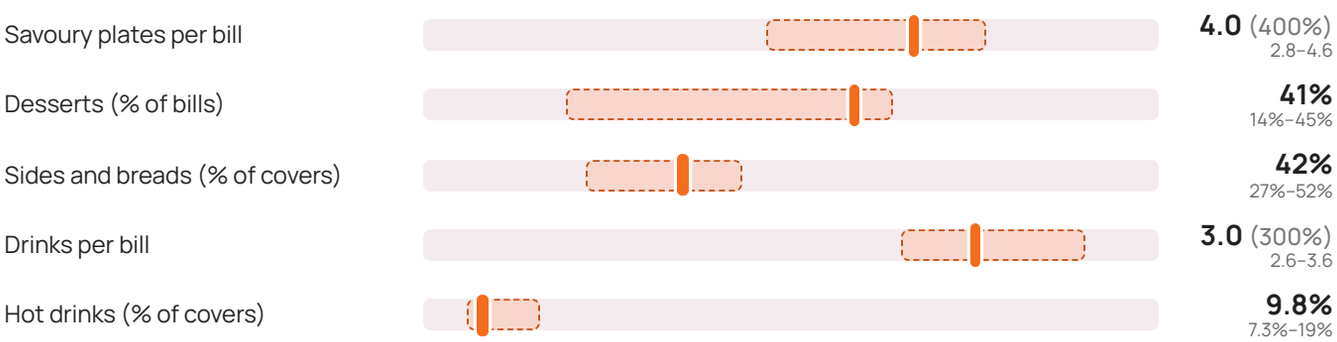
By location	Starters	Sides	Desserts	Hot drinks	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	57%	16%	15%	85%	1.1 (110%)	6.4%
Continental Europe	74%	66%	40%	28%	1.8 (180%)	75%

The highest dessert rate of the dinner formats: 36% of covers.

Small plates & sharing

UK regions · London · Continental Europe

Tapas, mezze, taco, dumpling and South Asian sharing menus. Guests build a meal from plates, so plates per bill replaces "per cover".



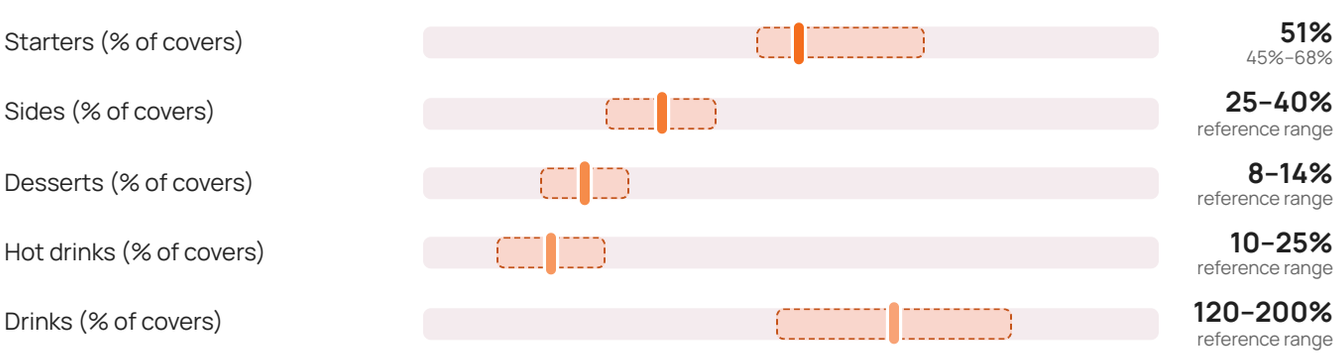
By location	Sides	Hot drinks	Plates / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	47%	10%	3.4 (340%)	27%
Continental Europe	42%	8.8%	3.6 (360%)	32%

Use plates per bill (typically 4) and desserts on 41% of bills. "Starters per cover" means little when the whole menu is plates.

Hotel restaurants

Reference ranges

Lunch and dinner in hotel restaurants. Breakfast is left out.



