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Varied, healthy, sustainable and well-priced: Swiss Youth Hostels launch new “Yoummi” food concept

The Swiss Youth Hostels are revamping their culinary offer. They have created the new “Yoummi” line, which lays the foundation for their new gastronomic future. Balanced and varied, sustainable and well-priced – these are the cornerstones of Yoummi. The focus is on the changing culinary needs of guests as well as the high-quality standards of the Swiss Youth Hostels with regard to their culinary offer. Core elements of Yoummi include the newly created daily menus, a new breakfast offer, a self-kiosk for snacks around the clock or packed lunches for lunch on the go. The new three-course menus are available as vegan, vegetarian or meat options and are always gluten- or lactose-free.

The Swiss Youth Hostels (SYH) have expanded their catering offer and are gradually rolling out their new, modern and sustainable catering concept under the name “Yoummi”. Yoummi stands for balanced, varied and healthy food, high-quality, sustainable use of resources and, of course, having an enjoyable time together in the down-to-earth atmosphere of the youth hostels – according to the motto “good food, good mood”. The basis for the new offer is the changing needs of guests in recent years. The eating habits of guests and their demands on modern gastronomy – from breakfast to dinner and late-night snacks – have changed significantly in recent years. There is an increasing demand for meat-free, gluten-free or lactose-free dishes. The concept of sustainability is also playing an increasingly important role. “We have been offering vegetarian dishes daily in our establishments for years, but meat dishes were also requested almost every day. We are now seeing a growing demand for vegan dishes. Vegan is more or less the new vegetarian”, says Thomas Unger, F&B Manager of the Swiss Youth Hostels. The catering offer has been expanded with Yoummi so that vegetarians, vegans and meat eaters alike get their money’s worth with balanced meals at the youth hostels.

New three-course menus: vegan, vegetarian, with meat – also anti-allergenic

The new menu creations prepared on-site at the youth hostels are the core element of the Yoummi offer. The focus is on consistently high-quality dishes with regional food as well as “fair trade” products and Swiss meat and poultry. Above all, the youth hostels are paying more attention to different eating habits and food intolerances. The Swiss Youth Hostels have revamped their dishes for this reason: Instead of offering meat dishes also as vegetarian or vegan options, wholefood menus are now cooked as vegetarian or often vegan options as an alternative to meat dishes. “Children, young people, their parents and grandparents all eat at the youth hostels. Despite this diversity, we want all our guests to get their money’s worth and we try to tailor our food to all needs. Our range of dishes is as varied as the individual youth hostels and their guests: sometimes Swiss, sometimes cosmopolitan, sometimes classic, sometimes innovative”, says Thomas Unger.

The attractively priced three-course menu will be retained in the future, i.e., guests can continue to look forward to a salad or soup, a main course prepared on-site and a dessert for CHF 19.50 (children’s prices from CHF 8.50) – including free second helpings of vegetables and side dishes. A new feature is the station with various toppings (e.g. nuts, raisins, chillies, tortilla chips, various sauces, lime slices, herbs etc.), which guests can use to garnish the individual courses as desired. From April onwards, the breakfast included in the accommodation price will also be gradually adapted to the sustainable Yoummi concept with regional cheese, Swiss cold cuts and seasonal fruit. The guests’ personal needs come first, even during breakfast, so Yoummi offers soy milk, oat milk and gluten-free bread and muesli, for example. Additional Yoummi elements will be introduced in the individual youth hostels as needed, e.g. a self-kiosk or packed lunches for lunch on the go.

But despite all these innovations, the Swiss Youth Hostels still kept tried-and-tested elements of the previous concept. The restaurants will continue to have the popular water stations where guests can help themselves to local drinking water free of charge.

À la carte restaurants for every occasion

The five individual à la carte restaurants of the Swiss Youth Hostels are ideal for a cosy get-together – be it for lunch or dinner, a piece of cake and a coffee in the afternoon or for a refreshing drink after work. The à la carte restaurants are also well suited for events of all kinds. For example, the Burgdorf Castle Restaurant “Schloss Burgdorf” is perfect for celebrating weddings, anniversaries or birthdays. But the hip “Biblau” in Laax, the stylish “3a” in Interlaken, the relaxed “Beizli am See” in Richterswil or the trendy “Bistro4000” in Saas-Fee are also great options for private or business events. Event menus are prepared according to the guests’ individual wishes. Different eating habits and food intolerances can be catered for here, too.

Yoummi as the next step in the comprehensive sustainability strategy of the SYH

Sustainability is deeply ingrained in the DNA of the Swiss Youth Hostels. From construction to purchasing to operation, attention is paid to environmental compatibility, and the carbon footprint has been continuously reduced over the past few decades. “We want to take responsibility and have always been committed to conscious tourism. By 2021, we will have reduced our carbon emissions for heating and hot water by almost two thirds. A significant portion of our carbon emissions is caused by our catering services, and we want to consistently reduce this as well. The introduction of Yoummi with its vegetarian or vegan-based dishes and an increased focus on regional products is a logical step in the sustainability strategy that we have been pursuing for years”, says SYH CEO Janine Bunte.

The Swiss Youth Hostels work with numerous partners to achieve their ambitious sustainability goals. Almost all of the 50 or so youth hostels are at the highest level (Level III-leading) of the “Swisstainable” sustainability programme initiated by Switzerland Tourism. In addition, the Swiss Youth Hostels regularly receive awards for their environmentally conscious activities – most recently from the Swiss sustainability label “ibex fairstay”, which awarded two out of four “best of ibex fairstay 2021” awards to the Swiss Youth Hostels.

Swiss Youth Hostels

The network of the Swiss Youth Hostels Association consists of 43 of its own hostels and 5 franchise properties, ranging from romantic castles to urban design locations and wellness hostels. The non-profit organisation with over 70,000 members generates around 750,000 overnight stays annually. The focus is on quality-conscious, sustainable, and affordable youth and family tourism. www.youthhostel.ch

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