

FOOD SERVICES

(room service, table service, external or internal catering service for banquets/events)

TRAVEL BETTER THANKS TO CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Tools to Support the Adoption of Circular Economy Practices in Tourist Accommodations.



For information on best practices related to kitchen and food production, please refer to the [Kitchen thematic fact sheet](#).



Reduce food waste by optimizing operations



Reduce the use of plastic and single-use products



Optimize residual material management with equipment and procedures for sorting, packaging, and collecting, adapted to the different waste streams and dining areas

BEST PRACTICES

1

Reduce food waste



Review the event booking process in order to:

- Determine an average portion size for different types of guests and encourage plated service over buffet service, which generally generates more waste
- Assess the type of attendees and promote meal options with fewer animal products to better accommodate all diets



Image: Hôtel & Spa Le Germain Charlevoix



Implement a procedure to ensure proper food preservation in buffets, such as keeping juice containers on ice during service

- Avoid offering pre-cut fruit, or make sure to collect any uneaten fruit to use in recipes.



Ensure breakfast buffets are planned according to the number of hotel guests to prevent overproduction



Provide smaller plates at buffets to prevent overfilling and, consequently, reduce food waste



Consider selling surplus buffet food in individual portions to employees or guests via a vending machine dispensing fresh, refrigerated items

2

Reduce single-use products and packaging



Avoid using single-use containers when preparing appetizers



Consider renting or purchasing reusable dishware for service



Establish strict purchasing procedures to limit packaged or overpackaged products unless it prevents food waste

- Use bulk condiments instead of single-use portions for some events or buffets
- Prioritize large-format products and provide them in bulk or via dispensers to guests:
 - Particularly applicable to cereals, yogurts, juices, condiments, sugar, milk, butter, salt and pepper, etc.
 - Consider the possibility of collecting bulk food (e.g., butter) to be used in recipes and thus prevent waste
 - Offer a bulk option in the event planning questionnaire with a corresponding discount



Prioritize the use of reusable containers, returnable or not (for events and room service)

- Provide lunch boxes in reusable containers, or, if not possible, consider using certified compostable fibre containers. In this case, organic waste collection must be available to recover the containers (see the [Rooms thematic fact sheet](#) for implementation details)
- Provide equipment (e.g., bins) for returning reusable containers



Replace single-use water bottles and cups with pitchers and reusable glasses/mugs at events



Remove straws, providing them only upon request



Use fabric tablecloths instead of paper ones, or skip tablecloths when possible



Minimize paper use during event planning and execution by using electronic devices (tablets, computers, screens) for real-time note-taking and team updates



Remove bread served automatically or offer it only upon request



Use reusable cloth napkins instead of single-use ones



Use electric burners instead of gas to reduce single-use gas canisters

3

Reuse or donate



Give surplus food to a local community organization



Image: Hôtel Château Laurier Québec

Recycle and compost



Set up a sorting station where plates are returned to properly separate recyclables and organics

- Collect coffee grounds
- Collect leftover food from plates



Identify all waste sorting bins with pictograms



Update procedures to ensure source-separated materials go into the correct collection bins and containers

SAMPLE CASES

[View all videos](#)



Auberge Saintlo Montréal (English subtitles available)

- Breakfast is partly served in bulk (e.g., cereals, jams, milk) and in large formats. Beer and coffee come in returnable containers, collected and reused by suppliers.



Hôtel La Libertad (English subtitles available)

- Bulk dispensers are used for condiments in the dining room (cereals, jams, peanut butter and ketchup).



Manoir Belle Plage (English subtitles available)

- Buffet portion preparation is adjusted according to the number of guests
- Some foods are purchased in large formats and portioned by the kitchen to be served at the breakfast buffet (e.g., yogurt, fruit salad). This approach avoids using thousands of individual milk cups, condiment packets, and yogurt containers.



Hôtel Albert par G5 (English subtitles available)

- The hotel offers à la carte meals only, instead of buffets.



Auberge des 21 (English subtitles available)

- The inn has removed tablecloths, reducing textile use as well as water and cleaning products needed for laundering.

USEFUL TIPS

1

Given the involvement of guests and organizers in best practices for events, it is wise to raise awareness of the ecoresponsible options implemented by the establishment. In addition, the establishment's directives for reducing food waste, limiting single-use items, and improving waste sorting should be communicated. Discounts could also be offered based on the event's level of environmental responsibility (zero waste, meat-free menus, etc.).

2

Replacing individual products with bulk or large-format products should not result in waste or loss of products, as the environmental impact of the product itself is generally greater than that of its container.

USEFUL TIPS

3

Changes in procedures that affect the quantity of service provided to guests will not be negatively perceived if the approach is clearly explained.

5

Consider the need, frequency of use, and necessity of owning an item before making any purchase. This will help determine whether renting or borrowing is preferable to buying. If purchasing is necessary, consider buying used products rather than new ones.

4

When using an external caterer for on-site events, make sure they receive the best practices from this thematic fact sheet.

6

In general, biodegradable, oxobiodegradable, or compostable plastic items are not good alternatives to conventional plastic. It is preferable to choose a reusable option or remove the item, if possible.

USEFUL RESOURCES

For more information on responsible procurement best practices, refer to the Responsible Procurement Guide and the tools available from the Espace de concertation sur les pratiques d'approvisionnement responsable (ECPAR):

<https://www.ecpar.org/fr/ressources/nos-outils/>

Tools to Help Manage Organic Waste (in French only):

<https://www.recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/entreprises-organismes/se-conformer/matieres-organiques/>

Downloadable visuals/pictograms for creating your own waste sorting posters (in French only):

<https://www.recyc-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/entreprises-organismes/performer/outils-guides-et-etudes/pictogrammes-signalisation/>

Produced by Stratzer, this tool was developed thanks to the collaboration and financial support of RECYC-QUÉBEC and the ministère du Tourisme, as part of the circular economy showcase project for the tourist accommodation sector.