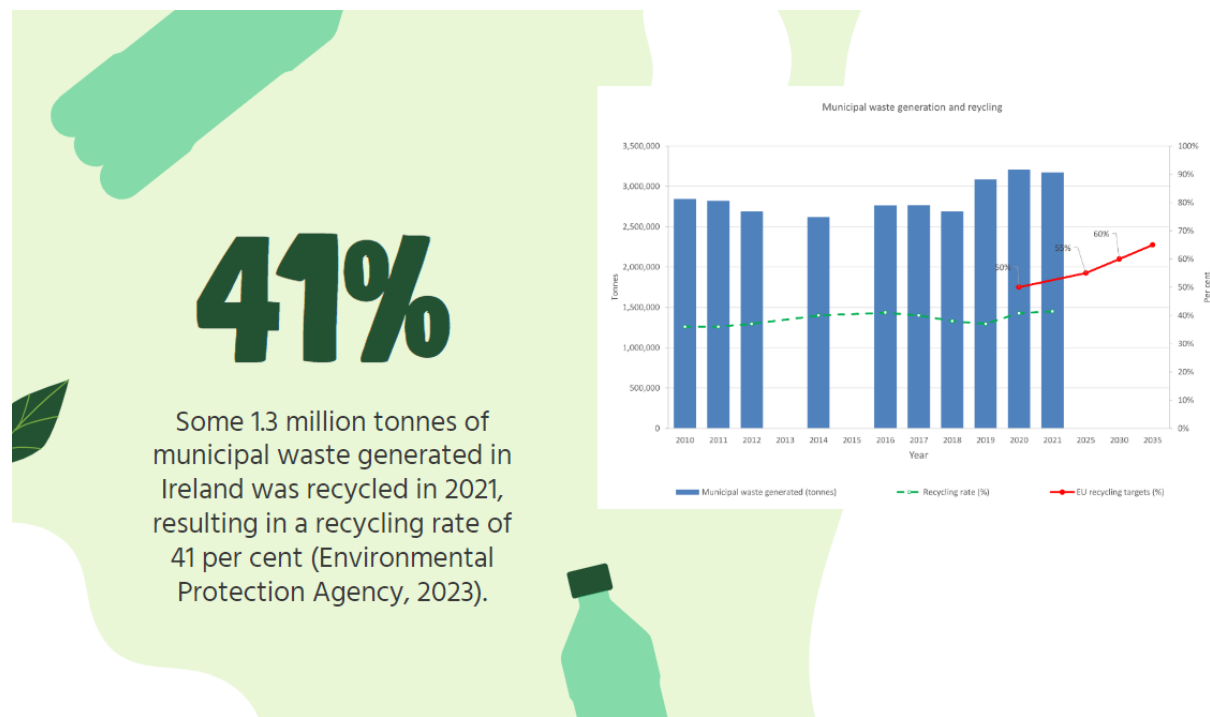


Hello! My name is Catherine, and today I'll be giving you some general information on how to commit to being a Sustainable Buff while abroad in Ireland based on my own experience here.

To start, I've done some general research on Ireland's most recent recycling stats. While I plan on giving out many general tips on staying eco-friendly in Ireland, most of it will revolve around sustainable waste management and recycling while abroad. As shown in the infographic, Ireland has made incredible strides toward raising their recycling rate of municipal waste. I'm going to give out tips on how to help contribute to this number! This is in stark contrast to the rough estimate of the United States' estimate of municipal waste that is recycled each year: 32.1% (Environmental Protection Agency, 2023).



Now, how to maintain and improve these rates of recycling while you're in Ireland? Unfortunately there is no real one solution that will fix it all, but by trying your best in several different ways you can become part of the sustainable waste management solution!

I'm sure you've heard of the common phrase, "reduce, reuse, recycle?" Well Ireland takes this motto a whole two steps further, expanding it to "refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle."

5 R'S

The Waste Hierarchy
gives guidance on how we can reduce the impact of waste on our environment

We need to focus on how the first 4 out of the 5 R's to really make a difference to our carbon footprint.

Recycling our waste is great, however **it is still waste** (UCD Estate Services, 2020)!

Sticking true to this model, Ireland offers several routes for each approach. Thrift and vintage stores are incredibly popular in Dublin. The Irish view on clothes is much different than our Americanized approach to fashion. In Ireland, it is not common to buy clothes through sites like SHIEN or any other typical fast fashion brand. It is frowned upon to buy clothes intended for one-time use (even if you discard these clothes at a thrift store). Quality and reliability is valued much more than quantity, and for this reason it is unlikely that you will see as many fast fashion trends in the Emerald Isle.

Where To Dispose Of Waste?

Recycling Bin	Organic Bin	General Waste Bin	Glass Bin
Recycling reduces the volume of waste sent to landfill and plays an important part in preserving the quality of the environment.	The brown bin is for your organic and food waste. The great thing about your organic bin is it removes the need to put food and garden waste in the general waste bin.	Your general waste bin is for any waste that you cannot put into your recycling, organic* or glass* bins. *where available	Glass is completely recyclable and saves precious energy resources. Recycled glass is made into new beverage bottles, food jars, insulation and other construction materials.

You will also see several bins for waste disposal when out and about. Similarly to the United States, Ireland offers both trash and recycling disposal. You may also see glass-specific and organic waste bins scattered throughout public and private spaces (Bord na Móna, 2021). For clarity, I've created little infographics about what materials will be accepted in each bin.

