



## Sustainability Practices

### DINING OPTIONS

Sustainability is integrated into every aspect of Shedd Aquarium's operations. A conservation ethic permeates our culture, energizes our staff and volunteers, inspires our guests and colleagues, and is based on a vision for a global environment in which ecosystems are healthy, understood and valued.

Providing sustainable dining options to our 2 million guests poses daily challenges, which have inspired flexibility, innovation and many creative solutions.

Your organization can become more sustainable too! Use our best practices as a starting point or create your own strategy for sustainability. A key ingredient is a commitment to routinely assessing the overall impact of your decisions and making choices that support a healthy bottom line for your business and the environment.

### FOOD SERVICES

Shedd Aquarium has three eateries for our guests' convenience: Bubble Net food court, Soundings café and Deep Ocean café. From flatware to napkins, the environmental impacts of each restaurant product influence our purchases. Whether or not a product is right for us depends on factors such as the energy and materials required to create it and the disposal options when it reaches the end of its useful life. Often, the sustainable and reusable products prove to be the most cost-effective.

### SUSTAINABLE FOOD

You may notice that we don't have much beef on the menu. Cattle are among the biggest water "hogs" in the food world, so we restrict beef to less than 10 percent of our offerings. Water conservation measures extend to our beverages; we've removed bottled water from the Soundings menu and instead offer tap water on request. While it's challenging to find local food sources for our high-demand operation, we work with area farmers and vendors wherever possible to bring Midwest-raised food to our tables.

We also offer shade-grown organic coffee, organic meals and vegetarian and gluten-free menu choices.





## WASTE MANAGEMENT

We've replaced disposable products with long-lived reusable trays, plates, glasses, cups and flatware in Soundings and our catering business. Throughout our food service, bulk condiment dispensers, coffee-service items and refillable salt and pepper shakers reduce the waste generated by each customer. We even chose table surfaces that are durable and easy to clean, eliminating the need for linen tablecloths.

Our comprehensive recycling and composting programs help limit Shedd's garbage. In addition to recycling cardboard, glass, aluminum cans and plastic bottles, we've found programs for a range of items unique to the food industry, including fryer oil, pickle buckets and wine corks. If an item isn't recyclable under available systems, we search for more environmentally friendly alternatives.

Our compost program handles leftover produce and bread scraps, brown paper towels, coffee grounds and biodegradable food containers. When we do have to place items in the garbage, we use a pulper to significantly reduce the volume of trash going to a landfill. The food services staff regularly works with Shedd's sustainable practices department to identify new opportunities to expand its recycling and composting programs.

## EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

Little changes make a big difference. Even with our Energy-Star appliances, we no longer turn all of our equipment on at once; instead, we've developed a schedule so each piece can be powered up when it's needed. With a bit of planning, frozen foods thaw in the refrigerator instead of under running water. By replacing the garbage disposals with our pulper, we significantly reduced our water use, and staff members are trained to use dishwashers only on an as-needed basis.

## GREEN PURCHASING

We stock our kitchens with green products. We buy paper products and cups made from post-consumer materials. Our menu includes local items whenever possible to shrink our carbon footprint. If you order food to go, you'll probably receive your meal in one of our compostable or recyclable containers. We purchase only environmentally friendly cleaning products to not only help the environment but also protect the health of our employees and our animals.

