



Göttingen



Dresden

# Green, Healthy & Affordable

Restaurants at universities face different challenges to those confronting concepts open to the general public. Their turnover is largely dependent on the number of students who, however, can find a growing number of inexpensive, high-quality alternatives to the refectory on the local high street. Over recent years, student expectations have risen to the same extent as public foodservice facilities have become more professional. At the same time, low prices remain the most important criterion for eating at a university restaurant. More than other segments of society, students tend to prefer organic, healthy cuisine. And, in many cases, they are happy to go without meat. Europe's university restaurants are adapting to these demands and becoming more attractive and greener.

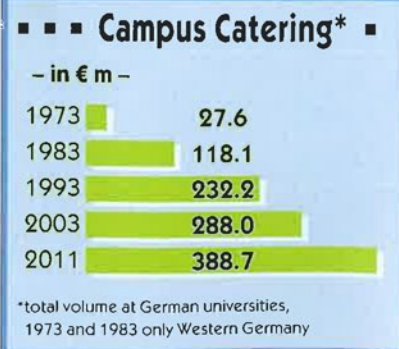
## Germany

More students than ever before were registered at German universities in the winter semester of 2011/2012. With a total of almost 2.2 m students, there were 6.1% more than a year before and, according to a survey, around 85% of them took advantage of the 854 refectories and cafés at their disposal. Altogether, these foodservice facilities served approximately 90 m meals for a turnover €388 m in 2011, an increase of 4.6% over the previous year.

Achim Meyer auf der Heyde, Secretary General of the German Student Welfare Organisation (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW) says the reason refectories and

cafés were unable to increase their turnover in line with the growth in student numbers was the result of an investment backlog of €200 m in university catering facilities. The DSW is the umbrella organisation of the 58 regional student welfare organisations that, in distinction to other countries, are the operators of the catering facilities at Germany's public universities, a segment in which private contract caterers are not represented. At city universities, such as Berlin and Munich, students generally have a wide range of alternatives to queuing in the refectory. At many smaller campus universities outside the city centre, however, the refectory is the only place students can obtain a warm meal at lunchtime.

With over 137,000 students at five universities, Berlin is Germany's biggest seat of higher education. The 55 foodservice outlets with seating for a good 13,000 people turned over almost €22 m in 2011. The average revenue per student per year was approx. €160. Second place is held by Munich with around 107,000 students and revenues of a good €13 m generated by 32 foodservice outlets. Third place in the ranking by turnover goes to the Ruhr city of Bochum with 57,000 students and 26 outlets with seating for 5,000, which resulted in revenues of €227 per student per year (see chart p. 10).



One of Germany's most up-to-date refectories is to be found in **Cologne's Zülpi-cher Strasse**. Opened this April after nine months of modernisation work and an investment of around €4.8 m, there



Germany



Duisburg



Jörg-Markus zur Oven, Head of the University Foodservice Department of the German Student Welfare Organisation (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW), the umbrella association of the 58 local organisations: "Take-away concepts and bistros with a narrower F&B range than refectories are a way of reducing the crush at lunchtime. The coffee-bar boom is also reflected by university campuses with 420

coffee bars and cafeterias at universities throughout Germany in 2011. Since 2010, the DSW has introduced its 'Ins Grüne' bistro concept at five universities, the two biggest being in Duisburg (with seating for 200) and Göttingen. The 'Ins Grüne' concept emphasises a responsible nutritional approach and is based on a sustainable operational management. Thanks to products ranging from Fairtrade organic coffee and bakery products from the region to Oeko-standard furniture and energy-saving LED lamps, guests can enjoy their meals with a good conscience. [www.studentenwerke.de](http://www.studentenwerke.de)

are now four restaurants offering ultra-efficient foodservice on two floors. They include two fast-service counters on the ground floor for those in a hurry. There, users pay automatically and easily by chip card when collecting their food. Around 16 different dishes are offered daily and always include a vegan, a vegetarian and an organic dish. Simple dishes, such as stews, cost less than €2. À-la-



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carte dishes cost up to €5 and are prepared, inter alia, at a Japanese teppanyaki grill, something unheard of at any other German university, where guests can put together their dishes from 20 ingredients plus meat or fish for a fixed price. At the pasta, pizza and wok counters, dishes are freshly prepared to order. The salad and vegetable buffet was also modernised. In general, payment is by chip card, which can be topped up at five terminals. The menu is shown on electronic displays and there is seating for almost 2,000 people. Every day, the staff of 120 currently prepares around 6,000 dishes plus 400 for smaller refectories and a kindergarten.

