



Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide 2.0



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Introduction

Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide 2.0 is designed to equip restaurants with tools to avoid greenwashing and choose the best Ocean Friendly products for their businesses. Since the first Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide was launched in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on the restaurant industry and greatly increased the public's reliance on single-use plastic **takeout items**. Despite this setback, governments at **global, federal, state, and local** levels have pushed for more sustainable packaging and single-use plastic bans. This increased awareness of the plastic pollution crisis and the ensuing policy actions have resulted in an expansion of good, bad, and sometimes in-between alternative products entering the market.

The good news is that Ocean Friendly products are more widely available than ever before. Restaurants can now buy sustainable products from national retailers at discounted and wholesale prices. Additionally, there is better awareness and avoidance of harmful chemical additives, such as polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances (**PFAS**) and Bisphenol A (**BPA**). We've even seen more **cities** and **states** pass policies that require or incentivize reuse, making it easier for restaurants to get rid of disposables altogether.

The bad news is that some companies have become more subtle in their greenwashing tactics and market their products as biodegradable or compostable without providing a full list of ingredients or trusted certifications. Companies have also made efforts to avoid the term 'bioplastic,' which can have a negative connotation, and instead use terms such as 'plant-based' or 'bio-based' to describe their biopolymers. In addition, recycling continues to be an unreliable form of waste management as the **U.S. recycling rate** fell to 5-6% in 2021 and most cities still do not have industrial compost facilities required to dispose of certain compostable or bioplastic products.

Due to the sheer amount of products on the market and rampant greenwashing, navigating the world of plastic alternatives hasn't gotten any easier. That's why we've updated our Foodware Guide to help restaurants stay

informed and increase awareness of what's on the market today. The latest Foodware Guide provides updated terminology, a decision matrix to help review products and avoid greenwashing, as well as case studies and examples of new products ranging from 'best choice' to 'what to avoid.' While this guide does not put forward all of the available options, the goal is to provide a starting point.

Thank you for being a member of the Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Restaurants program! We appreciate your commitment to protecting our ocean and beaches by reducing the amount of single-use plastics used in your establishment. If you are not yet a member, you can **sign up now** or reach out to your **local chapter or club** for more information. One restaurant, one customer at a time – together, we are increasing awareness, driving behavior change, and ultimately creating scalable impact to reduce our collective plastic footprint.



Common Terms & Labels



Common Terms & Labels

There are many buzzwords and labels swirling around the market today. While some labels have a vetted verification process to ensure products meet certain standards, others aren't well regulated and don't hold much weight. Words such as 'renewable,' 'biodegradable,' 'eco,' or 'green' can often be used with no scientific backing at all. This can sometimes result in 'greenwashing,' which makes it even more difficult to make the right choice. By outlining the below terms, we hope to provide the knowledge needed to make informed decisions on the foodware products used in your establishment.

BIO-BASED PLASTICS

As stated by the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), "bio-based plastics are manufactured from plant materials instead of being made from oil or natural gas." As they are plant-based, there is a tendency to assume that this type of plastic must be biodegradable. However, bio-based plastics can be designed to be structurally identical to petroleum-based plastics. If designed in this way, they can last in the environment for the same period of time as petroleum-based plastic and result in the production of microplastics. Bio-based plastics are usually branded with a leaf symbol and may state that they are made from corn, sugar cane, agave, or other natural-sounding sources. These products may have a large environmental footprint because of fertilizers, pesticides, and the land needed to grow the crops. There is often no indicator to state what percentage of the plastic is made from plants. Even the [USDA](#) sets their minimum bio-based requirement at just 25%, with the rest of the polymer usually made from or blended with conventional fossil fuel-based plastic.

