



FOOD CHOICE ARCHITECTURE PLAYBOOK

Strategically designing the dining experience to
promote nutritious and sustainable food choices



ONE PLATE



ONE PLANET



WHAT IS FOOD CHOICE ARCHITECTURE?

Food choice architecture considers all aspects of how food choices are framed to design a dining experience that makes it easier and more desirable to make healthy and sustainable food choices, while still offering a wide range of food options.





THE INTERSECTION OF HEALTHY & SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHOICES

Protein has been determined by the Menus of Change initiative, and related platforms, to be the single most important area of change with respect to advancing healthier, more sustainable menus. We aim to reimagine protein on our menus and in our operations, adopting plant-forward shifts focused on deliciousness and culinary exploration, to entice a new generation of eaters towards dietary patterns that optimize nutrition within planetary boundaries

Plant-Forward

A style of cooking and eating that emphasizes and celebrates, but is not limited to, plant-based foods—including fruits and vegetables (produce); whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses) and soy foods; nuts and seeds; plant oils; and herbs and spices—and that reflects evidence-based principles of health and sustainability.

Source: Menus of Change, a joint initiative of the CIA and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health—Department of Nutrition. For more information, please visit: www.menusofchange.org

A ROADMAP TO REDUCING FOOD-RELATED GHG EMISSIONS

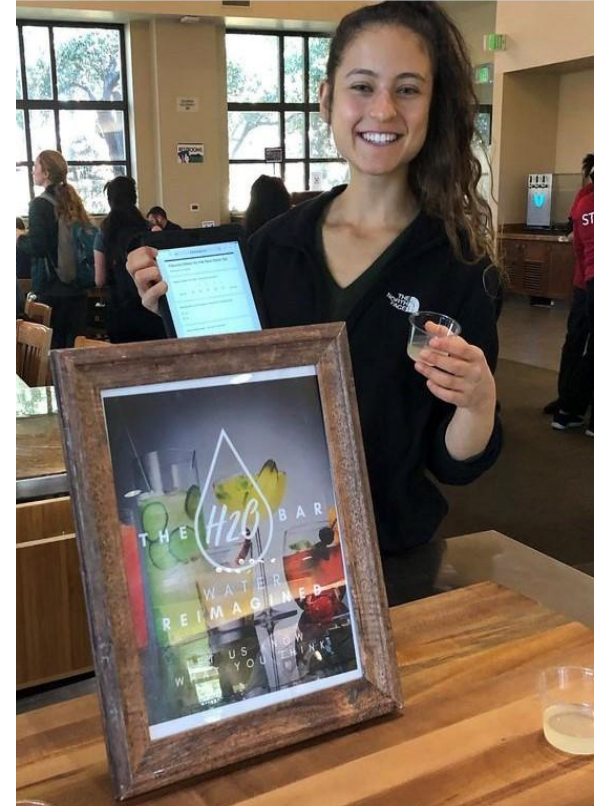
In 2022, R&DE Stanford Dining, Hospitality & Auxiliaries committed to reducing our food-related greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2030

	Change		Change
Beef	↓ 33%	Seafood	↑ 30%
Poultry	↓ 25%	Legumes	↑ 110%
Pork	↓ 25%	Nuts/Seeds	↑ 65%
Dairy	↓ 33%	Grains	↑ 20%
Eggs	↓ 33%		

To achieve a 25% food- related GHG reduction by 2030, and to enhance the health and wellbeing of our students, we commit to creating plant-forward shifts across our dining programs and food purchases.

☼ THE BIG PICTURE

As co-founders of the MCURC, and as Stanford is one of the world's leading research institutions, research is in R&DE Stanford Dining, Hospitality & Auxiliaries' DNA. Through the Stanford Food Institute, we partner with faculty and students to study the food environment at Stanford and adopt a "research mindset" in our operations to design transformative food experiences that inspire healthy, more sustainable eating practices.



ENGAGING STUDENTS IN RESEARCH THAT USES DINING HALLS AS LIVING LABORATORIES



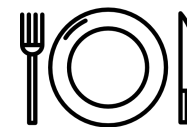
OUR TOOLKIT OF STRATEGIES



Menu Mix



Defaults



Portions



Placement



Presentation



**Promotion &
Prompts**



Menu Mix

Aligning with Menus of Change Principles for Healthy, Sustainable Menus

THE RIGHT BALANCE OF FOOD OPTIONS

Our menus are a reflection of our values and commitments to offer a variety of delicious, healthy, and sustainable choices. Increasing the availability and frequency of nutritious and environmentally conscious menu items offers diners more opportunities to enjoy these foods and promotes them as the “norm” to encourage better food choices.

