

Sustainable Catering: A Practical Starting Point

Small, practical changes in how menus are designed and delivered can significantly reduce the environmental impact of catering.

This checklist is designed to help you identify quick, achievable actions, whether you're working in a school, healthcare setting or commercial kitchen.

Menu Design

- Offer plant-based options as part of the core menu, not just a single alternative
- Reduce reliance on high-carbon ingredients such as beef and lamb
- Build dishes around vegetables, pulses and grains
- Ensure meals are balanced and satisfying, not just compliant
- Design menus using overlapping ingredients to reduce waste

Ingredient Choices

- Review your current menu for high-carbon ingredients
- Introduce lower-impact alternatives where appropriate
- Use ingredients that are widely available and practical to source
- Avoid over-reliance on processed meat alternatives

Kitchen Delivery

- Ensure recipes are practical for your team and equipment
- Standardise key dishes to improve consistency
- Build confidence in preparing plant-based meals across the team

Customer Uptake

- Use familiar, recognisable dish formats (e.g. curries, stews, pasta)
- Focus on flavour, texture and presentation
- Position plant-based dishes clearly within the menu

A Practical First Step

This checklist is a starting point. Delivering sustainable catering consistently requires the right structure, skills and confidence across your team.

If you're looking to take the next step, our catering training programmes can help you turn these actions into day-to-day practice.