Composting & Recycling

Each year, Cornell Dining compacts about 450 tons of food scraps and organic waste from our WY Love to Eat dining rooms and our retail dining eateries. Our chefs and food preparers compost all in our kitchen facilities (gas–consumer composting), and our customers can compost their waste (post-consumer composting) at Dining, Martha’s Café, Marriott Café, Ivy Room, Highky Diner, Synagoga Café, Iron Wall, and One World Café.

Farm Services collects organic waste from Cornell Dining and composts it at Cornell’s Industrial Compost Facility. The end product is used for campus landscaping, university experimental farms, and sold to local landscape companies.

You’ll also find that all of our FreshTake Grab-n-Go products are packaged in completely compostable containers, including the label, and nearly all of the serviceware and disposable cups we provide in our dining locations are compostable.

Menu items that are not compostable are recyclable. CornellDining strives to divert as much waste from landfill as possible. Customers may recycle glass bottles, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and newspapers in all Cornell Dining eateries.

Cornell Dining: Committed to building a more sustainable food system

Cornell Dining is continuously working to enhance our sustainable practices and reduce our carbon footprint.

In January 2012, Cornell University received a STARS Gold rating for sustainability from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

Cornell Dining is proud to have received full marks for our efforts to reduce landfill, energy and water waste, in addition to providing a diverse array of sustainable and local food choices.

With the help of two part-time Student Sustainability Coordinators – and with collaboration from student groups and campus colleagues – we have introduced numerous innovations in cultures in recent years. Look inside for an overview!

Committed to building a more sustainable food system

Local & Regional Foods

Every day Cornell Dining is helping to build a more sustainable food system, locally, regionally, and within New York State. Through our Local Food Growers Initiative, we purchase approximately 2% of our total food from regionally grown, raised, and processed sources.

To help our customers make better-informed decisions, we’ve defined terms to help track where our food comes from and where it is processed:

**Local** — Within 100 miles of Cornell or within NY state

**Regional** — Between 100 and 250 miles from Cornell

Cornell Dining partners closely with the local farming community to purchase fresh seasonal produce and dairy products, grains, beans, meat, poultry, baked goods, maple syrup, honey, sausages, and spreads. We source food from more than 25 regional growers through our supplier, Minnek Express, and also purchase regularly from Cornell Orchards, Cornell Dairy, Canna-Pure Organics, Rhac’s Bakery, and Ithaca Salsa.

Through our local beef program, we source ground beef raised locally—and without growth hormones and daily antibiotics—in one of our most active retail locations, the Ivy Room.

Help us celebrate our New York farmers and merchants—and sample delicious local foods—at our annual Fall Harvest Dinner, hosted each September. Learn more at dining.cornell.edu.

Vegetarian & Vegan Offerings

Studies show that reducing your meat consumption is one of the most impactful ways you can reduce your carbon footprint. With more students eating fewer animal products due to environmental and health reasons, Cornell Dining is proud to offer a variety of vegetarian and vegan options across campus.

In fact, in November 2012 Cornell was ranked #2 in PETA’s Most Vegan-Friendly Colleges!

Our culinary team is trained in accommodating a variety of meatless diets and creating dishes popular among students from across the globe. Vegetarian and vegan items are clearly labeled on our menu boards, at food stations, and on packaging. Each dining room has its own unique options, many of which rotate, so exploring new meat is never boring. Try our One World Café in Rhoades Taylor Hall for a menu featuring only vegetarian and vegan offerings, many prepared with locally grown produce.

Responsible Coffee Sourcing

Since 2002, Cornell Dining has provided Fair Trade coffee in all of our dining rooms, cafes, food courts, and coffee houses. Fair Trade guarantees a set price to coffee growers, enabling them to implement sustainable farming practices, become more self-sufficient and less vulnerable to market price fluctuations, and improve the quality of life in their communities.

Energy, Water, & Resource Conservation

In order to reduce food waste and electrical use, and to save thousands of gallons of water each month, Cornell Dining has introduced trayless dining in the majority of our dining rooms. When purchasing new kitchen equipment, we select Energy Star-rated appliances to reduce our energy use even further.

Cornell Dining has also partnered with the student-led Take Back the Tap initiative by providing easy and free access to filtered tap water at all of our soda fountain stations, and selling reusable stainless steel water bottles at Bear Necessities and Cornell Café. Take the “Take Back the Tap” pledge at takebackthetapcornell.wordpress.com to help reduce water bottle waste and the energy required to produce and ship water bottles, and to help support public water infrastructure.

To further help reduce waste, Cornell Dining offers reusable coffee mugs for sale at all of our coffee houses and cafes, with discounted prizes when reusable mugs are used.

Sustainable Seafood

In July 2012, Cornell became the first Ivy League university to earn the Marine Stewardship Council’s (MSC) Chain of Custody certification for sourcing seafood from sustainable wild capture fisheries.

The MSC maintains the most widely respected and accepted global standard for monitoring and verifying the impact of fisheries on the marine environment, and for recognizing and rewarding sustainable fishing practices.