Please rinse glass items and remove lids, tops and corks before placing in the glass bin.

Glass Bin

What Can't Go in Your Glass Waste Bin:

- Window glass
- Light bulbs
- Ceramics
- Lids, bottle tops and corks

A glass bin with incorrect materials cannot be accepted on collection day.



(Bord na Móna, 2021)

Top Tips:

- The brown bin rule – If it once grew, it can go in the brown bin. Paper was once a growing tree, making all pizza boxes, paper food wrapping and wine corks an organic waste too.
- Wrap your leftovers and fruit or vegetable peelings in newspaper before placing them in your bin. It will keep the fruit flies away.
- Keep your organic bin clean by using compostable liners or bags, available in most major retailers. Regular and bio-degradable bin bags are not suitable for an organic bin.

Organic Bin

What Can't Go in Your Organic Waste Bin:

- Chemically sprayed grass/weeds
- Ashes
- Rocks, bricks and gravel
- Vacuum cleaner bags and contents
- Dryer sheets and lint
- Clothes, shoes and rags
- Glass, metal and plastic
- Nappies and personal hygiene products
- Medical waste
- Paint, motor oil, wax or petroleum
- Cigarette butts
- Animal waste



An organic bin with incorrect materials cannot be accepted on collection day.

Top Tips:

- Flatten your cardboard boxes, tins, cans or plastics and fold any paper – it will take up less space in your bin.
- Think outside the kitchen – shampoo bottles, bubble bath, lotions and potions all come in containers that can be recycled. Pop a small bin in your bathroom to remind you to collect all of them.
- It really helps if you thoroughly rinse all items before placing them in your bin, as dirty or unsuitable items could contaminate the entire contents.

Recycling Bin

What Can't Go in Your Recycling Bin:

- Hard plastics – toys etc
- Disposable barbecue trays
- No meat, poultry or fish (raw or cooked) wrappers, trays or packaging
- Ashes
- Vacuum cleaner bags and contents
- Rocks, bricks, gravel & timber
- Glass/ceramics
- Clothes/shoes
- Green waste (kitchen or garden)
- Dryer sheets and lint
- Personal hygiene products
- Medical waste
- Paint, motor oil, wax or petroleum
- Cigarette butts
- Animal Waste
- Polystyrene



A recycling bin with incorrect materials cannot be accepted on collection day.

What Can't Go in Your General Waste Bin:

- Medical waste
- Paint cans, motor oil, wax or petroleum
- Rocks, bricks and gravel
- Electrical goods – please recycle through WEEE
- Hazardous waste

General Waste Bin

Using all of your bins to their full potential will decrease the amount of waste going to your general waste bin. This will reduce waste to landfill, as well as the impact your waste has on the environment.

Refuse and general waste disposal rules may vary depending on where you are. These rules only apply to Ireland, so if you intend on traveling outside of Ireland during your study abroad program it is important to research the local disposal and recycling rules!

Next, I will be touching on general Ireland sustainability that I personally chose to take, along with UCD specific eco-friendly initiatives. In my program, I was housed in the dorms on University College Dublin's campus. This campus was roughly a 45 minute bus ride away from the city center and my internship placement. Obviously one incredibly easy way to reduce my personal carbon emissions while traveling abroad was to use Ireland's public transit infrastructure as much as possible. There are

several light rails, trains, and buses, and trains that are easily accessible and walkable from UCD's dorms and campus.

In my experience, my study abroad program provided me with a general adult public transit card preloaded with €5 and I was in charge of covering my transit expenses from there. I would suggest applying for a [student transit card](#) as soon as you arrive in Ireland, as it cuts transit expenses in half. Unfortunately the application site requires an Irish Eircode and does not work outside of Ireland, so there is no way to order this card ahead of time. Several of the study abroad programs will guide you through this optional application process when you arrive at your accommodations or during your general orientation meeting.

To understand how to practice eco-consciousness at UCD, you must first learn about the inner workings of waste management at UCD. Linked to the graphic below are videos and websites explaining UCD's partnership with various companies to dispose of [mixed dry recyclables](#), [municipal solid waste](#), [compostable packaging & food](#), and [textiles](#).

WASTE AT UCD
Where does it end up?

MIXED DRY RECYCLABLES	MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE	COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING & FOOD	TEXTILES
			
(Thorntons Recycling, 2021)	(Thorntons Recycling, 2016b)	(Thorntons Recycling, 2016b)	(Clothes POD, 2024)

Additionally, the Centra store located on campus has a deposit return scheme, in which certain plastic bottles will be marked with a return label. You will pay an extra few cents for these bottles and

then be able to redeem that money if you return the correct bottles to the deposit machine. This will then provide you with a receipt that can be used toward more Centra purchases.

In the dormitories at UCD, you will notice that each outlet comes with a switch. This switch activates and deactivates the specific outlet. In many European countries, people have begun unplugging all of their devices and lights when they are not in use to reduce electricity consumption. These switches make the process even more convenient and efficient. Utilities in the kitchen will also have power switches on the wall, such as the refrigerators, stovetops, and your water heater. If the water heater switch is not turned on, it will only allow for one warm shower (approximately 15 minutes) before the water runs cold.

I hope you will be able to take advantage of all of the green and eco-friendly options offered in the Emerald Isle. Have fun, and challenge yourself to find even more options to uphold your [sustainable buffs pledge](#). Happy travels and sko buffs!

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