

# Bento - Our Sustainability Policy

## Our Belief

### **We believe everyone deserves to eat in colour**

- We love the colour and variety of our oceans, forests, and fields. We embrace and celebrate diversity, wellness, and innovation amongst our teams, locations, and suppliers.
- We believe in serving the freshest, most flavoursome and authentic sushi and Asian food while making sure that the world stays as colourful as it can be.
- As a business with over 950 chef based locations and 6 factories across North America we recognize the role we have to play in behaving responsibly and ethically; across our supply chains, as a committed employer, within the communities in which we operate and as part of the natural world which we all rely upon to exist.
- We are continuously striving forward to improve our sustainability performance, by embedding sustainability into our business strategy and using the power and influence of the Bento brand as a force for good.

## Our Promise

At Bento, we strive to be the best that we can be in all that we do. This includes making the best decisions we can on difficult and complex sustainability issues. To ensure we are making the right choices for our business, our planet and our people, we promise:

- To be open, honest and fair.
- To take a measured, informed and realistic, approach to decision making, (which means not making reactive decisions that could end up with unintended consequences). We will investigate all options and alternatives which may not be the quickest solution but will be the optimal solution for the situation.
- To be trustworthy, transparent and honest about what we can achieve.
- To constantly challenge ourselves to be as sustainable as we can be.
- To work hand in hand with our partners to align with their sustainability programs where possible

## Our Commitment

**We are committed to continuously improving our sustainability performance and we will focus on where we can make the most significant difference.**

- Continuous improvement has always been an important part of our DNA and in today's' rapidly changing world, now more than ever before, we recognize the need to continuously assess our impacts and improve our performance wherever we can.
- This Sustainability Policy has been developed alongside our [Responsible Sourcing Guide for Suppliers](#) and our [Responsible Seafood Policy](#) to help us to become a more sustainable business.

- We are comprehensively mapping out our business to better understand where our biggest impacts are and where we have the best opportunities to make a positive difference.
- We acknowledge that we cannot tackle everything at once, especially given the current industry headwinds. We are developing SMART 2021 Sustainability Targets to help prioritize our efforts, guide and challenge us to be the best we can be.
- Our sustainability strategy is based upon a 3 pillar framework and focuses on areas where we feel we can best reduce our most significant impacts.
- The 3 pillars are: Sourcing, Society and Waste Reduction

## **SOURCING**

We recognize that we are only as sustainable as the suppliers from whom we buy our products. Sustainability is integrated into our buying practices and we work closely with our suppliers to continuously improve our sustainability performance.

### **Fish & Seafood**

Responsibly sourcing high-quality seafood is very important to us. Refer to our Sustainable Seafood Policy for information on our minimum certification requirements for each seafood option.

### **Paper and Forest Derived Products**

We won't source any products from illegally harvested woods or wood fibers from controversial sources. We are in the process of switching over to FSC and/or PEFC certified office paper and by 2021 all the paper and cardboard that we use will also come from certified sources.

### **Soy, Palm Oil**

We are working with our suppliers to better understand our soy and palm oil "footprint" (current use, production standards, and processes in place, etc.) and are asking them to do the same with their suppliers further along the supply chain. We intend to strengthen our minimum buying standards in 2020 once we have identified where there are opportunities to do more.

## **SOCIETY**

We recognize that we are only as strong as our team members and the communities in which we operate. For Bento, sustainability is therefore as much about fostering a creative, fun, healthy and supportive working environment and local community as it is about looking after our oceans, forests, and farms.

### **A Great Place To Work**

With hundreds of locations across Canada and the United States, we provide opportunities in the community, close to home.

- Flexible working hours
- Comprehensive group health benefits plan for eligible employees
- Group retirement plan with company match for eligible employees
- Employee referral program incentives
- Employee service awards
- Annual performance/merit pay reviews
- Educational grants available for full-time employees
- Company-paid uniform
- On the job training that is focused on practical skills and teamwork
- A fun, friendly and diverse workplace environment
- A company that believes in promoting from within

## **Supporting Local Communities and Charities**

Founded in 2015, Bento Sushi Foundation's mission is to give back to our employees and the communities in which we serve through a variety of formats which include:

- Education grants for our employees and/or their children
- Charitable events and donations
- Sustainable seafood causes
- Japanese cultural events
- Community involvement and disaster relief
- Annual University Scholarships

**Since its inception, Bento has reinvested over \$400 000 into our local societies.**

### **Helping People Make Healthy Choices**

We pride ourselves on offering fresh and nutritious food, across our entire menu. To help people make healthier choices we have always provided calorie content information and allergen statements on our labels. Full nutritional information is available at our kiosks and on our website compliant with all Federal and/or Provincial/Regional legislation.

Our Food:

- Is fresh and seasonal
- Provides a variety of menu offerings to meet the economic needs of our customers
- Menu options which include Vegetarian, High Protein, Low fat, Less than 300 calories options
- Contains no MSG

## **ENVIRONMENT**

We recognize that to continue to provide the freshest, highest quality food, we need to protect the environments in which our food is grown, from field or fishery to fork. Our focus is on minimizing our demand on our natural resources and maximizing the efficiency with which we use them. We are shifting to a reduce, reuse and recycle approach (in that order wherever possible) to everything that we do, so that waste is seen as a resource, as part of a wider circular economy.

### **Packaging and Waste**

Waste management is an important sustainability component. As each of our items is served in a disposable container, we are committed to providing the best solution to reduce and impact our waste output. Our proprietary sushi packaging is produced in North America reducing transportation costs and supporting local economies. The packaging is PET 1 which is intended for one-time use only, BPA and Phthalates free and fully recyclable where facilities exist.

We removed the use of baran (thin green or red plastic) to separate ginger and wasabi in our sushi packs. Eliminating over 25 million pieces of plastic entering the waste management system.

More recently we have removed to straws from our retail store locations, we are removing single-use cups and single-use bottled water from our Head Office, Regional Offices and Factory locations. Additionally, we transitioned our 2 highest volume sized packages from black trays (which recycling facilities struggle to process) to clear plastic.

While this is a good start, we recognize that we need to do much more to reduce our packaging, plastic and waste impacts. After more than 2 years of product development, we are in the testing phase of a proprietary rice recipe that extends the shelf life to minimize our food waste. In 2020, we will be extending the testing phase to a larger scale and understand/measure the impact of waste reduction.

**Sticking to our Promises**

We are always striving to do more and to do the right thing. Our Sustainability Committee convenes (at minimum) quarterly to make sure we're on track to meet or beat our sustainability targets. We will review this policy on at least an annual basis to make sure that we're being the best business we can be.

**Finding Out More**

We are always eager to hear from our partners, customers and employees regarding how we are doing or we can do more to make a positive difference, so please reach out if you have any ideas or questions. [sustainability@bentosushi.com](mailto:sustainability@bentosushi.com)