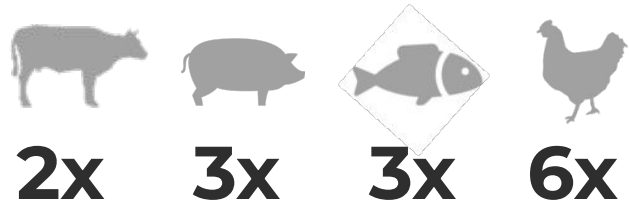


PLANT FORWARD

50%

Half of all entrees on our menu are entirely plant-based with a plant protein source like beans, lentils, tofu, or meat alternatives. Our chefs continuously develop new recipes that inspire all students to eat more plants.





R&DE Stanford Dining implements protein templates across our menus that determine how frequently meat, poultry, and seafood are served in alignment with MOC Principles.



PROTEIN TEMPLATES

THE PERFORMANCE BAR

Our robust performance bars offer a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables along with craveable chef-crafted composed salads, legumes, whole grains, and house-made dressings at every meal.



CASE STUDY: DINING HALLS AS LIVING LABORATORIES

Removing burgers from the grill and instead offering them once every three weeks as a burger bar **reduced the amount of beef burgers served by 30%** and increased student satisfaction





Defaults

Making delicious, healthy, and sustainable food the norm

A “TYPICAL” MEAL REIMAGINED

We promote foods that are delicious, healthy, and sustainable as the default option whenever possible. This approach makes our menus more inclusive to a wide range of dietary needs and preferences, while making it more convenient for diners to opt for a meal that promotes personal and planetary health. Our globally inspired menus celebrate the many traditional cuisines throughout the world that are innately plant-based.



MEAT AS A CONDIMENT



All plated salads, grain bowls, and pastas are plant-based by default -- meat, poultry, egg or cheese can be offered on the side or by request as optional additions



30%

All mixed dishes containing meat (such as stir-fries, casseroles, and soups) are served as a vegetable blend with at least 30% plant-based ingredients by default. All beef burgers are a 30% mushroom blend.



**VEGETABLE
BLENDS**

REIMAGINING RECIPES

Whenever possible, healthier and more sustainable ingredients and cooking practices are the default. Our purchasing standards ensure that we source foods that are grown, raised, and processed in ways that support human and planetary health, and our chefs are trained on culinary nutrition to design recipes that are both delicious and nutritious





Portions

A strategy to promote mindful consumption and reduce food waste

EMPHASIZING QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Offering appropriate portions is a *win-win* strategy that helps to promote mindful eating, reduce food waste, and maintain costs while offering diners greater flexibility to take the amount of food that is right for them. Behavioral research shows that people are primed to assume the amount of food they are served is how much they should eat, so we are conscious to offer portion sizes in alignment with dietary guidelines for personal and planetary health.



3 oz

All composed dishes contain no more than 3 ounces of beef, pork, or poultry per serving. Demonstration plates that promote daily menu offerings model smaller portions of meat and poultry.