BIODEGRADABLE

The [EPA](#) defines this as "the ability of a substance to be broken down physically and/or chemically by microorganisms. For example, many chemicals, food scraps, cotton, wool, and paper are biodegradable; plastics and polyester generally are not." While this term does mean that items can be broken down, the term typically hasn't taken into account the time frame for degradation to occur, which could be months, years, or longer. It also often doesn't consider if chemicals would be left over in the environment or released during the degradation process. Additionally, the definition doesn't outline the specific conditions required for proper degradation, such as specific heat, moisture, or oxygen levels. These conditions do not exist in common disposal sites or out in the environment. In fact, if bioplastics end up in the landfill, they release methane, which is a greenhouse gas that is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide. More often than not, "biodegradable" items don't fully break down, resulting in more microplastic pollution. The term biodegradable is not well-regulated, so be wary of companies that tout their products as biodegradable without any certifications or end-of-life instructions.

BIOPLASTICS

Bioplastics are polymers that often look and feel like plastic. They can be made from non-fossil fuel or renewable sources, and may or may not biodegrade or compost, depending on how a product is made. Bioplastic is sometimes used as a broader term that also refers to a fossil fuel-based plastic that has been combined with additives to become biodegradable over various time frames.

While some labels have a vetted verification process to ensure products meet certain standards, others aren't well regulated and don't hold much weight. Words such as 'renewable,' 'biodegradable,' 'eco,' or 'green' can often be used with no scientific backing at all.

COMPOSTABLE

The simplified definition by [Lexico](#) states, “able to be made into compost,” with [compost](#) defined as “decayed organic material used as a plant fertilizer.” Similar to biodegradable products, most compostable products, especially bioplastics, require highly specific environmental conditions. This means that these items will not simply turn into compost when tossed in a landfill or in our waterways. An important distinction to note is whether an item is home compostable or only compostable in a specialized industrial composting facility. While the term ‘compostable’ is more highly regulated than the term ‘biodegradable,’ there are still some factors to consider before purchasing compostable products, such as proper disposal methods.

INDUSTRIAL COMPOSTABLE

If a product is only compostable in a specialized industrial composting facility, which is usually the case with bioplastic foodware, these facilities can be difficult to come by and jurisdictions often lack the distribution networks needed to get compostable waste from your trash bin to the right facility. Further, some industrial composting facilities are beginning to [reject bioplastics](#) because they often don’t break down completely, take a longer time to process, and contain chemicals that can contaminate the compost and reduce its value. Industrial compostable products are often labeled with certifications, such as ASTM D6400, ASTM 6868, or EN 13432.

HOME COMPOSTABLE

Home composting for natural food waste, such as fruits and vegetables, plant debris, and even paper products with minimal ink or chemical processing, has some fantastic benefits. Products labeled as home compostable (such as certified ‘TUV Home Compost’) are more easily able to break down into their natural material. Home compostable means that materials are able to meet the ‘compostable’ specifications without the need for an industrial composting facility. Under TUV Austria’s OK Compost HOME certification, the material must, through backyard compost methods such as worm bins or compost piles: (1) biodegrade by 90 percent or more within 365 days; (2) fully disintegrate in a way that makes the materials indistinguishable from the compost soil; and (3) not have measurable ecotoxicity.

GREENWASHING

Greenwashing occurs when companies label and market products as environmentally friendly to potentially capitalize on the growing environmental awareness among consumers without actually providing an environmental benefit. Consumers may feel better about their choices, even though those items may have similar or even worse environmental impacts than their previous choice in product. To add insult to injury, these products are often more expensive than the ones they intend to replace.

MINIMALLY-PROCESSED NATURALLY OCCURRING MATERIALS

Surfrider defines “minimally-processed naturally occurring materials” as products made with ingredients that are not artificial or fossil fuel-based, and have not undergone extensive processing and/or chemical modification from their natural state. Naturally occurring materials, such as paper, bamboo, wood, hay, and seaweed, for example, do not require industrial composting facilities for disposal. Some certifications that Surfrider looks for include: USDA Certified 100% Biobased and TUV Home Compost. No certification is perfect, however, so try to seek out products that show a full list of product ingredients before determining if a product is made from naturally occurring materials.



