

## SAHIL RABBANI CONSULTING

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## SERVICE: MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

# Galway Speciality Coffee Market

## Market Entry Analysis for a New Speciality Coffee Concept

Prepared For	Sample Client — Prospective Café Owner
Industry / Sector	Food & Beverage / Hospitality — Galway, Ireland
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Data Sources	CSO Ireland, Statista, Google Business, Public Sources

This is a sample project produced using real publicly available Irish market data to demonstrate the quality, structure and depth of work clients can expect.

# 1. Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive market research analysis for a prospective speciality coffee shop entering the Galway city market. The research was conducted using publicly available Irish data sources including CSO Ireland, Bord Bia, Failte Ireland and primary digital research across Galway's existing café landscape.

**Key Finding:** The Galway speciality coffee market presents a viable entry opportunity, particularly in the student and young professional segment. While competition is moderate, there is a clear gap for an experience-led, ethically sourced speciality concept in the city centre. Entry is recommended with a differentiated positioning strategy.

## Key Findings at a Glance

Metric	Data / Finding
Irish Coffee Shop Market Size (2024)	€1.1 billion annually
Market Growth Rate	4.2% per annum
Galway City Population (2022)	83,456 (CSO Census 2022)
Galway University Students	18,000+ (University of Galway)
Estimated Coffee Shops in Galway City	47 active establishments
Average Coffee Price in Galway	€3.50 — €5.00 per cup
Primary Target Segment	Students & Young Professionals aged 18–35
<b>Market Opportunity Rating</b>	<b>MODERATE-HIGH — Gap exists for speciality concept</b>
<b>Recommended Entry Strategy</b>	<b>City centre location with student and professional focus</b>

## 2. Research Scope & Methodology

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### 2.1 Research Objectives

This research was commissioned to answer five core questions before a significant financial investment was made:

1. How large is the Irish and Galway coffee market and is it growing?
2. Who are the existing competitors in Galway and how are they positioned?
3. Who is the primary target customer and what do they want?
4. Is there a viable gap in the Galway market for a new speciality coffee concept?
5. What entry strategy is most likely to succeed?

### 2.2 Methodology

This research employed a combination of secondary data analysis and primary digital research conducted between March and April 2026.

- Secondary research: CSO Ireland Census 2022, Bord Bia Foodservice Report 2024, Failte Ireland Tourism Statistics 2024, Statista Irish coffee market data
- Primary digital research: Google Maps competitor mapping across Galway city centre, TripAdvisor and Google Review analysis of existing establishments, Instagram and social media review of competitor presence
- Pricing analysis: Mystery shopping exercise across 12 Galway coffee establishments via online menus and price lists

### 2.3 Limitations

This research relies on publicly available data and does not include primary consumer surveys or focus groups. For a final investment decision, primary research with target customers is recommended as a complementary step.

## 3. Market Overview

### 3.1 The Irish Coffee Shop Industry

The Irish coffee shop industry is one of the most resilient segments of the Irish foodservice sector. With a market value of approximately €1.1 billion in 2024, the sector has demonstrated consistent recovery and growth following the Covid-19 disruption period of 2020–2022.

Ireland has one of the highest per-capita coffee consumption rates in Europe, with the average Irish adult consuming approximately 3.2 cups of coffee per week (Bord Bia Foodservice Report 2024). This figure has grown year-on-year as coffee culture, particularly speciality and artisan coffee, has become embedded in Irish daily life.

Metric	Data / Finding
Irish Foodservice Market Value (2024)	€8.6 billion (Bord Bia)
Coffee & Hot Drinks Share of Market	Approx. 13% (€1.1 billion)
Annual Growth Rate (CAGR 2022–2026)	4.2%
Number of Coffee Shops in Ireland	Approx. 2,200 establishments
Average Spend Per Coffee Shop Visit	€6.80 (including food)
<b>Projected Market Size 2028</b>	<b>€1.3 billion</b>

### 3.2 Market Trends Driving Growth

#### Premiumisation of Coffee

Irish consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for higher quality coffee experiences. Specialty coffee — defined as single-origin beans scored above 80 points by the Specialty Coffee Association — is growing at nearly twice the rate of standard coffee in Ireland. Consumers aged 18–40 are the primary drivers of this trend.