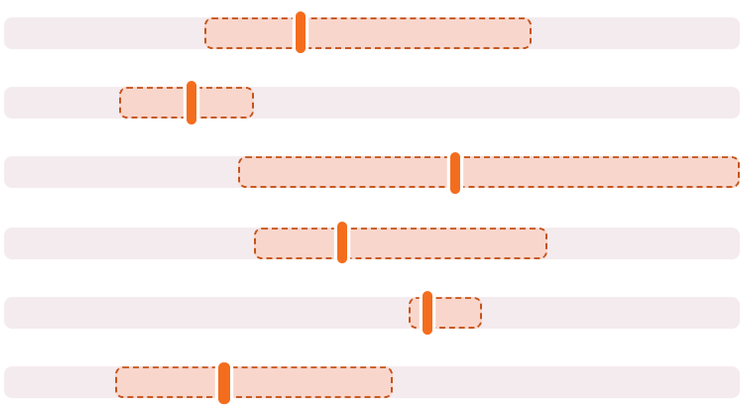
By location	Starters	Alcoholic drinks / bill
UK & Ireland	49%	1.1 (110%)
Continental Europe	56%	1.2 (120%)

Many hotel guests start with a starter but do not go on to a dessert or a hot drink. That gap can be closed by simply asking the guest.

All-day brasseries

London · Continental Europe · UK regions

Open from breakfast to late, often with a terrace.



Starters (% of covers)	**40%** 27%–72%
Sides (% of covers)	**31%** 19%–41%
Desserts (% of covers)	**31%** 16%–72%
Hot drinks (% of bills)	**46%** 34%–74%
Drinks per bill	**2.3** (230%) 2.2–2.6
Desserts (% of bills)	**21%** 11%–37%

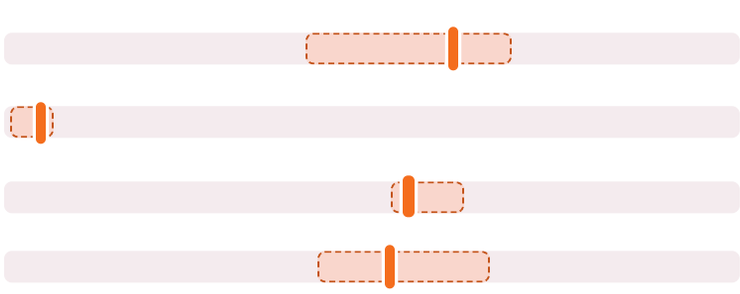
By location	Starters	Sides	Desserts	Hot drinks (% of bills)	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	27%	41%	16%	35%	1.4 (140%)	11%
Continental Europe	34%	35%	18%	42%	1.4 (140%)	12%

Terrace outlets on the Continent sell more desserts and ice creams than mains, so the range is wide. Compare by outlet and day-part.

Brunch-led café-restaurants

UK regions · London

Table-service brunch and breakfast restaurants.



Food items (% of hot drinks)	**152%** 102%–173%
Cakes, pastries and desserts (% of hot drinks)	**7.5%** 1.5%–10%
Drinks per bill	**2.2** (220%) 2.1–2.5
Hot drinks share of all drinks	**52%** 43%–66%

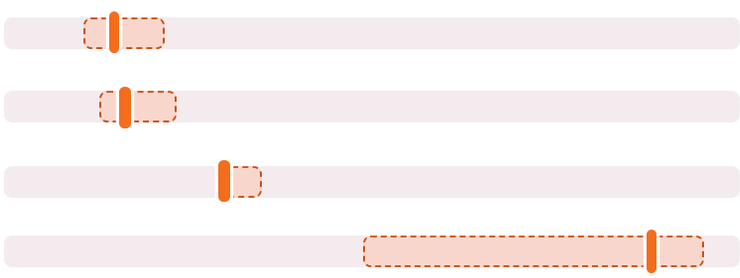
By location	Food (% of hot drinks)	Hot drinks %
UK & Ireland	141%	53%
Continental Europe	148%	52%

Starters and desserts barely exist on brunch menus. The upsell is a second coffee, a juice or a side.