"When planning the new refectory, we paid particular priority to fast production coupled with a high degree of freshness



Cologne

and lower operating costs, to ensure the prices for students remain low", explains planner Friedhelm Frank of planning office Reisner & Frank. "Also very important is the efficient interaction of the different kitchens to control their capacities, which ensures a balanced load on each of the four areas and, therefore, minimum waiting times." Guests are happy to take advantage of the wider range of dishes on offer. "We now cater for students who are prepared to spend a bit more on good quality and freshness. However, the cheaper dishes have also improved significantly."

An unequivocal trend at German university restaurants is the growing demand for sustainable, vegetarian and vegan dishes. The initiative came from the students themselves. At the beginning of 2009, students in the city of Düsseldorf founded a 'vegan refectory' initiative, which was quickly followed by local groups in many other German cities. Their demand: the inclusion of

## ■ ■ D: University Foodservice – the Top 10 in 2011 ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

R	Location	Sales 2011		Students		Sales / student		
		in € m	vs. 10	2011/12	vs. 10/11	Units	Seats	
1	Berlin	21.9	7.05%	137,279	4.31%	55	13,010	€159.76
2	Munich	13.2	3.61%	107,589	8.50%	32	10,008	€122.99
3	Bochum	12.9	7.92%	56,994	8.85%	26	4,891	€227.40
4	Dresden	12.8	10.45%	49,122	2.72%	20	4,891	€260.85
5	Thüringen	12.3	5.66%	52,786	0.52%	24	6,584	€233.21
6	Cologne	12.2	5.81%	71,813	9.65%	18	5,070	€171.02
7	Hamburg	11.9	7.32%	62,985	4.10%	27	4,992	€190.04
8	Münster	11.4	-0.12%	49,790	7.02%	20	5,039	€230.45
9	Frankfurt/Main	11.0	8.51%	63,298	5.25%	10	3,095	€175.01
10	Heidelberg	10.0	11.95%	44,507	4.87%	11	5,061	€225.86

Source: gy-praxis

dishes containing no animal products in the range of dishes offered.

The Berlin Studentenwerk is a pioneer in this respect. What began 30 years ago with organic potatoes continued with the opening of Germany's first vegetarian refectory in 2010 with a choice of six to eight meatless dishes a day. Since April 2011, there has been a 'climate meal' – a vegan dish – on the menu, which is marked by a green tree logo. Additionally, a traffic-light marking system helps the 10 m guests using the refectories every year to make their choice in accordance with nutritional criteria. The exclusive use of organic eggs and MSC seafood is now a matter of course, as is Transfair coffee in the new coffee bars where 10 of the 40 t brewed every year come from Fairtrade sources.

Students react to these offers with critical interest and health-con-

scious users are not shy of complaining if they consider there to be insufficient 'green' dishes. On the other hand, a 'vegetarian week' at the restaurants of Berlin Free University led to protests by meat lovers against the infringement of their freedom of choice. Nevertheless, many of the numerous 'green' projects of the refectory operators originate from the students themselves. For example, they can contribute via a feedback function on the Studentenwerk website. Thus, thanks to purchase of several thousand porcelain mugs, which were financed by a small extra charge on the cardboard to-go-mug, the 'coffee to stay' project resulted in a reduction of over 2.5 m waste mugs a year.

Refectories in other cities are also on veggie course. This applies not only to lunch but also to snacks between meals. And demand is growing continuously.

### ■■■ Heidelberg: The Cube ■■■■■■■■■■

With 44,500 students and foodservice revenues of a good €10 m a year (in 2011 – 10th place), Heidelberg is one of Germany's oldest and best known universities. Opened at the beginning of 2012, the new 'Cube' refectory at the campus of the private SRH University in Heidelberg-Wieblingen shows what modern foodservice concepts at universities could look like in the future. The sub-title, 'eat&meet', leaves no doubt that the 'Cube' aims to be more than just a stomach filler. And this is reflected by the structure of the 2,450 sq m refectory. With seating for 564 guests, the various eating areas are arranged symmetrically around the buffet and front-cooking stations: pizzas, two salad buffets, a daily organic dish, a dessert buffet and a pasta station.

Besides the free-flow refectory, the 'Cube' also incorporates a high-grade à-la-carte restaurant called Cube Extra, with seating for 100 guests and table service. A spacious lounge with adjoining

coffee bar offers a panoramic view outdoors. On average, the 'Cube' provides 1,300 meals a day.

Foodservice facilities at the SRH Campus were centralised with the conversion of the 'Cube' (Investment: €2.2 m). The operator is a subsidiary of SRH Holding, a leading provider of educational and health services. [www.fh-heidelberg.de](http://www.fh-heidelberg.de)