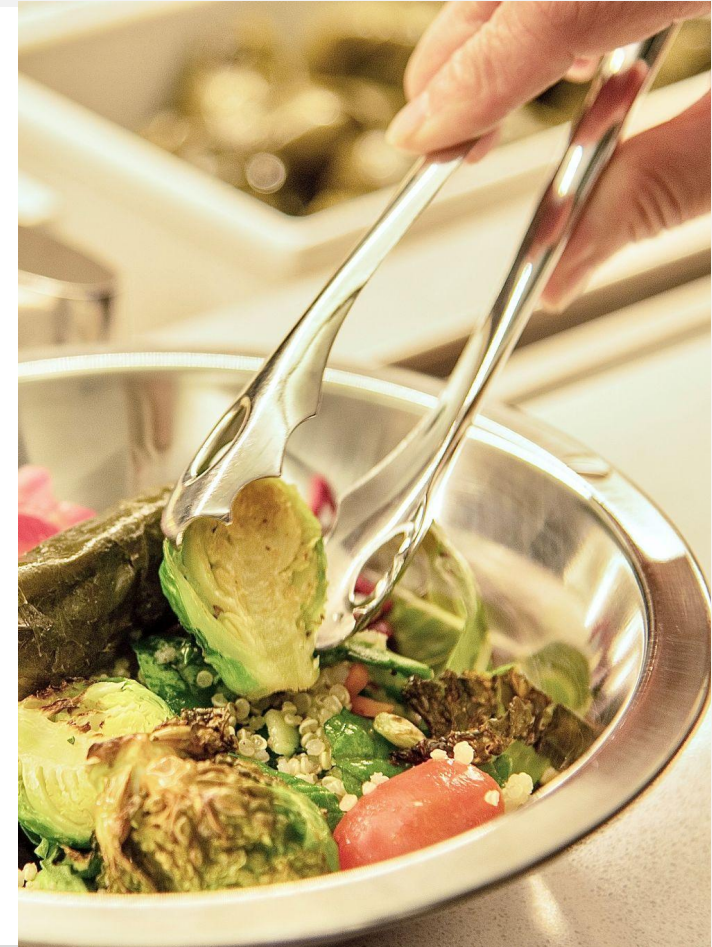


PROPER PORTIONING

SCALE DOWN SERVING UTENSILS

↓ **25%**

We utilize serving utensils, plates, and bowls that are 25% smaller to inherently reduce portion sizes and minimize surplus food that contributes to food waste.



☐☐☐ PORTIONS



We adopt a “less meat, better meat” philosophy and aim to source high quality, humanely raised meat and poultry in smaller portions, using bone-in cuts that promote more mindful consumption.



SOURCE IT SMALLER

CASE STUDY: DINING HALLS AS LIVING LABORATORIES

A student intern's capstone project compared satiety levels and satisfaction of students who consumed a quinoa, black bean, and roasted vegetable bowl with 2 oz or 4 oz of chicken.

There was no significant difference in hunger or satisfaction between the two groups, indicating that students can feel equally satisfied and full when offered composed dishes with smaller portions of meat.





Placement

Putting healthy and sustainable menu options front and center

THE BETTER CHOICE IS THE EASY CHOICE

Behavioral science demonstrates that increasing accessibility and prominence of healthier and more sustainable foods can promote better food choices. We design our dining spaces with this in mind, ensuring that healthier and more sustainable options are presented in the most convenient and desirable locations whenever possible. Considering the flow of the dining environment, plant-based options are always placed first in line, which research indicates can promote consumption.



ORDER OF OPERATIONS



We place plant foods like vegetables, fruit, beans, whole grains, and plant-based entrees first along the serving line to encourage diners to fill up their plates with plants.





Presentation

Employing culinary techniques that draw attention towards plant-based options

LOOKS GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

Psychological insights demonstrate that when faced with multiple options, people tend to focus attention on those that are most prominent or aesthetically pleasing. Presenting healthy and sustainable foods in more appealing ways has been shown to increase their consumption and perceived tastiness. We focus extra attention on presenting produce, beans, whole grains, and plant-based dishes in a way that makes them look as delicious and enticing as possible. This includes use of attractive dishes, creative plating techniques, and garnishes to add color and interest.