Coffee shops

Ireland · London · UK regions · Continental Europe

Specialty coffee and hot chocolate shops, mostly to take away.



Food items (% of hot drinks)	**38%** 28%–55%
Cakes, pastries and desserts (% of hot drinks)	**25%** 20%–35%
Drinks per bill	**1.2** (120%) 1.2–1.4
Hot drinks share of all drinks	**88%** 49%–95%

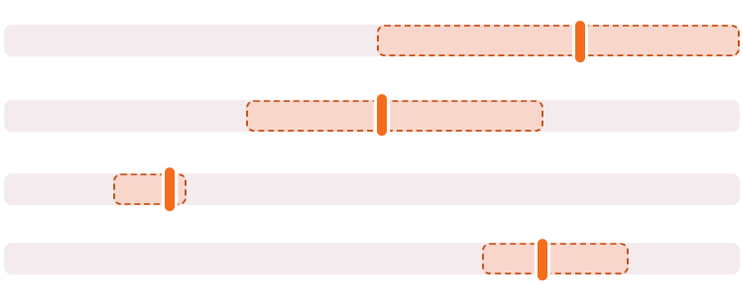
By location	Food (% of hot drinks)	Hot drinks %
UK & Ireland	35%	90%
Continental Europe	39%	87%

Summer period, so hot drinks run lower and iced drinks higher than in winter.

Bakeries & delis

London · UK regions

Bakeries, patisseries and delis where the cake or pastry is the product.



Food items (% of hot drinks)	**196%** 126%–283%
Cakes, pastries and desserts (% of hot drinks)	**77%** 49%–110%
Drinks per bill	**0.9** (90%) 0.6–1.0
Hot drinks share of all drinks	**73%** 65%–85%

By location	Food (% of hot drinks)	Hot drinks %
UK & Ireland	189%	80%
Continental Europe	199%	78%

Here the cake is the product and the coffee is the upsell. About two food items are sold for every hot drink.

Bars & cocktail bars

Continental Europe · Ireland · London

Cocktail bars, hotel bars and late-night venues.

Food items (% of drinks)		**16%** 11%–22%
Savoury dishes per bill		**0.3** (30%) 0.1–0.4
Drinks per bill		**2.6** (260%) 2.4–2.7
Alcoholic share of drinks		**85%** 60%–93%

By location	Plates / bill	Alcoholic %
UK & Ireland	0.1 (10%)	93%
Continental Europe	0.4 (40%)	63%

Continental hotel bars sell much more food and coffee than London cocktail bars.

QSR & fast casual

UK regions · London · Continental Europe

Counter-service burgers, salads, sushi and bowls, including meal deals.

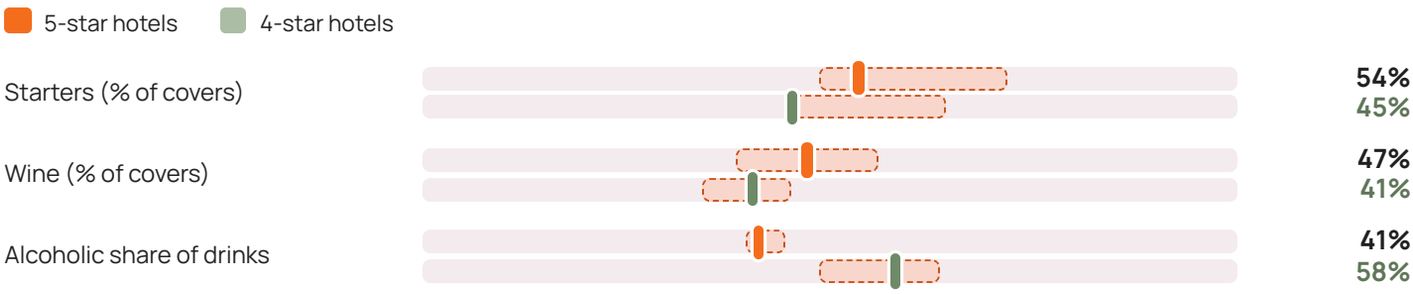
Sides (% of covers)		**7.3%** 1.5%–26%
Desserts (% of covers)		**4.3%** 2.9%–7.7%
Drinks (% of covers)		**27%** 20%–55%
Drinks per bill		**0.5** (50%) 0.2–0.9

