



The World's 50 Best Restaurants – Sustainable Restaurant Award FAQs

How is the award judged/how do you determine a winner?

The winner is determined through a two-fold process. All entrants complete a questionnaire of over 50 questions and submit supporting documentation this gives them a % score. The top three high scorers are then judged by FMG based on both their responses and a qualitative assessment of other publicly available information such as their menus, their website, any other efforts they are undertaking to improve their sustainability and demonstration of their advocacy.

Why do you ask the questions you ask?

The questions we ask have been developed specifically for The World's 50 Best Restaurants, building on our experience of working with food service businesses for the last 10 years. They are based around three key pillars: sourcing, society and environment, and split into 10 key areas. For example, in the section on 'Sustainable fish', we ask: "Does your menu include any fish considered endangered, or at risk of becoming endangered?", as well as asking about the information presented to customers about the fish served, such as whether it's wild or farmed, its place of origin and capture method, amongst others.

How do you check the answers from the businesses?

Given the international nature of 50 Best, it isn't possible for us to visit all businesses that take part. We rely on the information provided to us and the supporting evidence we ask for. This can be in the form of a sustainability report, press releases, pictures or website info. We then also check the menus of the top scorers and, where possible, supplier information and standards. The approach seeks to strike the right balance between rigour and pragmatism. We take it as a mark of success that chef Christian Puglisi of Relae called the audit "A pain in the ass that took ages to complete but made us think about some things we hadn't considered before".

Is any restaurant ever "sustainable"?

Sustainability is not only about managing negative impacts, but also maximising positive ones and in that sense, there is no such thing as a definitive sustainable restaurant – there is always more that can be done to have a positive impact. For example, once direct impacts have been managed, restaurants can play a vital role in regenerating areas, bringing direct and indirect jobs and income, and benefiting local communities as well as those further afield through their supply chain. Chefs also have huge power to influence, impacting the food many of us eat and helping to raise awareness, shift diets and ensure a more sustainable future food system for all of us.

In the end, sustainability is a journey, not a destination – a sustainable restaurant is one that is constantly striving to deliver more social value with the lightest environmental impact.

What if someone is serving something ‘unsustainable’ but is doing lots of other great things?

Sustainability is both a complex subject and a journey for restaurants and our questions reflect the fact that there is neither one version of what a sustainable restaurant looks like nor a definitive “sustainable” restaurant. By assessing multiple elements of sustainability, we sometimes find that a restaurant’s excellence in some areas can outweigh obvious deficiencies in another. It is quite possible that an otherwise exemplary restaurant could be serving a mayonnaise using eggs from caged hens; their score would still be high, despite serving an “unsustainable” ingredient.

This holistic approach to sustainability that includes, among other things, food’s impact on climate, biodiversity, animal ethics and poverty alleviation also means that we sometimes have to compare things that are not directly comparable: is the top notch seafood sourcing of restaurant A more sustainable than the direct trade with coffee growers at Restaurant B?

Deciding a winner is therefore not always an easy process.

Who can enter? Is it compulsory for all restaurants on the 50 Best list?

All restaurants on the 50 Best list are eligible to enter; however, entry isn’t compulsory. We encourage all restaurants to enter as it can be an extremely useful exercise to understand how a business is currently performing from a sustainability perspective.

Do you always ask the same questions?

We review our questionnaire every year to ensure it reflects the latest science and thinking around sustainability. We aim to maintain an element of consistency for those businesses that take part year on year, however the nature of sustainability means that we may need to ask new questions occasionally.

I’ve entered and I would like to know how I’ve done

Once the awards have taken place and the winner announced, FMG follows up with a short report, detailing how each restaurant performed in the rating. If a venue would like more specific information following the report, they can follow up directly with FMG, who will be able to provide more information.