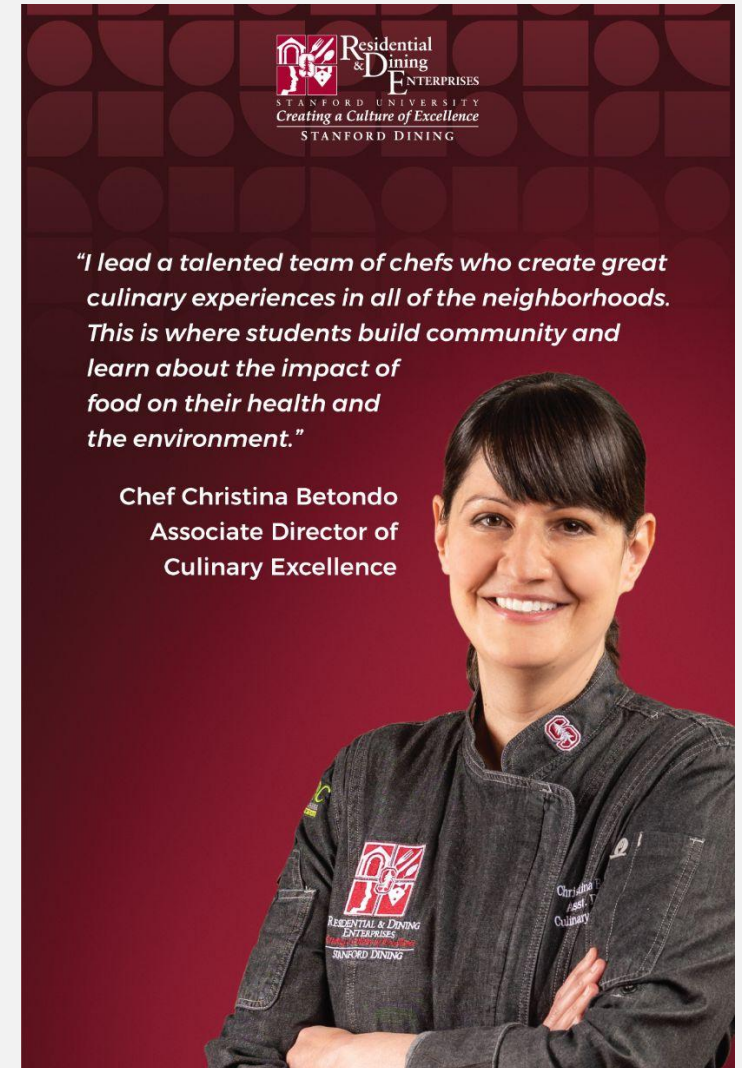


Promotion & Prompts

SEE HOW ENJOYABLE HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE EATING CAN BE

LEADING WITH FLAVOR

We know that taste is the most important driver of food choices, so we lead with flavor in all of our marketing while also promoting transparency of ingredients, allergens, preparation, and sourcing practices. Our chefs use their platforms as trusted food and flavor experts to encourage healthy and sustainable eating practices. We educate and inspire our students with fresh, seasonal ingredients that have peak flavor and nutrition to help them build a deeper connection with their food, and gain an understanding of food's importance for personal and planetary health.



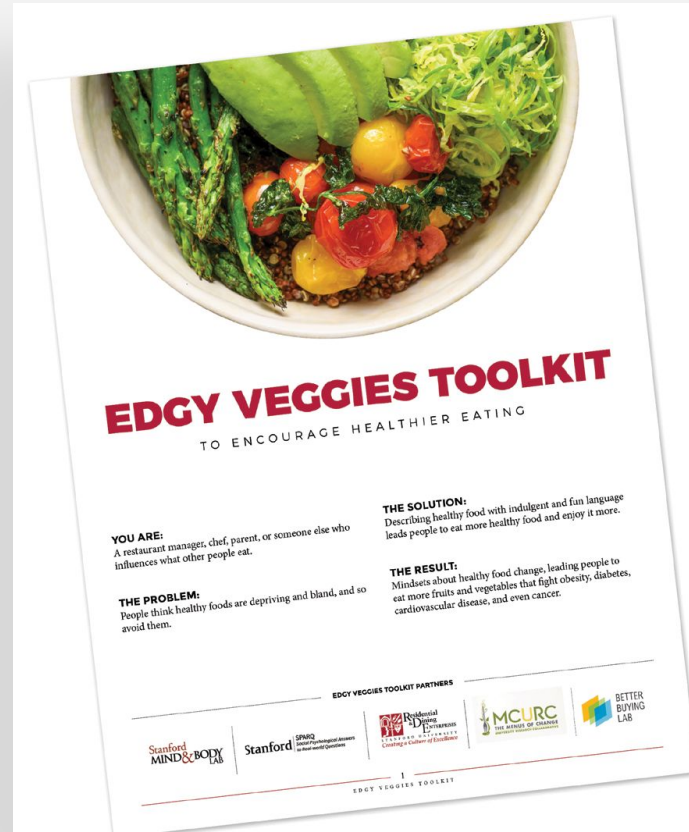


LABELING

Printed menu labels identify all ingredients, allergens, dietary traits, and sustainability attributes in a dish at the point of service. Colored icons assist diners with easily identifying food options that meet their needs and preferences.



TASTE-FOCUSED LANGUAGE



Taste-focused language is used in all menus and promotions to reframe healthy and plant-forward dishes with **flavorful, fun, and delicious language** which Stanford research shows can promote consumption and enjoyment of these foods.

DYNAMIC NORMS MESSAGING



Our Meatless Burgers Are on the Rise

From lunch to late night, we offer a variety of options for you to enjoy

Stanford research indicates people make more sustainable choices when they believe those decisions reflect changing social norms (“dynamic norms”).

Whenever possible, **we highlight the increasing popularity of plant-based foods** to encourage healthier, more sustainable food choices.





CHEFS AS INFLUENCERS

Stanford research demonstrates that students are more likely to choose a plant-forward dish (and enjoy it!) when it's being promoted by a chef. Our chefs create **transformative food experiences** that **inspire students to make healthier, more sustainable food choices** through chef specials, tastings, and communications with diners.



QUESTIONS?

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