By location	Sides	Desserts
UK & Ireland	1.5%	2.8%
Continental Europe	19%	6.5%

Sides and drinks inside a meal deal are not counted as upsells. Only items added separately count.

4-star and 5-star hotels

We checked the star rating of every hotel behind the hotel restaurants in this benchmark. 5-star guests order more starters and more wine. In 4-star hotels, beer and spirits make up more of the drinks order.



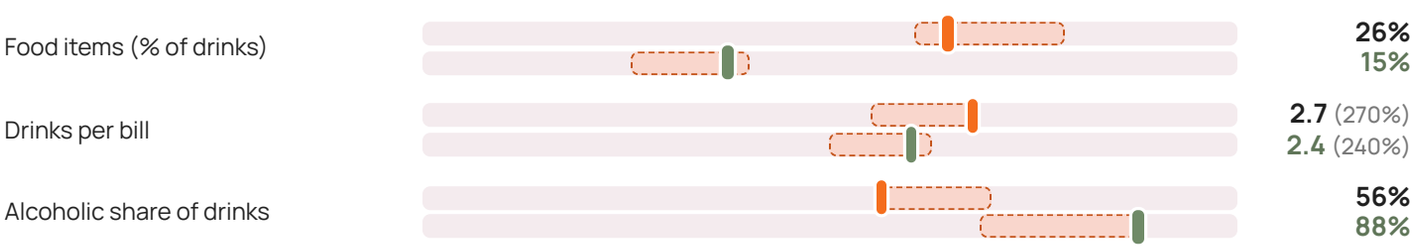
5-star: more starters, more wine

Guests order more starters (54% against 45% of covers). Wine is a larger part of the drinks order (47% against 41% of covers).

4-star: more beer and spirits

Alcohol is a bigger share of the drinks order (58% against 41%), led by beer, spirits and cocktails rather than wine. The 4-star rooftops and bars sell like a busy bar-restaurant.

Hotel bars



5-star hotel bars sell almost twice as much food per drink and far more coffee and tea.

Use the gap between the two as a guide, not the exact numbers.

The location of the site changes the mix

Percentage of covers unless stated.

Dining pubs & inns	Starters	Desserts	Hot drinks (% of bills)	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	47%	22%	9.6%	1.8 (180%)	9.5%
Continental Europe	52%	24%	11%	1.7 (170%)	11%

Steakhouses	Starters	Desserts	Hot drinks (% of bills)	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	35%	26%	17%	43%
Continental Europe	42%	30%	20%	50%

Small plates & sharing	Sides	Desserts	Alcoholic drinks / bill	Plates / bill	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	47%	19%	1.5 (150%)	3.4 (340%)	27%
Continental Europe	42%	20%	1.4 (140%)	3.6 (360%)	32%

Wet-led pubs & taprooms	Alcoholic %	Food / bill
UK & Ireland	87%	0.4 (40%)
Continental Europe	71%	0.4 (40%)

QSR & fast casual	Sides	Desserts	Desserts (% of bills)
UK & Ireland	1.5%	2.8%	3.1%
Continental Europe	19%	6.5%	5.6%

What this means for you

- Continental sites tend to sell more starters and more desserts per bill. Guests there stay for more courses.
- UK and Irish sites lean more on alcohol, and on beer and spirits in particular.
- Compare your outlet with sites in the same region and the same format, not with the whole table.

How this compares with published figures

We searched for other reports on upselling and attachment. None publishes attachment rates by format, so this benchmark is the first of its kind. The published figures measure other things, but they point the same way.

