

ENVIRONMENTAL: **FOOD**



SERVING SUSTAINABILITY

A menu for planet-first events



Events,
done better



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CANAPÉS

A bitesize introduction

A bitesize introduction to ESG

ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) is a model that calls us to embrace a more purposeful way of doing things. More than just focusing on sustainability, ESG is about the wider context of our choices and their positive and negative impact on local, national and international communities. This includes DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) and creating events where everyone can benefit and feel welcome, regardless of gender, race, background, neurodiversity, disability, or circumstance...put simply is about events, done better!

This white paper is the first in our series on ESG. Focusing on 'Environment', through the prism of food, it's a menu for event organisers and venues focused on creating events that go beyond sustainability. More than just a way to offset carbon or tick boxes, this easily digestible guide offers insights into how we've created waste-free events, pioneered purposeful meetings, and pushed for plant-forward food that has a lasting positive impact far beyond the events at which we serve it – and how you can do the same.

Tip:

Look out for these tips from our environmental experts to elevate your next event!



Food to feel good about

At Lime Venue Portfolio, our expertise speaks for itself.

All our venues are connected by ethical and sustainable catering from Compass Group UK & Ireland, which is why we're so passionate about food that's good for people and the planet. Our journey with planet-first food started over a decade ago, and we remain innovators and market leaders at the forefront of this industry shift. Working with FoodSteps, we adopted carbon labelling on all our menus to ensure attendees could make more environmentally aware choices. We've pioneered greater plant-based options and protein alternatives at events across the UK. We've also made strategic supply switches to support sustainability and reduced our supply lines and food miles.

To support more regenerative farming models, we helped set up a bio-hub at Ings Farm in Harrogate. This experimental farm uses cutting-edge practices around forestry and agricultural design to create carbon-positive farming systems that are better for animal welfare, biodiversity and the planet.

We also believe that knowledge sharing is central to positive change in our industry. That's why we create open-source information and guidance, such as our [Beyond Food](#) and [Meetings of the Future](#) reports, and this ESG white paper series.

Tip:

Make it easy for event attendees to travel sustainably by promoting public transport options and electric charging points ahead of the event.





— **STARTERS** —

Before the event

Before the event

The recipe for a climate-friendly menu



Taste

Taste is key to an elevated event experience and exceptional ingredients are central to delivering dishes that have the wow factor.



Nutrition

We're on a mission to fuel people to be at their best. To do this, we need to ensure that our meals are offering as much nutritional value as possible.



Sustainability

Everything we do has an impact on the planet. Food that's climate-neutral or climate positive will always be our goal.

Tip:

Choose trout instead of salmon. Trout farming generally has a lower environmental impact compared to salmon farming; they require less feed, produce fewer waste by-products and add great nutritional value and taste to menus.



Method

Working with our venues, event organisers, and suppliers. We've been on a journey to better understand how to minimise our environmental impact during events. Our learnings so far have led to:

- 60% of our menus being plant-forward. This doesn't mean that we're 100% meat-free – but we do offer less and better animal protein, with plants as the focus.
- 80% of our ingredients being British-grown and only using seasonal fruit and vegetables.
- Putting carbon labelling on all our menus, in partnership with Foodsteps.
- Being braver in our actions around food waste and only ordering what we need.

“Carbon labelling enables guests to quickly and transparently understand their meal’s carbon footprint and sustainability. It also encourages chefs to reformulate dishes to be lower carbon and gives your events package a unique selling point when pitching to clients who value sustainability.”

Chris Swain, Customer Success Manager, Foodsteps



With these learnings in mind, here's some actions for event organisers and venues to work towards minimising the impact of your events:



Plant-forward

- Offer less and better animal protein, with plants as the focus. Opt for meat as a side dish or garnish.
- Providing lower carbon alternatives results in more creative dishes that guests love, while still providing nutritious food that tastes great.



Local & Seasonal

- Aim to make your menu as local and seasonal as possible. Choosing local, seasonal ingredients that have been ethically sourced ensures that the food you're serving is delicious, high-quality, and traceable.
- Remove air freight by sourcing locally from suppliers who are committed to sustainability.



Fully Transparent

- Be bold and talk openly about your food choices, food waste and why you're only serving a certain amount of food.
- Put carbon labelling on your food menus. This clearly shows why you have chosen certain ingredients and empowers guests to make more environmental choices.



Zero Food Waste

- Get customer numbers right and don't over-order.
- Be brave in putting information about food waste on your menus – showcase the stats clearly and educate people on why it matters.
- Use every part of the food you're cooking, from broccoli stalks to kale stems.

Tip:

Use leftover vegetables, stalks and stems to make an 'anything goes' kimchi – find this dish and other recipes on page 20 of our [FORO Report](#).





