

Sustainability trends that may impact the hospitality and food industry in 2023

Sustainability has become a top priority for many industries and the South African hospitality industry is no exception. The increasing demand for eco-friendly and socially responsible tourism has led to sustainable food trends in hotels, resorts and restaurants.



Source: Sandra Seitamaa via [Unsplash](#)

This is the opinion of Etresia Booysen, a senior lecturer at the IIE's School of Hospitality & Service Management in Rosebank, Johannesburg. Booysen is passionate about sustainability and is currently studying for her doctoral studies in food service management. The topic for her thesis is **Water Management in Johannesburg Restaurants**, the first study of its kind undertaken in South Africa.

"As the hospitality industry grows, sustainable food practices and their execution expands. But we have to understand just what encompasses sustainable food," explains Booysen:

"Sustainable food can be classified as food with agricultural practices such as the contribution to local economies, the protection and welfare of plants and animals, the avoidance of damage or waste of natural resources and making provision for social benefits such as safe quality products and educational opportunities."

She shares some of the new sustainable food trends in the hospitality industry forecast for this year.

Farm-to-table: It has become more popular to source ingredients directly from the farmer in local areas. This helps with reducing the transportation between suppliers leading to lower emissions and growth of the local economy.

Plant-based options: More and more vegan and vegetarian options are becoming available on restaurant menus as consumers change to plant-based lifestyles which is beneficial to the environment.

Sustainable seafood: Restaurants and hotels have become more conscious of sustainable fisheries and supporting the world's seas and oceans. One of these steps is sourcing only from those certified sustainable suppliers that practice ecological fishing.

Composting and waste production: Given that the hospitality industry generates such a vast amount of waste, it is vital that it takes responsibility to reduce waste. Reusable and recyclable options have drastically changed, with polystyrene being replaced by recycled carton boxes and a ban on single-use plastics.

Booyesen continues: "These trends are changing the way culinary school and hospitality management students are taught, with lecturers bringing awareness to the classroom to ensure ease of adaptability to new trends within the industry.

"Sustainability is becoming an important factor in the food choices of consumers and the hospitality industry is responding by adopting sustainable food practices. From sourcing ingredients locally to reducing food waste, the industry is working to reduce its impact on the environment and provide consumers with healthier, more viable options."

So how do we make restaurants and patrons care more about the environment?

"Awareness and training are very important. If the hospitality industry is the forerunner of environmental awareness, it can cause a ripple effect and extend to other industries. I don't think people understand the vastness of employment opportunities that the hospitality industry has; it can affect more industries than just the accommodation and food and beverage industries.

"Sustainability in the hospitality industry can affect corporates, banks, procurement, tourism, accommodation, restaurants, air, land and sea travel and so much more. Hospitality equals customer service. Customer service should include sustainable practices," she concludes.

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