



ALLIANCE OF RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION  
launched in 1995 by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

PRESS RELEASE

# Celebration of Faiths and the Environment

*Many Heavens, One Earth:  
Faith Commitments for a Living Planet*

Windsor  
November 2-4, 2009

**Nine faiths, nine food traditions, dozens of different nationalities,  
one Royal banquet....**

**.... some people requiring halal food, others kosher, some vegetarian. And  
all of them needing food that is ethical, faith-consistent and  
environmentally-friendly...**

**Result? The first ever vegan banquet to be served at Windsor Castle**

When the organisers behind a major international conference – the Celebration of Faiths and the Environment, in Windsor from November 2-4, 2009 – began thinking about the food to serve, they realised their decisions involved much more than whether to offer beef or lamb.

The event is to launch 30 long-term plans to protect the environment, drawn up by nine of the world's major faiths – Baha'ism, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shintoism and Sikhism – at a Celebration hosted by His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and attended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-moon. It has been organised by ARC, the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

The plans – long-term initiatives aimed at influencing the attitudes and behaviour of the faithful for generations to come – come a month before Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in December and are so far-reaching that the UN Assistant Secretary-General (Development Programme) Olav Kjørven calls them “the biggest civil society movement on climate change in history”.

But just as the plans reflect the traditions, beliefs and practices of the individual faiths, so the food requirements of the some 200 secular and religious delegates vary enormously. Jewish delegates require kosher food, Muslim halal. The Hindus (and several other delegates) are vegetarian, while some – including the Bishop of London – have given up meat products for faith and environmental reasons.

And given the high priority given to food in many of the plans and the environmental aims of the Celebration, it was felt vital that all the food served was produced in as ethical, faith-consistent and environmentally-friendly a way as possible.

- All food at the conference will be vegetarian and free-range; most will be local, organic and fair-trade. No bottled water will be provided.
- The lunch at Windsor Castle on Tues Nov 3, hosted by HRH Prince Philip will be vegan – the first time that the Castle caterers have organised a vegan meal for a Royal banquet.
- Likewise the Mercure Castle Hotel, Windsor, where the UN Secretary-General will host a welcome dinner on Mon Nov 3, is producing its first ever vegetarian banquet.

Both the Windsor Castle caterers (Edible Food Design) and the Castle Hotel are happy to talk to you about their experience of creating their vegan / vegetarian banquets. The contact at Edible is Sophie Douglas-Bate – 020 7622 5444. Elizabeth Alfano, conference sales manager at the Castle Hotel is on [H6618-sb@accor.com](mailto:H6618-sb@accor.com) and the Castle Hotel is on 01753 851577.

### **Vegan banquet menu for Windsor Castle**

#### **STARTER**

Salad of roasted English pear steamed celeriac and oven roasted cobnuts  
Frizee leaves tossed with a hazelnut oil and lemon oil dressing  
Served with a red grape reduction

Ciabata bread served with olive oil

#### **MAIN COURSE**

Portabello mushroom stuffed with artichoke, red onion and thyme  
Set on pearl barley and butternut squash risotto with Gremolata oil

Roasted root vegetables to include carrots, parsnips and beetroot turned with baby chard

#### **DRINKS**

Cranberry & fresh orange cocktail  
Jugs of iced tap water and lemon on the tables

(No dessert due to extremely tight schedule)

### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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**More information:** [www.arcworld.org.uk](http://www.arcworld.org.uk). Dedicated Celebration website: [www.windsor2009.org](http://www.windsor2009.org).

### **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

What many of the long-term plans to be announced at Windsor have in common is a recognition that how we care for the earth is a moral issue. These plans signify the growth of a movement that, in the words of the US interfaith ministry The Regeneration Project, “addresses ecological issues from theological roots”.

Many have widened this moral issue to include broader issues of justice and fairness – and for many that also includes how food is produced and sourced. For example, three of the faiths – Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism – are exploring the creation of new faith-based eco-labelling

standards for goods and services, including food, similar to the organic or Fairtrade labels but consistent with the faiths' beliefs.

- The Bishop of London, Rt Rev Richard Chartres, (one of the delegates attending the Windsor Celebration) has become vegetarian for ecological reasons.
- The Jewish Seven Year Plan calls for Jewish dietary laws around what is considered fit for Jews to eat to be expanded to include ecological considerations, plus a target of halving communal meat consumption by 2015;
- The Daoists are prohibiting the use of ingredients from endangered animals and plants in their healthcare, food and medicine;
- Shanghai Buddhists are recommending that Buddhist-owned restaurants do not serve meat from wild animals;
- The Hindus intend to provide resources for temples to develop gardens on their land;
- The Buddhists in China (who, although they have vegetarianism in their tradition, are not themselves usually vegetarian) have pledged to boost vegetarianism among their followers;
- The New Psalmist Baptist Church (110-year old, predominately African-American congregation in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, which attracts congregations of 7,500 to its services) wants to create a church garden and promote the growing of food as a means of returning to a simpler lifestyle and becoming more self sufficient;
- GreenFaith (a US-based interfaith environmental coalition) is to develop a series of sustainable consumption resources to enable faith communities to learn a religious basis for sustainable consumption;
- Operation Noah, the only ecumenical faith-based body that focuses exclusively on climate change in the UK, is calling on Christians to exchange food-growing skills and source food locally;
- The Presbyterian Church (PCC) in Cameroon, which has a rural agricultural programme, intends to promote biological soil fertility methods and train farmers in sustainable agricultural systems;
- The Quakers in Britain will be implementing a strict food policy at the Quaker headquarters, Friends Hall in London, including total food recycling, a 35 per cent increase in organic produce and 40 per cent of food sourced from greater London by the end of 2012.

Among the secular bodies attending the Windsor Celebration to pledge their intention to work with the faiths are the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the Soil Association. Others include World Bank, Conservation International, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Fairtrade, WWF and the Carbon Trust.

### **ABOUT ARC**

ARC is a secular body that helps the major religions of the world to develop their own environmental programmes, based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices. The United Nations, in partnership with ARC, launched its programme to work with the world's major faiths to tackle climate change and environmental issues in December 2007. The faiths were asked to consider how they could develop Long Term Commitments for a Living Planet. They've come up with a huge number of initiatives in the shape of Five, Seven, Eight and Nine Year plans.

### **WHY THE FAITHS?**

Most people around the world adhere to one religion or other – the faiths reach out to 85 per cent of the world's 6.79 billion people. There are 2.1 billion Christians worldwide; 1.34 billion Muslims; more than 950 million Hindus; 50-70million Daoists; 24 million Sikhs and 13 million Jews. (*Source: Atlas of Religion, published by Earthscan, 2007*).  
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