



# Sustainable Food in Zurich

Summary of the City of Zurich's Sustainable Food Strategy



# Contents

What is Sustainable Food?

Objectives for the City's Food Establishments

Information and Education

Regional Production and Distribution

Procurement and Catering

Food Waste and Disposal

Cooperation and Monitoring

Further Information

# Preamble

For me, good food is part of an enjoyable life. But I am also aware that food is a major global challenge as not everyone has access to healthy food. At the same time, food – from farm to fork – has an impact on the environment and climate. Cities have a strategic role in this; more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas. Many people eat their meals in municipal establishments, such as schools, staff restaurants, childcare facilities, hospitals, or nursing homes.

Zurich has the best conditions for sustainable food. In November 2017, a clear majority of Zurich's voters expressed their support for the promotion of environmentally friendly food. New cooperative endeavours between consumers and producers are flourishing citywide, and associations and organisations are getting involved in the conversation on the topic of food. The diverse, multicultural gastronomy sector creates new, enticingly sustainable offers almost every day. In its own 450 food establishments, the City of Zurich makes sustainability an integral part of culinary enjoyment. The citizens should know what a sustainable diet looks like and how they can actively choose one. After all, it is not difficult to eat food that is both healthy and environmentally friendly.

The way in which Zurich's citizens eat now is crucial – for both present and future generations, for Zurich and the whole world. Together, sustainable food is possible.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Hauri'.

Andreas Hauri, Member of the city council  
Head of the Department of Health and the Environment

## What is Sustainable Food?

Sustainable food takes into account the environment, health, economic viability and social justice. In the City of Zurich, the food served should be healthy, safe, accessible to all, produced in an ethically responsible manner and cultivated in an environmentally friendly way. Effective ways to improve sustainability range from:

### Reducing Food Waste

- Fewer losses in production and processing
- Careful planning of meals and purchase
- Appropriate packaging and storage
- Sensible menu offers and portion sizes
- Creative use of leftovers

Food saving starts when items are purchased. With good planning (including leftovers), food waste can be largely avoided.

### Maintaining a Balanced Diet

- More fruits, vegetables, nuts and vegetable fats
- Moderate meat consumption and more plant-based alternatives
- Less animal fats and fewer sweet and salty foods

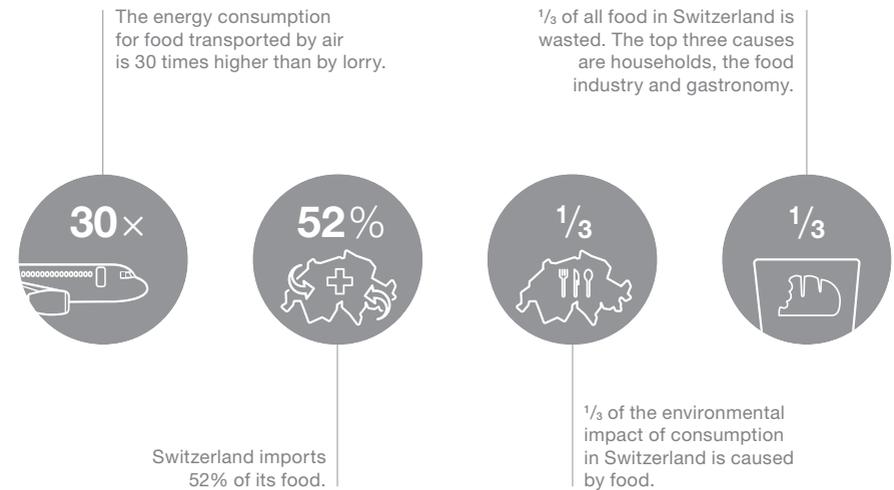
A balanced, varied diet based on plant products promotes health and protects the environment.

### Choosing Sustainable Products

If there are several variants of a product or product group to choose from:

- Choose seasonal products from the region
- Buy products that are environmentally and socially sustainable

Purchasing seasonal products avoids greenhouses heated with fossil fuels. If seasonal products are regionally sourced, short transport routes are ensured, and the local economy is supported. Products with recognised labels ensure that defined environmental and social standards are met.



## Objectives for the City's Food Establishments

The City of Zurich wants to become more sustainable, including in terms of food. It is committed to greater sustainability along the entire value chain – from farm to fork. Three objectives have been established::

Role model in the city's food establishments

Sustainable criteria for procurement

Information and offers for all

The following binding targets have been set for the 450 food establishments by 2030:

1. Avoidable food losses are less than 10% of the production volume.
2. The menu complies with the recommendations of the Swiss food pyramid.
3. The proportion of sustainable products is 50%; products of particular concern are not used at all.
4. The environmental impact of food is reduced by 30%, compared with the year 2020.

By completely improving the food system – reducing food waste, promoting a balanced diet, selecting sustainable products – its ecological footprint can be reduced by 45%.



A balanced, varied diet protects not only individual health, but also the environment.

## Information and Education

What does a healthy and ecological diet look like? What do children, the elderly and office workers need? The City of Zurich is committed to ensuring that its population has easy access to information about healthy, sustainable and enjoyable food. In doing so, it relies on cooperation with numerous partners in business, science and society.

«Education for Sustainable Development» is a high priority in Lehrplan 21. The topic of food is taught in greater detail in home economics lessons, in over 80 school gardens and in many other subjects. To further expand its existing commitment, the city is promoting the idea that teachers at primary, secondary and vocational schools receive further training in ecological and healthy nutrition at the appropriate levels. In order to cope with the growing number of pupils, the nature school programme is being expanded. In addition, people with small budgets are to be targeted with suitable offers.

