



A How-to Guide for the San Francisco Restaurant Switch to Tap Water



food&waterwatch





Now is the Time for San Francisco Restaurants to Join Consumers as We Take Back the Tap

Dear Restaurateur,

In the interest of protecting our water resources, Food & Water Watch and the City and County of San Francisco need your help and that of all San Francisco restaurants and chefs. You can join with consumers as we all kick the bottled water habit and take back the tap.

U.S. restaurants and consumers are wasting billions of dollars a year on billions of gallons of bottled water, at least in part because they think it is healthier or safer than its counterpart from the tap. It is not.

Luckily, the City by the Bay is leading the way: the City of San Francisco has partnered with Food & Water Watch on the Take Back the Tap campaign that urges restaurants to hold the bottled water and, instead, serve only tap water.

This guide will help you smoothly transition your restaurant into serving healthful, great tasting tap water.

Thank you for your interest, and we hope that you will join us in our efforts to provide clean, affordable water for all.

Sincerely,

Wenonah Hauter
Executive Director
Food & Water Watch

Jared Blumenfeld
Director
San Francisco Department
of the Environment



Why You Should Help San Francisco Break the Bottled Water Habit

In 2006, California consumers wasted billions of dollars on nearly 2 billion gallons of bottled water in large part because advertising spin has led them to believe that water in a bottle is safer or better than tap water. As much as 40 percent of bottled water comes from the tap.

Truth is, tap water generally is just as safe, clean, and healthful as bottled water, and in many cases more so. The federal government requires far more rigorous and frequent safety testing and monitoring of municipal drinking water. The Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates tap water, requires that utility companies test municipal water hundreds of times per month, while the Food & Drug Administration, which regulates bottled water, requires only one water test per week by bottling companies.

In fact, San Francisco's water is tested more than 100,000 times each year to make sure it meets the state and federal water quality standards that are much stricter for tap water than bottled water.

Bottled water causes many equity, public health, and environmental problems. Beverage companies often take water from municipal or underground sources that local people need. Producing plastic bottles uses energy and emits toxic chemicals. And transporting the bottled water spews pollution into the air, adding to global climate change.

Taking Back the Tap Helps Your Patrons' Health, Our Environment, and Your Bottom Line

By turning to your restaurant tap, you'll help consumers avoid the arsenic, microbes, toxic chemicals, and other pollutants that tests have found in various brands of bottled water. What's more, chemicals, such as phthalates, could leach from the plastic bottles into the water.

Along with protecting consumer health, turning to tap water could save your restaurant big money. On a per gallon basis, tap water costs about \$0.002 compared to the \$0.89 to \$8.26 charge for bottled water.

Larry Mindel, whose restaurant Poggio in Sausalito serves only filtered tap water, shared his thoughts with the Associated Press:

“Even though he could charge diners double or triple what he pays for water, he said it gives him a ‘stab’ to pay so much — or charge others — for something that falls from the sky.”

And according to Mike Kossa-Rienzi, general manager of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, in the same news article: “We just decided this was something we had to do. It just makes sense to us to not have to use all the energy and resources to bottle water in Italy and then truck it to our restaurant and then after that deal with the recycling of it.”

Giving up bottled water also helps our environment. U.S. plastic bottle production requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil, enough to fuel 100,000 cars. And in the end, about 86 percent of the empty plastic water bottles in the United States land in the garbage instead of being recycled.



Case Study: Incanto

Incanto is an Italian restaurant in San Francisco's Noe Valley neighborhood. Since it opened in June of 2002, Incanto has exclusively served San Francisco tap water: filtered, chilled, and served either still or sparkling in reusable one-liter carafes. Incanto made the decision to serve San Francisco water instead of selling imported bottled waters because it eliminates an awkward moment for guests and because serving local water goes hand-in-hand with serving locally grown food.

“Offering our guests complimentary filtered San Francisco water with their meal combines the best of generous hospitality, care for our surroundings, and authentic local flavor. What we sacrifice in profits by not selling bottled water, we more than make up in increased goodwill with our guests,”

– Mark Pastore, owner
Incanto

Serving San Francisco Water

While bottled water has proven to be an unreliable source of clean water, the city of San Francisco's documented water quality provides residents with the security to drink straight from the tap.

According to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the city's major water source originates from spring snowmelt flowing down the Tuolumne River and is stored in the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. Because this pristine water source meets or exceeds all federal and state criteria for watershed protection, disinfection treatment, bacteriological quality, and operational standards, the California Department of Health Services has granted this water source a filtration exemption. In other words, the source is so clean and protected that the SFPUC is not required to filter water from the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir.

Filtered Water for Your Restaurant?

In general, because of the high tap water quality in San Francisco, it is not necessary to filter tap water for public safety reasons. The State of California requires that every water utility produce and distribute an Annual Water Quality Report (also called a Consumer Confidence Report) that includes detailed information about potential contaminants, water sources and the actual

Case Study: Delfina

Delfina and Pizzeria Delfina are bustling neighborhood restaurants in San Francisco's Mission District. At Delfina, we discontinued serving still bottled water at the end of 2006. We made the decision to serve tap water because it eliminated the need for storage and disposal of excess bottles and because San Francisco has an excellent municipal water source.

The process required nothing more than installation of a simple filtration system. At Pizzeria Delfina, we incorporated a simple filter/chiller system into our original design it has proven to be extremely efficient. I would incorporate a similar system in any new project I'm involved with.

"I drink tap water all day long."

*– Craig Stoll, Co-owner
Delfina and Pizzeria Delfina*

results of testing from the previous year. Because of its high quality sources and rigorous testing and treatment, San Francisco's tap water consistently meets or exceeds every state and federal standard for drinking water. You can view the latest Annual Water Quality Report for yourself at www.sfwater.org or request a copy by calling the SFPUC at 415-554-3289.