MARINE DEGRADABLE

Marine degradable generally means a material has the ability to completely biodegrade under marine environmental conditions, including aerobic marine waters or anaerobic marine sediments within a specified time frame, leaving no toxic substances or residue (so it doesn't have any ecotoxicity). Some will only apply this term to non-plastics, such as cellulose materials like paper. As a standard providing more clarity, assurance and testing requirements needs to be provided for this term to be effective and meaningful – currently it is not a reliable term.

PETROLEUM-BASED PLASTICS

These are conventional fossil fuel-based plastics, which are usually cheap, plentiful, and highly resistant to biodegradation, regardless of environmental conditions. While this seems like a beneficial quality when using the product, the convenience has dangerous consequences throughout its lifecycle. These materials have not been shown to biodegrade in our lifetime, even with [controlled experiments](#) using a wide range of microorganism strains. Since they are produced from fossil fuel, they are also a major contributor to climate change and should therefore be avoided when purchasing disposable products. To make matters worse, petroleum-based plastics can release toxic chemicals into food or beverages that are being served.

PFAS

Poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”) are a group of man-made chemicals commonly found in food packaging and household products, such as nonstick pans and water-resistant fabrics. According to the EPA, PFAS can accumulate in the body over time, which is why they are also referred to as “forever chemicals.” They have been linked to adverse health outcomes, including cancer, compromised immune system function and hormone disruption. See Surfrider’s [Beachapedia article](#) for more information.

PLA

Polylactic Acid (PLA) is a bio-based plastic commonly used in foodware and takeout items, and marketed as a sustainable alternative to conventional plastics. Despite claims of environmental friendliness, products made from PLA will only reach complete degradation at industrial composting facilities and often contain high ‘upstream impacts’ from growing the plant-based material and processing it into a plastic product. PLA is often made from corn and the raw materials must undergo an intense and highly polluting [chemical process](#) to transform that organic material into PLA. PLA plastic will not break down into natural elements in your backyard composting pile, the landfill, or most importantly, the ocean.

For more details and to learn more about bioplastics, check out Surfrider’s [Bioplastics Facts and Research Page](#).



Ocean Friendly Product Guide



Ocean Friendly Product Guide

To help you review products and avoid greenwashing, we've created a Product Buying Guide and Decision Matrix. We hope you will use this tool to evaluate the products you're currently using, discover products you may not have considered in the past and, compare costs. While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, remember to consider how long you will use them and calculate the cost savings of switching away from single-use disposable items over time. [Studies](#) show that switching to reusables have saved restaurants between \$3,000 and \$22,000.

You can use tools from [Rethink Disposable](#), [Upstream](#), and [Product Stewardship Council](#) to calculate cost savings at your restaurant.

Please note that costs may vary depending on the quantity purchased or whether wholesale pricing options are available in your area. The MSRP cost per unit for each product was added in February 2024. We've highlighted which vendors offer discounts to current Ocean Friendly Restaurants. Reach out to ofr@surfrider.org or your [local chapter or club](#) for more information.



Foodware Buying Guide

CATEGORIES

We've categorized the following foodware options as either "best choice," or "good alternative." We hope this inspires you to find ways to reduce your use of single-use items and make more sustainable choices for your business.

Best Choice

Durable, nontoxic, preferably non-plastic reusables. The Surfrider Foundation advocates for a reduction in the overall use of single-use plastic items by switching to reusables whenever possible. That's why a mandatory criterion for the program is that onsite dining must be served on reusables. This includes cups, plates, sauce containers, and anything else you use to serve your customers. Eating with reusables elevates the presentation of the food and the customer's dining experience, while also helping to avoid harmful chemicals and create less waste. However, not all reusables are made equal. Some reusable plastics, such as melamine, have been found to leach toxic chemicals when exposed to high heat. For this reason, melamine products are not included in the following list.















Good Alternative

Single-use items made from minimally-processed naturally occurring materials, such as paper-based items, bamboo plates, wooden utensils, straws made completely from paper, hay, seaweed, bamboo, and more! That said, beware of plastic-lined paper items, as these are not recyclable or home compostable. Words to look out for include "PLA lining", "plant-based lining," and "grease resistant," to name a few. Additionally, a number of paper and fiber-based products have been found to contain toxic PFAS. These forever chemicals can leach into the food we eat, contaminate compost, and ultimately end up in our bodies. For this reason, items found to contain PFAS are not included in the list below. This section also features aluminum cups, which can be reused multiple times and are typically easily recycled.