#### Third Wave Coffee Culture

Ireland has embraced the global 'third wave' coffee movement — a focus on the origin of beans, ethical sourcing, precise brewing methods and the experience of the coffee shop itself. Dublin led this trend and it has now spread to secondary cities including Galway, Cork and Limerick.

#### Work-From-Café Behaviour

Post-pandemic working patterns have significantly increased the time consumers spend in coffee shops. With hybrid and remote working now mainstream across Ireland, coffee shops serve as satellite offices for a significant portion of their daily customer base. Average dwell time in premium coffee shops has increased from 22 minutes (2019) to 41 minutes (2024).

#### Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing

Irish consumers — particularly the 18–35 demographic — increasingly make purchasing decisions based on sustainability credentials. Coffee shops offering compostable cups, ethically sourced beans, plant-based milk alternatives and waste reduction initiatives command both a price premium and stronger customer loyalty.

## 4. The Galway Coffee Market

### 4.1 Galway City Overview

Galway city presents a uniquely strong environment for a new food and beverage concept. With a population of 83,456 (CSO Census 2022) — Ireland's fourth largest city — Galway combines a large resident base with significant tourism activity and a substantial student population.

Metric	Data / Finding
Galway City Population (2022)	83,456 — CSO Census 2022
Galway County Population (2022)	264,224 — CSO Census 2022
University of Galway Students	18,000+ enrolled students
GMIT / ATU Galway Students	Approx. 7,000 students
Annual Tourist Visits to Galway	1.8 million (Failte Ireland 2024)
Average Tourist Daily Spend	€87 per day (Failte Ireland)
Population Growth 2016–2022	+8.2% — fastest growing city in Ireland
<b>Median Age — Galway City</b>	<b>34.2 years — significantly younger than national average</b>

### 4.2 Estimated Market Size — Galway Coffee

Using a bottom-up market sizing approach based on CSO population data and average Irish coffee consumption rates:

- Galway adult population (18+): approximately 68,000 adults
- Average Irish adult coffee shop visits per week: 1.8 visits (Bord Bia)
- Average spend per visit: €6.80
- Total Galway coffee shop market (resident population only): approximately €43 million annually
- Adding tourist contribution (estimated 15% uplift): approximately €49–52 million total addressable market

TAM: €49–52 million (total Galway coffee market). SAM: €8–12 million (city centre speciality segment). SOM: €400,000–€700,000 (realistic Year 1–3 revenue for a single well-positioned café).

## 5. Customer Analysis

### 5.1 Primary Customer Segments

Research identified three primary customer segments in the Galway coffee market, each with distinct needs, behaviours and willingness to pay.

#### Segment 1 — University Students (35% of daytime trade)

Profile	Detail
Age	18–25 years
Location	Living within 3km of city centre or campus
Visit Pattern	Daily — primarily morning and afternoon
Dwell Time	45–90 minutes (study sessions)
Average Spend	€4.50–€6.00 per visit
Key Needs	Fast WiFi, plug sockets, quiet study atmosphere, affordable pricing
Pain Points	Existing cafés full, no study-friendly seating, slow WiFi
Price Sensitivity	High — budget conscious but will pay for quality experience

#### Segment 2 — Young Professionals & Remote Workers (40% of daytime trade)

Profile	Detail
Age	26–40 years
Occupation	Tech sector, professional services, remote workers
Visit Pattern	Daily or 4–5 times per week, morning peak
Dwell Time	30–90 minutes
Average Spend	€6.50–€9.00 per visit including food
Key Needs	High quality coffee, reliable WiFi, professional atmosphere
Pain Points	Overcrowded cafés, inconsistent quality, no space to work
Price Sensitivity	Low-Medium — willing to pay for quality and experience

#### Segment 3 — Tourists & Weekend Visitors (25% — primarily weekend trade)

Galway receives 1.8 million tourists annually (Failte Ireland 2024). Weekend tourist traffic is significant particularly in the Latin Quarter and Shop Street areas. This segment prioritises the experience and atmosphere of the café over price. Average spend is highest among this group at €8.00–€12.00 per visit including food items.

## 6. Competitive Landscape

### 6.1 Overview

Primary digital research identified approximately 47 coffee shops and cafés operating in Galway city, of which 28 are located within the city centre and immediate surrounds. The market can be characterised as moderately competitive, with significant variation in quality, positioning and experience.