— MAINS —
During the event

Talking about planet-first food

Whether you're organising your first waste-free event or introducing some new plant-based dishes, it's important to consider how you talk about food and food waste before, during and after a planet-first event.



Educate and empower

A 2018 [study](#) by Oxford University found that 'avoiding meat and dairy is the single biggest way to reduce your impact on the Earth' and that 91% of the destruction to the Amazon rainforest is from animal agriculture, mainly beef. Understanding statistics like this and the reasoning behind our food choices empowers us to talk confidently about them in an event setting. Educate your team on why it matters and make it part of the culture at events to share knowledge around why you're choosing meat alternatives or plant-based foods. Additionally, share the story of your food to bring it to life even more for guests.

- Before the event, educate your team on why it matters and make knowledge-sharing part of your culture.
- During the event, share the story of your food to bring it to life even more for guests. Get chefs involved to elevate the experience.
- After the event, share your learnings and wins to encourage others to try it too.

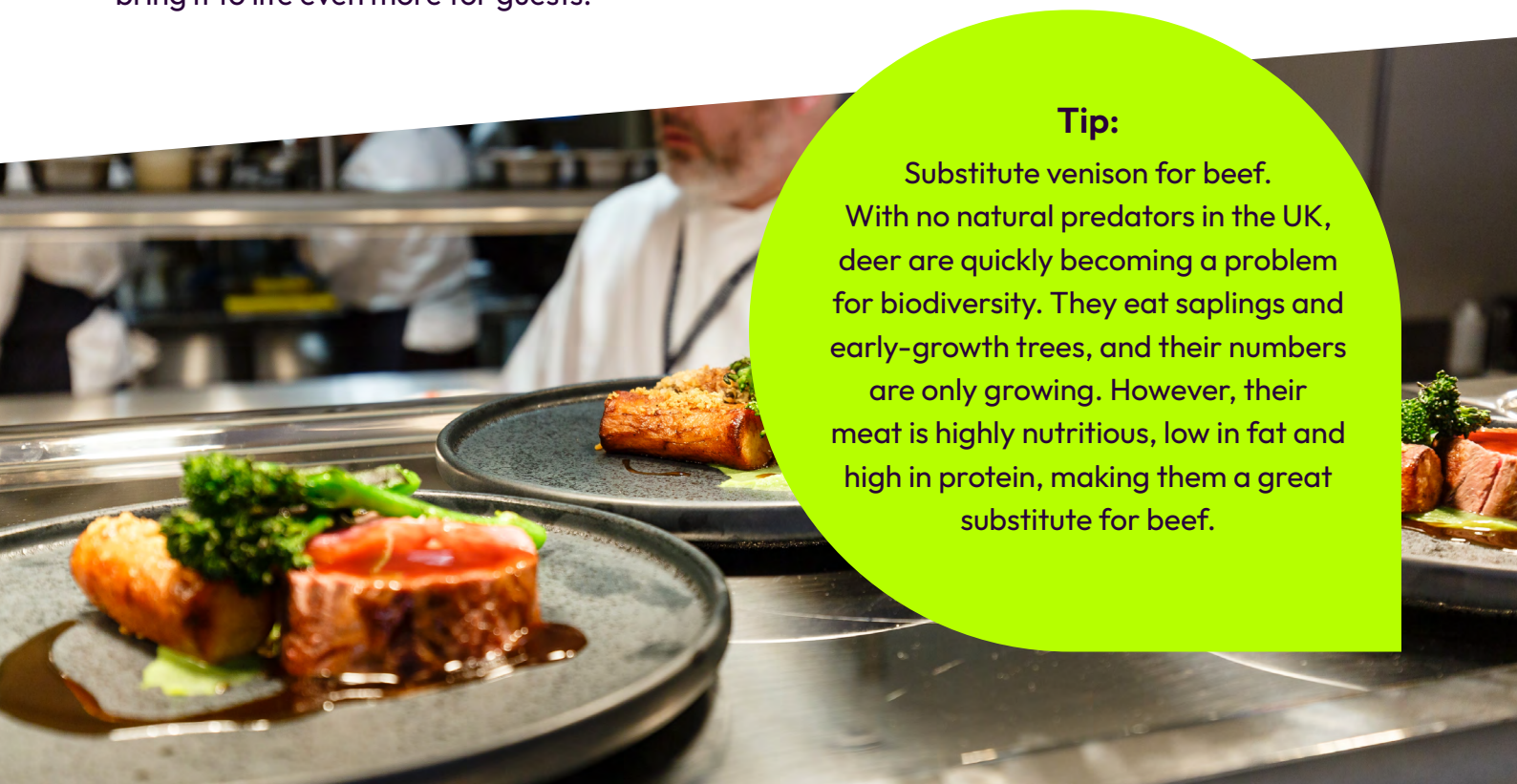


Show and tell

Just as we can have fun with our dishes, so too can we have fun with how they're presented. Encourage your chefs to become a part of the event – bring them out to explain the food, ingredients and story behind how it got to the plate. Theatrical displays are memorable – use that to your advantage and have fun sharing your mission and values!