The city is paying special attention to the employees of its establishments. Appropriate training courses will ensure that sustainable food is also addressed in the municipal apprenticeship programme.



Only those who are aware of the added value of a sustainable food item can make targeted decisions.



## Regional Production and Distribution

There are almost 30 farms in the City of Zurich – about one tenth of the urban area is used for agriculture. In addition, there are more than 5000 traditional allotments, over 80 school gardens and numerous communally used green spaces. This diversity enables the population to experience the cultivation of agricultural products or to get involved in it themselves.

The city wants to further strengthen awareness of the links between food, health and the environment by offering interested parties additional opportunities to actively participate in food production and animal husbandry. The various concerns regarding land use will be taken into account.

Various food products from the surrounding area can be found at weekly markets and in farm shops. Such products make an important contribution to regional value creation. It is therefore all the more gratifying that more and more grocery stores are also focusing on regional product lines. A strong regional agriculture sector expands the range of regional and seasonal products. This is further contributed to by the joint positioning and coordinated distribution of goods by producers from the Zurich area. The city supports the marketing of products by city farmers and informs the population about places where they can buy produce from the city and region. Innovative, sustainable projects and initiatives receive support in their implementation.



The purchase of regional products guarantees short transport routes and supports the local economy. If fruit and vegetables are bought in season, greenhouses heated with fossil fuels can be avoided.



## Procurement and Catering

Zurich's 450 food establishments provide around 7 million meals per year. Together, they can make a difference on behalf of the climate and environment. The City of Zurich takes various sustainability criteria into account, both during procurement and within establishments. In schools, the focus is on a healthy, mainly plant-based diet that is moderately combined with fish and meat. In five of the city's staff restaurants, guests are offered climate-friendly menus.

The city wants to make its food services even more sustainable by throwing away less food, offering more balanced menus and buying more sustainable products. Young and old guests alike should be able to choose from sustainable, enjoyable menus, whether they are children at in-school meal facilities, senior citizens in nursing homes, municipal employees or visitors.

Public restaurants and businesses who would like to make their menu more sustainable can receive coaching from a specialist on request.



A sustainable diet is colourful, varied and enjoyable.

## Food Waste and Disposal

The good news first: awareness of the problem of food waste has increased significantly in recent years. The bad news is that every year, one third of food in Switzerland remains untouched and ends up being wasted.

To counteract this, the City of Zurich launched a pilot project in 2016 to collect data on food waste. The establishments involved – city hospitals and nursing homes – measured their food waste, cooperated to draw up a catalogue of measures and successfully implemented many of them. The city's other catering businesses have not been idle either. Among other steps, they are already distributing leftover meals to those in need.

The city wants to further reduce food waste. In its own establishments, it will collect key figures from across the board and implement targeted improvement measures. The distribution of non-consumed food is to be developed further and, if possible, expanded. The City of Zurich also wants to avoid other types of waste as much as possible – by using reusable containers or reducing unnecessary packaging, for example. Everything else will be recycled or disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

The citizens of Zurich can also dispose of their kitchen waste and various packaging materials in an environmentally friendly way. At the Werdhölzli recycling centre, such disposal is used to produce biogas, compost, fertiliser and new recycling materials. The city is also working to ensure that organisers of major events take measures against food waste and make use of organic waste disposal.



Food waste can be avoided by good menu planning and the creative use of leftovers.



Sustainable food from A to Z – the City of Zurich cannot achieve this ambitious goal alone. It is therefore working intensively with partners. These include the federal government, canton and municipalities, suppliers, scientific institutions, non-profit organisations and many more. It is important that the city and its partners share available knowledge and exploit synergies, particularly in specific projects. A reliable exchange between departments, and also between partners, forms the basis of this cooperation.

Meaningful key figures are an important success factor for improving the sustainability of municipal food establishments. They make progress visible, lay the foundation for further improvements and serve to communicate internally and externally.

The City of Zurich has set for itself the goal of reducing the negative impact of its food establishments on the environment by 30% by 2030. To this end, the existing key figures are being further developed and established across the board in all municipal establishments. Improvements throughout the city shall also be visible. The city and its partners are therefore defining suitable indicators and collecting data on a regular basis.



Key figures and indicators make progress visible and lay the foundation for further improvements.





As individual as dining cultures, geographical conditions and taste preferences are, so too are the range of solutions for enjoyable and sustainable food. Image: Thomas Käser

## Further Information

The development of the City of Zurich's Sustainable Food Strategy is based on the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and scientific findings. A more detailed discussion of the technical principles and concrete measures can be found in the city's Sustainable Food Strategy publication.

[www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ernaehrung](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ernaehrung)

Would you like to find out more about the City of Zurich's activities in the field of sustainable food or to support the implementation of the strategy with your own project? Then the Planning & Projects team looks forward to hearing from you.

[ugz-ernaehrung@zuerich.ch](mailto:ugz-ernaehrung@zuerich.ch)

Would you like to make a personal contribution to sustainable food in Zurich? How can sustainable food be implemented in everyday life with simple guidelines?

[www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ernaehrungstipps](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ernaehrungstipps)



## **Our Details**

City of Zurich  
Environmental and Health Protection Service  
Department of Nutrition  
Yvonne Lötscher  
Lisa Halter  
Tel. +41 44 412 11 74  
[www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ernaehrung](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ernaehrung)  
[ugz-ernaehrung@zuerich.ch](mailto:ugz-ernaehrung@zuerich.ch)  
September 2020