ITEMS TO AVOID

Plastics and bioplastics. Watch out for greenwashing and terms that do not require certifications. A product that states 'compostable' doesn't necessarily mean it will be composted or can be composted at home. Phrases to look out for include "made from renewable resources," "eco-friendly," "bio-based," "degradable," "marine biodegradable," "PLA," and "green." If you're confused about whether an item is bioplastic, ask yourself, "does this look and feel like plastic?" If it does, then it probably is a plastic or a bioplastic. In addition, take some time to explore the product's website – if ingredients or processes aren't clearly listed, then the product information may not be transparent.













TAKEOUT CONTAINERS									
	MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT		
	Klean Kanteen Food Box	Recycled 18/8 Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	Klean Kanteen	10 oz, 23 oz, 34 oz, 55 oz	\$12.95+	Yes	Yes	BEST CHOICE
	ECOlunchbox Reusable Container	Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	ECOlunchbox	3 oz, 7 oz, 12 oz, 20 oz, 26 oz, 48 oz	\$15.25+	Yes	Yes	
	UKonserve Reusable Container	Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	UKonserve	25 oz	\$19.99+	Yes	No	
	Fallen Palm Leaf Takeout Box	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Verterra	4.75 x 6.75", 8.4 x 6.6", 9 x 5.5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Paper Takeout Container	Uncoated Kraft Paper	Kraft Paper, Recyclable when clean	Webstaurant	8 oz, 16 oz, 24 oz, 32 oz	\$0.11+	Yes	No	
	Foil Takeout Pan with Lid Takeout Container	Aluminum Foil	Recyclable when clean	Webstaurant	8", 7", 9", 10"	\$0.13+	Yes	No	
UTENSILS									
	MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT		
	Stainless Utensils	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	Size varies	Price varies	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Bamboo Chopsticks	Bamboo	Reusable, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased	Bambu	9.25"	\$2.87+	Yes	Yes	
	Bamboo Utensils	Bamboo	Reusable, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased	Bambu	7.25"	\$3.86+	Yes	Yes	
	Bamboo Utensils	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Bambu or Webstaurant	6.5"	\$0.18+	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Wooden Utensils	Birch wood	FSC-Certified, Home Compostable	Eco-Gecko or Webstaurant	6.5"	\$0.05+	Yes	No	
	Wooden Utensils	Poplar and Pine Wood	FSC-Certified, Home Compostable	Wood Able	NA	\$0.09+	Yes	No	
	Bamboo Dessert Spoon	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	5.5"	\$0.05+	Yes	Yes	
	Bamboo Utensils	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	6.7"	Price varies	Yes	Yes	







COLD CUPS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Glass Cup	Glass	Reusable	Webstaurant	14 oz	\$1.05+	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Klean Kanteen Steel Cup	Recycled Stainless Steel	Reusable	Klean Kanteen	10 oz, 16 oz	\$9.95+	Yes	Yes	
	Steelys Steel Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Steelys Drinkware	7 oz	\$3.75+	NA	No	
	Stainless Steel Depot Steel Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Stainless Depot Company by Hogg	15 oz	\$2.90+	NA	No	
	Coconut Cup	Coconut Shells	Reusable	The Coconut King	Approx. 12 oz	\$1.75+	No	No	
	SiliPint Cup	Silicone	Reusable	SiliPint	16 oz	\$9.98+	Yes	No	
	Ball Aluminum Cup	Aluminum	Reusable, Recyclable	Webstaurant or local grocery stores	16 oz	\$0.41+	Yes	No	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	SOFi Paper Cup	Coating-free Paper	FSC, Recyclable, Home Compostable	SOFi or Webstaurant	8 oz, 12 oz, 16 oz, 20 oz	\$0.13+	Yes	Yes	
HOT CUPS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Glass Coffee Mug	Glass	Reusable	Webstaurant	12 oz	\$1.68+	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Stoneware Coffee Mug	Stoneware	Reusable	Webstaurant	12 oz	\$1.21+	Yes	No	
	SOFi Paper Cup	Coating-free Paper	FSC, Recyclable, Home Compostable	SOFi or Webstaurant	8 oz, 12 oz, 16 oz	\$0.13+	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE

