

HYY'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE'S

# Guide to Sitsit

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE  
DINNER PARTIES

FOOD | LESS CLUTTER | RECYCLING

## Introduction

**Organisations operating under HYY organise over 350 academic dinner parties (sitsit) every year, which amounts to thousands of people partying. The organisers thus have a great opportunity to affect the environmental impact of sitsit through thousands of meals, decorative choices and proper waste recycling. Sustainable sitsit save both the nature and your budget. Reading this guide will help you organise more sustainable sitsit!**

***This guide was created by the hard work and great passion of Sini Holopainen, Julia Hämäläinen, Suvi Jutila, Sofia Kaipainen, Marika Manner, Essi Nuorivaara and Marika Sarkkinen.***

## Food

You can affect the environmental impact of food in sitsit in the same way as in your everyday life: with small choices. Reducing the amount of meat and increasing the share of vegetables decreases the carbon footprint of food. It is also easier to make the same dish for a large group, as vegetarian food is often suitable for those with a special diet. If, however, you wish to serve meat at your sitsit, we recommend checking out which products to favour from the WWF's meat and fish guides. Remember to also use products that are in season – they are not only ecological, but also cheap!

When you plan the menu for your sitsit, avoiding food waste should also be taken into consideration. Food waste does not only waste the money and natural resources used, but also the energy and work contribution used in the preparation. You can reduce food waste in stores and save money by favouring products approaching their best before date. Good food does not end up as waste very easily, so make sure the menu is tasty! Even if the theme of the sitsit tempts you to serve bizarre courses, remember to also consider whether the food will be eaten. Blue couscous may seem like a fun idea, but the sight of it in the biowaste container is not necessarily as funny after the party. Food at sitsit usually winds up cold, so you should make food that tastes good cooled down too.

Pay attention to the amount of food as well. The Marthas and IsoMitta, for instance, have instructions on how much food to reserve for large events. If participants do not pay in advance, you should also

inquire whether everyone who has signed up is planning to attend the sitsit before buying the ingredients. Even good planning is not always enough, though, and you can end up with leftover food. Organisers should take containers with them so that leftover food does not end up in the trash. You can also urge participants to take their own containers with them. You could also try to use the leftover food in some other event or meeting or offer it to the other members of your own organisational cluster.

### SUGGESTED MENU

Tomato soup with croutons made of leftover bread  
 Pasta bolognese made with lentils or soy mince  
 Vegan carrot cake

### USEFUL LINKS TO HELP IN PLANNING

[ohsheglows.com](https://ohsheglows.com)

An internationally acknowledged vegan food blog

[abritinhelsinki.com](https://abritinhelsinki.com)

A vegan food blog based in Helsinki

[blogs.helsinki.fi/hyy-ymp/category/kasviskeskiviikko/](https://blogs.helsinki.fi/hyy-ymp/category/kasviskeskiviikko/)

The Environmental Committee's Kasviskeskiviikko blog



## Less clutter

A good way to protect nature with next to no effort is to reduce clutter. This is easy to achieve at sitsit with just a few tricks. The idea is simple: try to avoid disposable products and, as much as possible, replace them with objects with a longer lifespan.

Loaning and renting things or buying them second-hand is also a good example of reducing clutter, and can often be not only easier but also cheaper than buying them new! If, however, disposable products are necessary, please remember to recycle them correctly.

## Dreaming of sitsit with less clutter? Remember this:

*Bring your own dishes or ask the participants to bring theirs. Renting a dinnerware set might be worth it for larger sitsit.*

*You can either bring your own decorations or rent them. If the decorations must be bought, favour reusable or easily recyclable decorations.*

*Invest in a wax-coated or otherwise reusable tablecloth instead of a paper version.*

*Song printouts can be replaced by projecting the lyrics on the wall with a video projector, for instance. You could also create an electronic version and give the participants a link to it in advance in the Facebook event or by email. Another sustainable option is to print songbooks or consider using another organisation's songbook at your sitsit.*

**Did you know about the Facebook group for organisations operating under HYY which you can use to ask around for rentable dishes, decorations and other items? Check out the group at [www.facebook.com/groups/530050157143490](https://www.facebook.com/groups/530050157143490) (you need to be logged in and join the group).**

## Cleaning and recycling at sitsit

Cleaning goes faster when you start to take care of recycling already when preparing the sitsit. If the premises you are using have recycling instructions, check them out right away. You can also confirm this in advance from the owner of the premises. Make sure that all organisers are aware of the premises' recycling instructions – this makes it easier to take out all the trash at the end of the sitsit, as they have already been sorted and you know where the recycling point is located.

### A COUPLE OF TIPS FOR MAKING RECYCLING AND CLEANING EASIER

Recycle continuously. Do not collect the trash into one pile – throw them into the containers they belong in as they form.

Mark the trash containers clearly and tell your fellow organisers about their existence.

Rinse cartonboard, metal and glass containers quickly, but do not wash them.

If possible, get some extra hands for the kitchen so that you do not have to alternate between partying and cleaning.

You can either return the cans or recycle them as metal – this is important as they can stop the entire processing cycle at the waste processing plants if sorted into mixed waste.

*If you first collect metal trash into plastic bags, remember to sort the metal and the plastic bags separately afterwards.*

Do not use an excessive amount of cleaning detergents during the final cleaning, a small drop is often enough.

### WHAT USE IS IT TO RECYCLE? WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WASTE I RECYCLE?

**Biowaste:** Taken to Ämmässuo where it is decomposed and composted. The process creates landfill gas for energy production and nutritious compost for green construction. Besides fossil fuels, this also saves artificial fertilisers, for instance.

**Glass:** Transported to England to be used as raw material for recycled glass packaging. This saves energy and glass sand. Glass can be recycled endlessly without the quality suffering.

**Metal:** Metals are separated at the processing plant, and they can be reshaped after having been melted. Similarly to glass, metal can circulate forever. In other words, that one glass jar or beer can should be recycled correctly!

**Paper:** Paper production from recycled paper is faster and more energy-efficient. Recycling paper saves energy and forest reserves – as does recycling cartonboard.

**Cartonboard:** Cartonboard goes into the cartonboard machine through the sorting plant. Recycled cartonboard can be used to produce corrugated board or toilet paper rolls, for instance.

### SEE ALSO

HSY's waste sorting instruction and waste-specific search function:

[www.hsy.fi/en/residents/sorting/instructions/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.hsy.fi/en/residents/sorting/instructions/Pages/default.aspx)

*Further information and support  
for more sustainable sitsit*

**FEELING LOST? CONTACT US:**

Member of HYY's Board in charge of environmental affairs

The Environmental Committee through Facebook ([www.facebook.com/HYYnYmparistovaliokunta](https://www.facebook.com/HYYnYmparistovaliokunta)) or the Chair of the Committee

Current contact information for the member of HYY's Board in charge of environmental affairs and the Chair of the Environmental Committee can be found at [hyy.helsinki.fi/en](https://hyy.helsinki.fi/en)

... or join the email list of the Environmental Committee:  
[yv-lista@helsinki.fi](mailto:yv-lista@helsinki.fi)

... or check out the section on the environment in the Organisation Wiki (currently only in Finnish):  
[wiki.hyy.fi/index.php/Ymp%C3%A4rist%C3%B6asiat](https://wiki.hyy.fi/index.php/Ymp%C3%A4rist%C3%B6asiat)

