

Sustainable Sourcing at Bristol Zoo Gardens

Since 2003, Levy Restaurants has managed the day visitor catering at Bristol Zoo Gardens, which attracts 600,000 visitors to its beautiful grounds all year round.

The outlets include the Coral Restaurant Deli and Bakery, Coral Café, and three kiosks – Ice Cream Parlour, Pizzeria and Hungry Monkey kiosk. They also have extensive hospitality facilities where they cater for an array of weddings and events.

Over the last 7 years, Levy has worked closely with the Zoo's 'Green Team' to support the implementation of an Environmental Management System to ISO14001 standard and put improvements in place to reduce their impact on the environment.

Sustainable sourcing is a priority for Bristol Zoo Gardens. The team of chefs freshly prepare each day's menu using fresh, local, seasonal and ethical ingredients. Here's how they do it:

Buying Local

We're as individual as our loaves!

All bread and bakery products come in fresh from Pullins, the oldest bakery in North Somerset (est. 1925), and Hobbs House Bakery, a family business in the Cotswolds. All are baked daily by qualified bakers using British flour, traditional methods and family recipes. They don't buy everything in though – The bread is delivered to the Zoo daily and used to make all of the fresh sandwiches, and their pastry chef, Tracy bakes all of the cakes on site!

Who made all the pies?

The Zoo is one of the many local traders that support Tom's Pies, purveyors of multi-award winning delicious pies, handmade in Devon. They are created from only the best and freshest free range ingredients, sourced in the West Country where possible. The pies contain no artificial preservatives, additives or colourings.

Ice cream fresh from the farm!

The ice cream comes from Marshfield Farm, a Soil Association approved local supplier just 16km from the Zoo. Every process from cow through to cone is carried out on the farm itself, and has been so for the past 25 years. What makes the ice cream so special is that 60% of the tub is real organic milk, produced from 200 Friesian cows on their 1,000 acre farm. Every ingredient in the ice creams is natural and ingredients are carefully selected - 75% of their ingredients are within a 50 mile radius of the farm.

Ales Good!

Bristol Zoo has been serving local beer and cider from Bath Ales for the past five years. Bath Ales use British barley and hops to produce their famous ales, which are brewed and bottled on site. Their spent grain is used by local farmers as livestock feed, and spent hops and yeast are turned into fertiliser.

"As an organisation committed to safeguarding wildlife, Bristol Zoological Society welcomes the emphasis Levy Restaurants place on sustainable sourcing and ethical buying.

As a family attraction, cemented in Bristol's history, we cannot afford to compromise on quality. Levy Restaurants has always delivered on quality, whilst meeting the sustainable requirements laid out in our mission statement."

Wendy Walton,

Director of commercial operations,
Bristol Zoo Gardens

Cheddar is Gorge-ous!

England has a long, rich history of cheese-making that continues today: More than 700 types of cheese are produced in the country, according to the British Cheese Board. So they've swapped out their French cheese and replaced them with local favourites Somerset Cheddar (where it originates from) and Somerset Brie.

Buying British

Bristol Zoo supports British by working with farmers and growers to use local and regional ingredients. This includes:

- British milk, sugar, flour, and butter
- Farm assured British beef, lamb and chicken
- Free range British eggs
- Organic British wines, with plastic bottle options
- UK farmed salmon

Buying Responsibly

Where they can't source locally or within Britain, they make sure it is as ethical and sustainable as possible. For example:

- All wild caught fish is Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) approved
- They have stopped selling tuna altogether
- All coffee is Fairtrade, organic and Rain Forest Alliance certified
- All tea, hot chocolate, bananas and sugar is Fairtrade
- They are working to remove palm oil from their ingredients
- The picnic benches are made out of recycled plastic bags
- The patio furniture uses FSC certified teak

What's next?

Levy Restaurants will continue to work closely with Bristol Zoo and Compass Group's supply chain to keep making improvements. The team's next project is to source more sustainable options for catering consumables (e.g. disposable cups, cutlery, and takeaway packaging). They are also busy preparing for the Sustainable Restaurant Association accreditation, and making plans for 2015, when Bristol becomes European Green Capital.

What about you?

If you have a good environment story to tell, or would like support or advice with your environmental objectives, please contact Celena Fernandez, Environment Manager for Compass Group UK & Ireland: Celena.Fernandez@compass-group.co.uk