



Always fresh and tasty: there is a cleverly-designed concept behind Maritim's signature breakfast buffet.

SUSTAINABLY REPLENISHED

It pains Maritim Hotel's experienced Head Chefs to see food being wasted. They are getting to grips with the mountain of waste using scales, new crockery and a computer programme from the University of Stuttgart. And with great success: during a two year pilot, leftovers from Maritim's signature breakfast buffet were permanently reduced – without any consequences for guests. This achievement received fulsome praise from the Federal Minister of Food Christian Schmidt and a nomination for the 2016 Federal prize "Too good for the bin!"

One of the greatest benefits of staying at a Maritim Hotel is sitting down at a finely set breakfast table, enjoying a freshly brewed coffee and then feasting on the delicacies of the generous buffet. The Maritim's signature breakfast buffet has been at the very top of guests' list of luxuries since the German hotel chain was founded. And so it shall remain!

Bucking the throwaway trend

Nonetheless, the issue of sustainability and the waste of resources do also concern Maritim's Head Chefs. Far too often, still-warm croissants, freshly scrambled eggs, sausage, cheese and fruit salad all end up in the waste bin after breakfast. Anything that has been served must be disposed of. This is prescribed by law. "This sort of waste causes a chef real distress", says Maritim's star chef Lutz Niemann. He is in charge of the "Orangerie" gourmet restaurant in the Maritim Seehotel Timmendorfer Strand and is among the hotel chain's leading kitchen managers who want to curb the mountain of waste. Therefore, in 2014 the hotel group joined the "United against waste" initiative, which wants to reduce avoidable

waste in commercial kitchens by 50 percent by 2020. Of the 15 million tonnes of food which finds its way into refuse each year in Germany, at least 1.9 million tonnes comes from the hospitality and restaurant sector.

Measured leftovers

To calculate the surplus, the two most important tools in combating the waste of resources are scales and a computer programme. The pilot has been running for the last two years in the four Maritim Hotels in Dresden, Stuttgart, Munich and Timmendorfer Strand, in collaboration with Stuttgart University's Institute for Waste Management. Specially trained staff who are on-board with the aims of the project use the feedback scales and the "Resource Manager" programme to calculate how much food ends up in the bin each day. In other words: how much sausage, cheese, salmon, fruit and scrambled eggs is actually superfluous.

However, that does not simply mean that correspondingly smaller quantities are served on large platters and dishes. "The guest prefers well-filled plates", knows Niemann. Food is a feast for the eyes. Therefore, he created new crockery for the end of the breakfast service, when appetites are getting smaller. Less appears to be more when it is presented on small platters and dishes. This old housewives' saying may sound trite, but it is extremely effective: in the Maritim Seehotel Timmendorfer Strand hotel, 80 percent less food is now discarded after breakfast compared with before! The only thing that the guest notices is that the smaller sausage or salmon platter is replenished more often. "And I see that as an additional sign of quality", says Niemann.

This result also impresses the Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture. So much so that Minister Christian

Schmidt nominated Maritim Hotels for the 2016 Federal Prize for Commitment to reduce food waste "Too good for the bin!". According to a study by the University of Stuttgart, every adult throws an average of 82 kilograms of food away each year – mainly fruit and vegetables, followed by baked goods and pasta as well as leftovers. The aim of the national competition is to reduce avoidable food waste by 50 percent by the year 2030.

The Maritim Seehotel Timmendorfer Strand has significantly surpassed this benchmark with its signature breakfast buffet, substantially reducing waste. Bins have also been reduced by a quarter. Niemann and his colleagues are really pleased with the praise that has come from the very top. But the star chef is still preoccupied by other opportunities for improvement involving sustainability, CO2 emissions and locally-sourced food. "We need to look beyond the plate and ask questions about the future", says environmentally-aware Niemann. Therefore, Maritim is going to pass on its positive experiences to all its hotels and will also work against the throwaway trend at the lunch buffet. In the meantime, the good results of Maritim's excellent pilot are spreading further afield: In 2017, the Bavarian Ministry of Agriculture is planning to introduce feedback scales and the "Resource Manager" computer programme throughout the catering sector in Bavaria.

One of Niemann's own personal aims is to enthuse every employee about future-oriented issues through individual projects. At the end of the day, each individual bears their own responsibility towards society: "Everything that we carelessly throw away could be used by others."

Astrid Kniep



Would you like another bread roll? A copious Maritim breakfast makes an excellent start to the day.