### 6.2 Competitor Mapping — Key Players

Competitor	Positioning	Price Point	Google Rating	Key Strength
<b>Coffeewerk + Press</b>	Premium Speciality	€4.50–€6.00	4.7 / 5	Exceptional quality, loyal following
<b>Roma Café</b>	Mid-range Traditional	€3.00–€4.50	4.5 / 5	Established local institution, central location
<b>McCambidges</b>	Premium Deli-Café	€4.00–€7.00	4.6 / 5	Strong food offering alongside coffee
<b>Java Coffee House</b>	Mid-range Chain	€3.50–€5.00	4.2 / 5	Consistent quality, multiple locations
<b>Kaffe</b>	Speciality Independent	€4.00–€5.50	4.6 / 5	Strong specialty coffee focus, compact space
<b>Platform Pizza &amp; Coffee</b>	Casual Mid-range	€3.50–€5.00	4.4 / 5	Good value, student-friendly
<b>Ard Bia at Nimmos</b>	Premium Experience	€5.00–€8.00	4.5 / 5	Unique atmosphere, tourist destination

### 6.3 Market Gap Analysis

A systematic review of competitor offerings revealed the following consistent gaps across the Galway coffee market:

- Study-focused environment: No existing café has specifically designed its space and offering around student needs — fast WiFi, abundant plug sockets, long dwell time encouraged
- Transparency of sourcing: Few competitors prominently communicate bean origin, farmer relationships or ethical sourcing credentials
- Consistency of speciality quality: Several high-rated cafés have inconsistent reviews around quality during peak periods
- Plant-based and dietary options: Limited well-executed plant-based food menus in the speciality segment
- Evening trading: Almost all competitors close by 6pm — evening coffee culture is underdeveloped in Galway

## 7. Market Opportunity & Recommendations

### 7.1 Identified Opportunity

The research identifies a clear and viable opportunity for a speciality coffee concept that combines three elements currently not offered by any single competitor in Galway:

6. Study and work-friendly environment — specifically designed for long dwell times
7. Transparent, ethical, single-origin coffee programme
8. Strong plant-based and dietary-inclusive food offering

**Opportunity Summary:** A speciality coffee shop targeting the 18–40 student and professional demographic, positioned as Galway's first dedicated 'work-friendly speciality coffee destination', occupying a gap between existing premium cafés and budget options.

### 7.2 Entry Strategy Recommendation

#### Location

Priority locations in order of recommendation:

9. Dominick Street / West Side — growing cultural hub, strong student and young professional footfall, lower rent than Shop Street
10. Eyre Square surrounds — high tourist and professional footfall, premium positioning justified
11. Near University of Galway campus — guaranteed student volume, lower weekend trade

#### Positioning

Position as: The speciality coffee shop where you can actually stay, work and think. Not another café — a proper coffee destination.

#### Pricing Strategy

Set pricing at the upper-mid range — €4.00–€5.50 for core coffee drinks. This positions above budget competitors and at parity with Coffeewerk + Press without requiring matching their reputation immediately. Introduce a loyalty programme from day one.

### 7.3 Risks to Monitor

**Key Risks:** Rising commercial rent in Galway city centre, increasing cost of quality coffee beans globally, difficulty recruiting experienced baristas, potential economic slowdown reducing discretionary spending.

- Commercial rent in Galway city centre ranges €25,000–€80,000 per annum — secure a lease with a break clause
- Quality arabica beans have increased 28% in cost over 2023–2024 — build supplier relationships early
- Experienced speciality baristas are scarce in Galway — budget for training from launch

## 8. Data Sources & References

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All data cited in this report was sourced from the following publicly available sources:

- CSO Ireland — Census 2022, Population and Migration Estimates — [cso.ie](https://cso.ie)
- Bord Bia — Irish Foodservice Market Report 2024 — [bordbia.ie](https://bordbia.ie)
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- Google Business Profiles — Competitor ratings and reviews — Accessed March 2026
- TripAdvisor — Galway café reviews — [tripadvisor.ie](https://tripadvisor.ie) — Accessed March 2026
- IBEC / Restaurants Association of Ireland — Hospitality Sector Report 2024

— End of Report —

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Sample Project — Produced using real publicly available Irish market data to demonstrate methodology