Published figure	Value	This benchmark	What it tells us
UK consumers who "usually" order dessert when eating out CGA for Callebaut, 2021–22 · Stated behaviour, share of people	**44–45%**	22–26% dessert attachment in table-service formats	Our figure counts what is ordered. 84% of dessert eaters say they share, which explains most of the gap.
UK adults who say they now skip dessert / starters Lightspeed survey, Aug 2025 · Stated behaviour	**32% / 24%**	Starters 28–62%, desserts 22–26% of covers	Consistent: most covers still end without a dessert.
US meals and snacks that include a dessert NPD, 2013 · Share of all occasions, including fast food	**About 10%**	3–4% in burger, pizza and counter service	Consistent once fast food is included in the base.
US diners who "always" order dessert / appetisers "every time" Toast survey, Dec 2025 · Stated behaviour, US	**18% / 29%**	Desserts 22–26%, starters 40–62% (table service)	Similar order of size. Vendor survey, US only.
Wetherspoon: bar share of revenue Annual report, FY2025 · Value, all UK pubs	**57%**	Wet-led pubs: drinks 66% of sales	Close. Our wet-led group is more drink-led than a food-heavy chain.
Young's: drink share of food plus drink Annual results, FY2025 · Value, premium London pubs	**68%**	Wet-led pubs: drinks 66% of sales	Close match.
Irish hotels: beverage share of F&B revenue Crowe Ireland hotel survey · Value, whole hotel F&B	**33–36%**	Irish hotel restaurants: drinks 32% of sales	Close match.
US hotels: F&B revenue per occupied room, luxury vs upper upscale STR / CoStar, Aug 2025 · Value per room	**2.4×**	5-star: more starters (54% vs 45%) and wine (47% vs 41% of covers)	Same direction: luxury guests eat more courses.

Why the published numbers differ

- Surveys count what people say they usually do. Till data counts what was ordered.
- Sales shares are in money, so price and VAT move them. We count items.
- Panel figures include fast food and snacks, which pulls dessert rates down.

The market around these numbers

No free, published benchmark for attachment rates by format exists for the UK or Europe. These trends explain the picture.

Guests say they are cutting back

In one UK survey, 32% say they skip dessert and 24% skip starters. This is what people report, not what they order.

Lightspeed / Perspectus survey, Aug 2025

Fewer visits, higher prices

Across Europe's five largest markets, visits fell about 1% while spend rose about 1% in early 2025. Price drives the rise, not more items.

Circana, 2025

Pubs keep beating restaurants

UK pubs +4.2% against restaurants −1.0% in July 2026, helped by heat and the World Cup. London grew faster than the rest of the UK.

CGA / RSM Hospitality Business Tracker, Aug 2026

Alcohol-free is growing from a small base

Alcohol-free beer +38% and alcohol-free cocktails +27%. In our data they are still 1–3% of drinks sold (6% at the highest site).

Lumina Intelligence, Nov 2025

Tax moved food, not drinks

Food VAT fell to 9% in Ireland (July 2026) and 7% in Germany (January 2026). Drinks VAT did not change.

VATupdate; Irish Times, 2025–26

Tourism is uneven

Record years for Paris (23m+ international visitors) and Spain (96.8m) in 2025. Overseas visits to Ireland fell 6%.

Visit Paris Region; INE; ITIC, 2025–26

Your own numbers against these

Pick one ratio

Start with the category furthest below your format's band.

Set a target

The top of the band is a realistic goal, because similar sites already reach it.

Keep it alive

Review it in every briefing. A target nobody measures does not move.

See how Tenzo supercharges performance in real-time

Speak to one of our team to see how Tenzo could work for your business. We'll not only take you through the platform, but ask what's most important to you and dive into what you want to see.

Prepared by Tenzo. All figures are indicative, based on an anonymised Tenzo sample, and are not targets. No operator or site can be identified. Hotel restaurant ranges are reference ranges. Data period 29 June – 20 September 2026.