# Olympic dining transformed: from chicken nuggets to Michelin-starred cuisine



As the world gears up for the excitement of the 2024 Olympic Games, athletes will be in for a culinary treat befitting the host nation's reputation for fine dining. Jake Food has heard that gone are the days of fast food dominations such as the 2008 Beijing Games, where Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt famously consumed around 1,000 chicken nuggets from McDonald's, a former Olympic sponsor, over ten days.

France has elevated the Olympic dining experience by enlisting the expertise of Michelin-starred chefs to design the menu at the Olympic Village. Athletes can expect dishes such as poached eggs, artichoke cream, and veal in velouté sauce. This change comes under the stewardship of Philipp Würz, the Olympics head of food, who has worked diligently to provide a healthier food selection. McDonald's, which accounted for around 20% of the meals at the London 2012 games, is absent from the Games due to its expired sponsorship, leading to a significant shift towards health-conscious offerings.

French culinary stars, including chefs Amandine Chaignot, Alexandre Mazzia, and Akrame Benallal, have contributed to creating an extensive menu that aligns with athletes' nutritional needs while showcasing the best of French cuisine. Among the highlights are speciality boulangerie items like croissants and pain au chocolat, a variety of desserts such as chocolate raspberry mousse, and hearty main courses including cod with prune condiment and cheese soufflé.

Approximately 80% of the food ingredients are sourced from within France, with all meat coming from French suppliers. Additionally, to cater to the diverse dietary preferences and requirements of the nearly 15,000 Olympians and Paralympians, about 30% of meals will be plant-based. Grab-and-go sections will also provide fast food alternatives such as soy-based nuggets, hot dogs, and burgers, allowing for quick and easy meal options.

Six dining stands will represent global cuisine, including one dedicated to traditional French food and another focused on halal-prepared meals. Special requests from international teams will also be accommodated, ranging from protein-rich options like chicken skewers and salmon fillets to cultural staples such as Japan's miso and Britain and Ireland's beloved porridge.

The dining experience is bolstered by the ban on alcohol sales in Olympic venues, in adherence to 'Evin's Law,' which prohibits the sale of alcohol to the general public in sports stadiums, a regulation that extends to both athletes and spectators, ensuring a focus on health and performance.

Athletes will be staying in an environment equipped with state-of-the-art dining facilities, including a 3,500-seat restaurant within the Olympic Village. Despite the absence of some familiar fast-food items, the focus is firmly on providing nutritious, flavoursome, and high-standard food that can meet the rigours of Olympic competition.

The 2024 Paris Olympic Games will kick off on July 26, with the opening ceremony, followed by competitive events starting on July 27. Team GB is set to bring 300 athletes to Paris, including notable figures from previous Olympics, and the youngest, Sky Brown, a bronze medallist in skateboarding from Tokyo, and gay sporting icon Tom Daley, who is expected to be the UK’s flag-bearer.