However, we understand that even if tap water is perfectly safe to drink, you may still prefer to consider filtering the tap water to improve its taste (as a result of older plumbing) or to reassure and allay the fears of customers who may worry, likely because of the bottled water myth of purity, about tap water safety.

Commercial-grade water filters use many different technologies including calcite/carbon blends, Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) hexametaphosphate crystals, KDF media, UV light, softening resins and reverse osmosis. The different technologies use different techniques to remove particles or kill germs, and some are more effective for certain filtering needs than others.

Whatever technology the filter uses, the most important information for you to know is whether the particular product you are considering has been certified to remove your target contaminants. And, when you're looking for certification, don't just trust the company selling you the filter--make sure that their product has been tested by an independent certifying agency. National Sanitation Foundation International (NSF), Water Quality Association, and Under-

Case Study: Nopa

Nopa is a neighborhood gathering place located north of the panhandle of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. At Nopa we have been serving tap water over bottled water since our opening in April 2006. We made the decision to serve tap water because we are a local business wanting to utilize the local resources around us. The process of eliminating bottled water from the menu was an easy choice due to the logistics of storing and recycling bottled water. Making the decision to serve solely tap water has proven to be a sound decision for our guests as well as our business.

One of our biggest commitments to this community is to reduce the waste that we produce in serving 300 to 400 guests a night.

“Our goal is to leave a smaller imprint on this world. We’re not amazing. We’re the wave of the future.”

– Allyson Jossel

writers Laboratories Inc. are three well-regarded organizations that test and verify water treatment and filtration product claims.

Aside from making sure your filter is working on the appropriate particles, other factors to consider when purchasing a filter for your restaurant include the capacity of the filter, water efficiency (reverse osmosis filters are less water efficient than carbon filters), and hidden costs, such as installation, maintenance, and replacement filter fees. In addition to tap water filters, you may want to look at filters specifically designed for use with restaurant equipment such as ice makers, coffee makers and soda machines.

Some research may be necessary to determine what water filter best suits your restaurant’s needs. You can always contact a local water filtration and purification installation company for advice and price estimates. Just make sure to verify licensing and certifications of water distribution operators, and be aware that the equipment may require extra maintenance and installation costs.

Companies

In an effort to support restaurants in transition to serving tap water, we have provided this list of companies capable of installing commercial filtration systems. While Food & Water Watch and the City

of San Francisco cannot endorse or guarantee your satisfaction with these companies, we do hope that the list is helpful in achieving the goal of eliminating bottled water from your menu.

Resources

For more detailed and in-depth information about the issues with bottled water and the benefits of tap water, read our report *Take Back the Tap: Why Choosing Tap Water Over Bottled Water is Better for Your Health, Your Pocketbook, and the Environment*. Available at: www.takebackthetap.org

For specific water quality questions, you can call the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Monday through Friday between 7:30am and 4:30pm at 877-737-8297, or you can visit their website at: www.sfwater.org.

Company	Contact	Phone Number	Email Address
Lifesource	Fred Stankus	(626) 675-6104	fredlifesource@aol.com
US Pure Water Corp 20 Galli Dr, Ste. E Navato, CA 94949	Michael Davis	(415) 883-9900	mdwater@uspurewater.com
Multi-Pure Water Filtration Systems	Christian Fredricksen	(800) 420-3499	h2ofixx@earthlink.net



Common Questions and Answers About Tap Water

Q: Why should I drink tap water instead of bottled water?

A: Over the course of a year, tap water costs hundreds or thousands less than bottled water and is just as clean and healthy as bottled water. It is tested over 100,000 times a year for contaminants.

Q: How do you know whether the tap water is safe?

A: San Francisco tap water meets or exceeds all federal and state drinking water standards and is tested more than 100,000 times each year. The source of most of San Francisco's tap water is pristine Sierra Nevada snowmelt that requires minimal treatment. By contacting the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, you can request a copy of San Francisco's Annual Water Quality Report, also referred to as the Consumer Confidence Report. There you can see detailed information about potential contaminants, water sources and the results of actual testing. You can see the Report at www.sfwater.org. The SFPUC, as well as some private laboratories, also will come out and test water if you fear a contamination problem.

Q: Can a filter remove chlorine and fluoride?

A: When it comes to chlorine, the answer is "yes." Most water filters remove or reduce this chemical disinfectant. On the other hand, fluoride is more of a challenge. Typically, only reverse osmosis filters and distillation units reduce or remove it.

Q: Tap water tastes funny. What did you do about that?

A: Odd tasting water does not necessarily mean that it is unhealthy or contaminated. The taste could be due to older plumbing, chlorination or to the mineral content in the water. A commercial filtration system like ours is the best solution to this problem.

Take Back the Tap Pledge

Key Facts:

- Most tap water is just as clean and safe as bottled water.
- The idea that all bottled water is pure is a marketing myth.
- Plastic bottles can leach chemicals into the water.
- About 86 percent of the empty plastic water bottles in the United States land in the garbage instead of being recycled.

As a chef and/or restaurant owner our business pledges to:

- Eliminate the sale of non-carbonated bottled water;
- Switch to serving only municipal tap water;
- Help educate customers about the benefits of tap over bottled water;
- Whenever possible, install a carbonation machine to make sparkling water from the tap.

BUSINESS _____

CONTACT _____

TITLE _____

PHONE _____ **FAX** _____

EMAIL _____

STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Fax to: 415-904-8394. For more info, contact Noelle Ferdon:

415-904-8399 or nferdon@fwwatch.org

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