

Requirements for sustainable food at meetings and events – guidance to caterers

Sustain is committed to helping reduce people's impact on the environment and to improve the health and well-being of staff. One of the ways we do so is to provide better food for meetings and conferences. These guidelines give simple ideas for how we would like to provide healthier options that have a lower impact on the environment and support local farmers and good food economies. We want our catering to be as healthy and sustainable as possible, and are happy to discuss our requirements with caterers to help decide – we may also be able to provide contact details for more sustainable suppliers.



We are very likely to order a high proportion (even 100%) of vegetarian and vegan food – especially if a caterer cannot provide organic meat or meat raised to high standards of animal welfare. Please tell us about the different vegetarian options you can provide – we would like some options that do not rely on animal products such as cheese and eggs. There are lots of tasty alternatives to meat, such as patés or dips made from beans, lentils, and nuts. Where meat, poultry, milk and eggs are used, these should be British and produced to high standards of animal welfare, e.g. organic, RSPCA Freedom Foods, or free-range.



Please provide non-dairy alternatives to milk such as oat milk or soya milk.



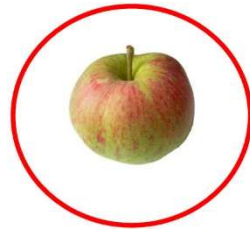
All tea, coffee and sugar should be Fairtrade certified, as well as dried fruit, nuts, juice and chocolate, if these are used. This ensures that farmers in less wealthy countries get a fair price for their produce. For catering suppliers of Fairtrade products see: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/for%20business//Business-Resources/Catering>



Where bread is used it should be mainly wholemeal, not mainly white, and preferably Real Bread such as sourdough from a local artisan baker. We would like it if you could serve other starchy foods such as salads made with rice, couscous or pasta that also incorporate seasonal fresh vegetables.



If fish is used, we cannot accept endangered fish (called 'red list' fish, or MCS 5-rated, www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide/search) – ask your supplier to check. If fish is used, it should be certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council or Aquaculture Stewardship Council, or be labelled as "line caught tuna". If this is not possible, we would prefer not to serve any fish.



We would like you to serve a selection of seasonal fresh fruit – preferably locally grown and preferably organic. If imported fruit such as bananas are included, we would like them to be Fairtrade certified. We will not require any soft drinks other than fruit juice and tap water. For health reasons, we would prefer to serve fruit instead of cakes, biscuits, crisps or salty snacks.



If serving a buffet, please consider offering a variety of fresh, seasonal, local vegetables. For example bowls of different salads, vegetable crudités and a range of vegetables in sandwiches (e.g. roasted veg or grated carrot). Try to avoid using salad as a garnish as it probably won't be eaten.



We do not accept bottled water unless it is tap water in refillable bottles. We prefer jugs of tap water with glasses or other reusable vessels, to avoid unnecessary packaging and plastic waste. Also, we ask you to cut back on waste by using reusable crockery, cutlery and glassware. If you must use disposables please use biodegradable / compostable or recycled items.

For some evening events, we may order alcohol. We generally prefer Fairtrade or organic wine and local craft beers.