

Food Procurement Policy



Food procurement not only effects the wider global environment but can also directly affect the health of the individuals who eat its result.

Sustainable food procurement allows both the healthy eating, economic, environmental and animal welfare agendas to be combined and acted upon.

At Eden we are passionate about sustainable development. Our food procurement policy is primarily informed by the sustainable agenda.

Provide our clients and staff with healthy and nutritious food

We avoid buying processed foods preferring to buy raw and staple ingredients.

We prepare and cook simply to retain our food's maximum health & nutritional impact.

No artificial preservative, colouring or flavouring are used in our cooking.

We provide fruit in virtually all our Working Lunch set menus.

We aim to limit fried items to one per season, preferring to bake, roast, poach, smoke or steam.

Our raw fruit, raw vegetables, raw meat, raw fish and bread bills constitute 70% of our total food expenditure.

“Home” made

As described above, whenever possible we will choose to make our own version of everything we serve. This extends to buying and foraging local fruit and vegetables when in abundance to make our own cordials, jams, dressings, dried fruits, candied fruit and chutneys. This gives our food an authenticity, nutritional value and uniqueness of flavour we cherish.

Purchase food with the least carbon footprint

We will always work to reduce our carbon footprint. We consider the food we buy a contributor to this ambition. By buying raw materials manufactured as close to Eden as possible, we are buying food which has itself acquired a lower footprint.

The requirement to offer a varied menu throughout the year does mean it is not always possible to buy UK manufactured or grown produce. We will buy from the closest possible source (eg. Spain over Chile), providing the quality and price are not prohibitive. Best practice where this is concerned is however not straight forward. Has a six month old refrigerated English apple retained a lower footprint than the new harvest Spanish shipped to market soon after picking?

Raw ingredients have a lower carbon footprint having not undergone intensive processing or cooking. Packaging and refrigeration is significantly more efficient.

In most cases our food undergoes only one cooking cycle.

In house we use filtered and chilled tap water.

Support the local economy & reduce delivery miles by buying food from suppliers as close to Eden as possible

We have reduced the average delivery miles for our food from 28 to less than 21 miles since 2009, achieved by steadily finding and selecting suppliers located closer to us. The policy is twofold, first to reduce the delivery miles and therefore fuel used but also to support local suppliers.

Buy food in season

We change our main menus three times per year. This is in order to avoid menu fatigue, but also to allow us to incorporate seasonality to the raw ingredients. Food in season is by its nature fresher with a significantly lower carbon footprint.

Use food sourced (made, baked, grown or farmed) in the UK

We will always choose to buy as much food which has been baked, farmed, made or fished in the UK as is possible. Our ability to do so is however dictated by the market so fixed rules are difficult to apply, in particular for vegetables and fruit. If a UK item is available in the market (New Covent Garden) it will be bought as long as the price is not prohibitive. Our meat will always be from UK bred animals and poultry, our fish from UK waters.

Meat

Our MEAT where possible is Free Range and always from UK farms. We are buying from London butchers (Barbican Supplies & Finclass) who share our philosophy.

It's difficult for us to guarantee that all meat will be sourced from a particular farm or supplier for 100% of orders but in most cases, it will be as follows:

All gammon is Free Range from Blythburgh Farm in Suffolk.

All chicken to be from Jack Brand Ltd based in Suffolk.

We do not supply beef. In 2022 products containing Beef were removed from our menus, this decision has been implemented as part of our new Net Zero Project - an endeavour to improve our sustainability and ethical values.

As well as our meat being from UK farms, we have also asked that all meat supplied to us is sourced from farms that promote the use of good animal feed and adhere to responsible antibiotic usage, this includes minimizing and avoiding inappropriate use of antibiotics.

Eggs

Our eggs are RSPCA Assured and from UK farms with certified free-range hens.

Fish

Our FISH and seafood is from UK farms or waters and the majority bought from James Knight of Mayfair, one of the most sustainable fishmongers in the UK and located less than ½ a mile from us. All fish supplied to us to be rated 3 or less (yellow) or equivalent on the MCS (Marine Conservation Society) Good Fish Guide.

Coffee & Tea

The majority of our coffee is fair-trade (Matthew Algie) and tea organic (Solaris Botanicals).

GM Foods

We confirm that we will never knowingly buy any food item which either is genetically modified or contains genetically modified ingredients. In addition, it is not our intention to introduce such foods in the future.

Palm Oil

We do not purchase palm oil, and we actively seek ingredients that do not contain palm oil or palm oil derivatives. Palm oil continues to be used by most large-scale manufacturers of items such as pastry, biscuits, and ingredient sauces, posing a significant challenge to our industry.

Alternative Protein

Protein derived from livestock is a luxury our planet's growing population cannot support. 10kg of grain is required to produce 1kg of beef. The methane produced by cattle is 23 times more damaging than CO₂ as a Green House Gas. In response to this we are and will continue to gradually reduce; in particular, the quantity of red meat purchased and generally increasing the proportion of vegetarian and vegan food offered on menus. This is not a plan with a specific deadline or target but a gradual shift to fit with our client's growing awareness and acceptance of vegetarian as a preferred option. For menus which naturally contain a mix of vegetarian, meat and fish items, historically our menus have contained around 45% vegetarian or vegan items. This ratio is now up to between 65% and 70% for all menus.

Nick Mead, Managing Director

Eden Caterers Ltd

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