Tip:

Substitute venison for beef. With no natural predators in the UK, deer are quickly becoming a problem for biodiversity. They eat saplings and early-growth trees, and their numbers are only growing. However, their meat is highly nutritious, low in fat and high in protein, making them a great substitute for beef.



Talking about food waste

Our research shows that between 15% and 20% of event food is wasted, and 20% of all food-based feedback from events is about waste. Food waste is clearly something people care about, and while waste due to over-ordering food is the norm in the industry, nothing will change if we're too afraid to do things differently. So, how do we stop food waste?

The three key ingredients



Be Brave

In our [Beyond Food report](#), we coined the phrase #FORO (Fear of Running Out) to raise awareness of the need to reduce food waste by 'brave' ordering – not being afraid to run out of certain dishes. Part of making this work is about the format of events – by embracing new ways of presenting and talking about food we can tackle the issue of food waste head on.



Be Honest

It's important to communicate with delegates pre-, during and post-event to provide a seamless flow of information, set the tone for the event, and share what you've achieved. Keeping communication channels open with guests or delegates is not only professional but also ensures they're part of the event and understand your aims before it's even begun.

During the event, if you want to cut food waste but you're afraid of running out of food, be honest about why you've ordered the right amount of food and how this might differ from what people are used to. Chefs know their food best, so bring them out to talk about food waste, do live cooking or tasting demos, and present sharing plates or bowls that make it harder for people to detect when food has run out.



Be Factual

Whether it's sharing your CSR (corporate social responsibility) objectives openly, or making use of stats, research or knowledge sharing – be open with your mission and values and back them up with facts to support why you're making certain choices or changes. Guests and delegates are far more likely to accept change if they understand why it's happening.

Tip:

To lower the environmental impact of your event menu, opt for meat as a side dish or garnish.



— **INTERLUDE** —

A tone of voice guide

How to communicate purposefully

When it comes to doing things differently at events, clear communication is key. Balancing sharing your intent purposefully while ensuring that guests understand and appreciate why is important. Here's a few tips on what to say and how to say it.



DO: Use inclusive language

Clear communication is key when it comes to doing things differently at events. It's important to balance purposefully sharing your intent while ensuring that guests understand and appreciate why. Here are a few tips for event organisers and venues on what to say and how to say it.

Example:

We've run out of chicken, but we can't say we're sorry – you've helped us host a waste-free event, saving XX amount of food waste. Thank you!



DO: Inspire & Educate

If you're passionate about improving the events industry, don't be afraid to inspire others to do the same. Our choices are supported by evidence, so use it to your advantage – keep some facts up your sleeve to share when communicating with guests pre-, during or post-event.

Example:

The average event wastes between 15-20% of the food it produces, which is why we choose to only order as much food as we need.



DO: Learn the 'why'

Make it a part of your team's culture to understand the 'why' behind the choices you make at events. Additionally, make sure that those who are on the floor at events understand why you've swapped salmon for trout, or beef for venison, and how to answer the kind of questions they might be asked.



DON'T: Get bogged down in facts & figures

When sharing stats, it's best to keep it light and relevant. Using too much data can cloud the message, so be wise with how you use facts and figures and don't over-do it.



— **DESSERT** —

After the event

After the event

Got food waste? Deal with it

As climate change has forced us all to shift, there have been amazing initiatives created to make it that bit easier. Across the UK, there are local and national services that re-distribute food that's still perfectly good to consume. Nationally, companies such as Olio and Too Good To Go are working hard to send food waste to a good home. Food banks also always need food donations to support their work in helping vulnerable people across the country. Event organisers can work with their chosen venue or caterer to find out who they could support locally to ensure that any waste produced is used.



Share your successes (and failures)

Whether it's hosting your first waste-free event, producing more plant-based meals, or changing the format of a gala dinner – every step forward is a step in the right direction. Changing an entire industry is only possible when we work together. Don't keep your learnings to yourself – share what you've achieved or need to improve on so that others can create better events too.

Serving Sustainability A menu for planet-first events



Crown your food heroes

Encourage and support your people to live out sustainable values and reward them for it. Weaving a planet-first mindset into your culture will not only benefit your business, but it also draws in talented employees who want to work for a company who live by their values.

Tip:

Serve food in bowls or sharing plates – it's far less obvious that you've run out of food and can be a unique way to present dishes, sparking curiosity and interest that leads to talking points.




Still Hungry?

Delve deeper into sustainable food & events

When it comes to ESG, we're just getting started. Keep an eye out for our next white paper on the Social aspect of ESG, which will be released soon.

Book your next event with us

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