



Sustainable Events

Sustainable Catering Checklist

Use the checklist below to guide your conversation with your caterer and assess whether caterers meet your event's goals for sustainability. Virtually any caterer will have climate friendly options on their menu. Many globally-inspired menus offer a variety of flavors and creative ways to feature plant-forward options, while celebrating the diversity of our campus community.

Check box if accomplished

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY	<p>Supplier Diversity: Support diverse businesses owned by women or minorities, including people of color, LGBTQ+ owners, veterans, and persons with disabilities. Use the filters available in the MIT Supplier Search tool, or visit the below links for businesses in the Cambridge and Boston area to get you started.</p> <p>https://vpf.mit.edu/supplier-search Cambridge Business Diversity Directory City of Boston Business List</p>	
	<p>Celebrate Cultures: Prioritize vendors and cuisines that incorporate food cultures from around the globe, and offer lots of flavors and ways to incorporate plant-forward options.</p>	
MENU DEVELOPMENT	<p>Plant-Forward (Vegetarian & Vegan): Plan a delicious menu that puts plants at the center of the plate and avoids meat. Vegetarian and vegan entrees are available and prioritized in your order.</p>	
	<p>Local: Food is sourced locally. Food grown within Massachusetts is ideal. Food grown within New England is also a good target.</p>	
	<p>Seasonal: The menu highlights products in season.</p>	
	<p>Organic: Food is USDA Certified Organic.</p>	
	<p>Allergies, Sensitivities, & Dietary Preferences: Based on the dietary needs of the attendees, choices are available for vegan, gluten-free, lactose intolerant, kosher, halal, or other allergies and preferences.</p>	
	<p>Kid Friendly: Healthy choices are available for children, for both food and beverages (water, 100% juice).</p>	
RESOURCE CONSUMPTION	<p>Preparation: Ask your caterer if food is prepared fresh, as opposed to pre-prepared or frozen. Prioritize fresh ingredients and preparation.</p>	
	<p>Dishware: Reusable dishware is ideal. If reusable dishware is not appropriate, minimize plastic and single-use as much as possible, and maximize recycled-content. No Styrofoam. Note that compostable items are not accepted in MIT food waste or recycling streams.</p>	
	<p>Serving Platters: To minimize packaging, serve all dishes and condiments family-style or in bulk as opposed to single-serving options. Consider hand-held or bite-sized menu items to avoid single-use utensils.</p>	
	<p>Tablecloths: No disposable linens are used as tablecloth. Bare tables are the best option. If tablecloths are necessary, use butcher paper or reusable linens.</p>	
	<p>Water: No bottled water is provided. Instead, water is provided in large containers, jugs, reusable or recyclable containers. Encourage attendees to bring their own reusable water bottle.</p>	
COMMUNICATION	<p>Beverages: No beverages are provided in single-serving containers. Options besides sugar-sweetened beverages are prioritized.</p>	
	<p>Labeling: Food is clearly labeled with name of local farm, dietary information, and ingredients, where appropriate.</p>	
WASTE DISPOSAL	<p>Flexibility: Attendance usually changes a couple days prior to the event. See if some flexibility is permitted to change catering orders prior to the event to make sure you do not over-order. Be accommodating and understanding of the preparation required for catering.</p>	
	<p>Food Scraps: Request Food Waste collection bins from facilities by placing a special services request, or ask your caterer if they can provide composting services.</p>	
	<p>Extra Food: Do not let extra food go to waste. Make a plan to promptly distribute any leftover food. Ask your caterer if they have an existing partnership with a food bank or donation center.</p>	