

# SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN YOUR KITCHEN\*

\* For more specific and actionable practices, complement these recommendations with a lifecycle assessment of your own facility.

1. Our World in Data: Environmental Impacts of Food Production. 2022
2. UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024
3. FutureBridge: Analysis based on Desk Research and Expert Consultation. 2024
4. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2019: IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.
5. Harvard T.H. Chan: The Nutrition Source, Plate and the Planet. 2019 / Healthy Eating Plate. 2023

## Be conscious of energy use and cooking methods.

As a chef, you may spend most of your time and energy cooking, but have you considered the energy usage of your appliances? For example, you could use induction cooking, slow cooking (especially overnight when electricity demand is usually lower), steam-cooking, convection ovens or a thermo-plunger<sup>3</sup> to meet the needs of your business while being mindful of energy consumption.

Curing, fermentation, and acidic marinades could be used as preparation techniques while imparting unique flavors and possibly reducing the need for energy in the kitchen. Also, keeping lids on pots and pans while you cook can save cooking time.

It's also a good idea to assess your kitchen's energy use and work with equipment suppliers that provide efficient and energy-saving appliances that may reduce running costs. When possible, select long-lasting, easy-to-clean and repair equipment and try to repair rather than replace during breakdowns to maximize the investment. You could even seek an energy supplier who uses renewable energy.

## 3 | OPTIMIZE ENERGY

## 1 | CHOOSE INGREDIENTS WISELY

### Prioritize fresh, plant-based ingredients and consider their environmental impact.

One of the most effective ways to reduce the environmental impact in the kitchen is to add more plant-based options to the menu and balance the use of animal-based products.

Plant-based foods, such as cereals, pulses, fruits or vegetables tend to have a lower carbon footprint than meat and dairy products.<sup>1</sup>

Another way you can influence the environmental impact of a meal is to try to choose ingredients that are fresh, locally sourced or in-season whenever possible, and to look at the farming methods where the ingredients have been grown. You can switch ingredients in any meal and select options that could impact the overall carbon footprint. (e.g. chicken instead of beef or plant-based alternatives as cooking aids or in beverages, etc).<sup>1</sup>

## 2 | MANAGE WASTE

### Make the most of ingredients and limit packaging waste.

Did you know that food service was responsible for 28% of food waste in 2022?<sup>2</sup> Look for suitable systems to measure and track your waste, identifying opportunities that may help reduce it, save money, and influence your carbon footprint.

During prep, trim meat and vegetables efficiently, then save leftovers for garnishes, stocks, and broths. Lean on your regional knowledge and creativity to repurpose leftovers in delicious recipes like frittatas, shepherd's pie, croquetas, ramen, or dumplings.

When it comes to packaging, apply the "Reuse, Reduce, Recycle" rule to promote circularity. For example, encourage suppliers to use minimal packaging that fits your local recycling guidelines, or when possible, consider ordering in bulk.

While cooking, use a minimal amount of plastic wrap, foil, and paper towels, and then dispose of them in the appropriate waste stream.

Offering customers a choice of smaller portions on menus and avoiding single-use cups and flatware may also contribute to less food and packaging waste.

## 4 | SAVE WATER

### Take steps to help reduce water use in the kitchen.

When you're cooking in water, right-size your pots and pans to avoid water waste.

Look for opportunities to reuse water within the kitchen, being mindful of allergens and cross-contamination. For example, when boiling vegetables, try cooking different types using the same water. After use, you may be able to repurpose cooking water as a base for soups and sauces.

You can also steam food or use a pressure cooker instead of boiling to reduce water use, since preventing evaporation may save energy as well.

Another way to repurpose water is to use leftover water (from steaming or boiling vegetables) to water plants.

## Keep taste, nutrition, and sustainability in harmony.

Chefs are often the ones who drive and influence food trends. You have the ability to design tasty dishes, but you could also contribute to healthier and more sustainable menus.

Balanced menus including plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts & legumes present opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while contributing to human health.<sup>4</sup>

Think about this concept when creating menus and cooking tasty dishes, and then visualize these recommendations as a complete plate to guide you.

- ½ of the plate would be filled with fruits and vegetables
- ¼ with wholegrains and tubers
- and ¼ with healthy protein, such as beans, nuts, fish, or poultry.<sup>5</sup>

Following the recommended food proportions and being mindful of the portions, you may help reduce excess calories while optimizing the nutritional quality of your dishes, providing your customers with a delicious meal.

## 5 | AIM FOR BALANCE