

FINAL DRAFT

National Park Service Healthy and Sustainable Food Choice Standards and Guidelines for Front Country Operations



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The National Park Service (NPS) has more than 75 units with over 250 F&B concessioner operations. F&B operations in the front-country range from sit-down restaurants to snack bars and serve an estimated 23.5 million customers a year. Opportunities also exist in backcountry and retail food services within the NPS. Managing this diverse set of F&B and retail operations and serving millions of visitors annually presents the NPS and its concessioners with the unique opportunity to provide visitors with healthy food, reduce the environmental footprint of these operations through sustainable food sourcing and service practices, and educate visitors on the benefits of enjoying healthy and sustainable foods.

In August 2011, the NPS issued the *Call to Action*, a five-year strategic plan that contains 36 action items targeted at national parks and their partners. Action 8: Eat Well and Prosper, which states that the NPS will:

Encourage park visitors to make healthy lifestyle choices and position parks to support local economies by ensuring that all current and future concession contracts require multiple healthy, sustainably produced, and reasonably priced food options at national park food service concessions.

The ***NPS Healthy and Sustainable Food Choice Standards and Guidelines for Front Country Operations*** are designed to help the Service meet this Call to Action Goal. Areas covered include food ingredients and choices, food preparation, and visitor/consumer education. They were developed using current federal standards, guidelines, and definitions where they exist and were appropriate. These sources include the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Health and Sustainability Standards for Use in Federal Food Procurement for Concessions and Vending Operations*; *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*; and *21 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 101, Food Labeling*.

Definitions for terms identified in the standards and guidelines are provided in a separate ***NPS Healthy and Sustainable Food Choice Glossary***. Guidelines for healthy and sustainable food in backcountry operations are also provided in a separate document. Healthy and sustainable retail food sales guidelines are under development.

I. HEALTHY FOOD STANDARDS – FRONT COUNTRY OPERATIONS

These minimum standards apply to new contracts. They may be applied for existing contracts if mutually agreed upon by the NPS and the concessioner. The standards may be strengthened in new contracts on a contract-by-contract basis following an NPS analysis of what is technically and economically feasible and appropriate given services, location and other factors specific to the contract. Concessioners are also encouraged to voluntarily exceed the minimums where appropriate.

A. Food Ingredients and Choices: Applicable to the portion of the menu as specified.

1. Overall Menu: Applicable to the entire menu.

<i>Vegetable and Fruit Option</i>	Offer all entrées or full meals with at least one fruit or vegetable. Where food is available only à la carte, offer fruits or vegetables as side dishes on the menu.
<i>Low-fat and Fat-free Dairy</i>	Where milk and milk products are offered, offer low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products.
<i>Beverages with No Added Sugar</i>	Of the beverage selection offered, at least 30 percent have no added sugar (i.e., high-fructose corn syrup, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, honey, sucrose, dextrose).
2. For Certain Menu Choices: Applicable to two core menu items: <i>one vegetarian</i> and <i>one non-vegetarian</i> ; and to a percentage of other menu items, as stipulated on a contract-by-contract basis. Applies to sit-down meals as well as grab-and-go and cafeteria offerings.	
<i>Light/Lite</i>	Entrée including sides is <u>light</u> ¹ , containing up to approximately 800 calories for adults and 600 calories for children when prepared according to the recipe.
<i>Fat</i>	Entrée is designated as <u>low fat</u> .
<i>Sodium</i>	Entrée is designated as <u>low sodium</u> .
<i>Hormones and Antibiotics</i>	Meat, seafood and eggs have <u>no hormones</u> and <u>no antibiotics</u> added.
<i>Whole Grain</i>	Where grains are offered in entrées, they are <u>whole grains</u> .

B. Food Preparation

<i>Portion Sizes</i>	Offer half servings or reduced portion sizes when possible such as when items are prepared in bulk like pasta and soups and are served to order.
<i>Frying Oil Used</i>	Offer the choice of steamed and grilled food rather than using fat in cooking when food is made to order. Do not use artificial trans fats in frying or as ingredients in any foods on the menu.

C. Food Education	
<i>Signage and Labeling</i>	Use a designated symbol and key to identify “healthy choice” options which meet the NPS healthy food choice standards on menus, signs, or other materials to educate visitors on these items ² . Use signs or other materials to educate visitors on the importance of healthy food.
<i>Placement</i>	For grab and go food establishments, ensure that healthier options are placed where they are noticeable and likely to be purchased.
<i>Nutritional Data</i>	For core healthy food menu items, provide specific nutritional information on food items upon request. Include the labeling facts recommended the USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (The percent of daily values and vitamin labels are not necessary).
<i>Marketing</i>	Do not offer deep fried items as "specials" or "featured" items.

1. Underlined terms are defined in the *NPS Healthy and Sustainable Food Choice Glossary*.
2. Concessioner menus and menu boards are subject to review and approval by the Service per NPS policy and Concession Contract.

II. SUSTAINABLE FOOD GUIDELINES - FRONT COUNTRY OPERATIONS

These guidelines should be used to determine requirements for new contracts, following an analysis of what is technically and economically feasible and appropriate given services, location and other factors specific to the contract. These guidelines may also be used to identify criteria for existing contracts which can be applied on upon mutual agreement by the Service and the concessioner. Concessioners are also encouraged to voluntarily apply the guidelines where appropriate.

A. Food Ingredients and Choices: Applicable to menu items as stipulated on a contract-by-contract basis. Some or all may be applied as determined appropriate.

<i>Sustainable Fisheries</i>	Where seafood options are offered, provide only those that are “Best Choices” or “Good Alternatives” on the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch list, certified sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, or identified by an equivalent program that has been approved by the NPS.
<i>Fair Trade</i>	Where coffee is offered it is fair trade-certified.
<i>Sustainably Grown</i>	Where coffee is offered it is <u>shade grown</u> ¹ .
<i>Seasonal, or Locally or Regionally Produced</i>	Offer <u>seasonal</u> or <u>locally</u> or <u>regionally</u> produced products and ingredients.
<i>Organic</i>	Provide menu items that could be labeled as being “made with organic ingredients”, “organic” or “100 percent organic.” Note: <u>Organic</u> foods by definition are not <u>genetically modified organisms (GMOs)</u> .

B. Food Education

<i>Signage and Labeling</i>	Use a designated symbol and key to identify “sustainable choice” options on menus, signs, or other materials to educate visitors on these items. ² Such items meet one or more of the sustainable food choice attributes. Use signs or other materials to educate visitors on the importance of <u>sustainability</u> and the sustainable components of the food and beverage operation.
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