STRAWS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT
	Reusable Straw	Stainless Steel	Reusable	4RTides	6", 8.5"	\$0.75+	Yes	Yes
	Dishwasher Safe Straw Cleaning Caddy	Polypropylene	Reusable	4RTides	4" x 4"x 7"	\$29.99	No	No
	Reusable Straw	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	5.5", 6.5", 8.5"	\$0.83+	Yes	No
	Reusable Straw	Stainless Steel with Silicone Tip	Reusable	Klean Kanteen	8mm, 10mm	\$1.50+	Yes	Yes
	Reusable Boba Straw	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Impresa	0.5", 8.5"	\$1.19+	Yes	No
	Bamboo Straw	Bamboo	Reusable, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased	Bambu	8.0", 8.5"	\$1.66+	No	Yes
	Reed Stem Straw	Reed	Reusable, CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	5.5", 7.9"	\$0.08+	Yes	Yes
	Boba Reed Straw	Reed	Reusable, CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	7.9"	\$0.11+	Yes	Yes
	Wheat Straw	Wheat	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 99% Biobased, Home Compostable	Holy City Straw Company	5.5", 7.9"	\$0.03+	Yes	Yes
	Paper Boba Straw	Paper	CMA, SFI, FSC, Home Compostable, PFAS Free	Aardvark Straws or Webstaurant	8.5"	\$0.05+	Yes	Yes
	Paper Straw	Paper	CMA, SFI, FSC, Home Compostable, PFAS Free	Aardvark Straws or Webstaurant	5.75", 7.75", 10.0"	\$0.04+	Yes	Yes
	Paper Straw	Paper	SFI, FSC, Home Compostable, PFAS Free	Boss Straw	5.75", 7.75", 8.5", 10"	\$0.03+	Yes	Yes
	Hay Boba Straw	Wheat Stems, Plant stems	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	HAY! Straws or Webstaurant	8"	\$0.13+	Yes	Yes
	Hay Straw	Wheat Stems, Plant stems	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	HAY! Straws or Webstaurant	5.0", 7.75"	\$0.04+	Yes	Yes
	Seaweed Straw	Seaweed	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Loliware	5", 7.5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes

BEST CHOICE

GOOD ALTERNATIVE

PLATES & BOWLS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Porcelain Plate	Porcelain	Reusable	Webstaurant	Size varies	Price varies	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Stoneware Bowl	Stoneware	Reusable	Webstaurant	Size varies	Price varies	Yes	No	
	Coconut Bowl	Coconut Shells	Reusable, Home Compostable	Coconut Bowls	17 oz	\$6.50+	Yes	No	
	Bamboo Plate	Bamboo	CMA, USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Bambu or Webstaurant	5", 7", 9", 11"	\$0.59+	Yes	Yes	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Palm Leaf Plate	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	6", 7", 8", 9", 10", 12"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	
	Palm Leaf Plate	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Clear Conscience	3", 4", 6", 7", 9", 10"	\$0.75+	No	No	
	Palm Leaf Bowl	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	2.5", 3.5", 5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	
	Palm Leaf Bowl	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	Clear Conscience	5", 5.5", 6", 7", 9"	\$0.67+	No	No	
SAUCE CUPS & RAMEKINS		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT	
	Porcelain Ramekin	Porcelain	Reusable	Webstaurant	5 oz	\$1.58+	Yes	No	BEST CHOICE
	Round Sauce Cup	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	1.5 oz	\$0.17+	Yes	No	
	Round Ramekin	Aluminum	Recyclable when Clean	Webstaurant	4 oz	\$0.04+	Yes	No	GOOD ALTERNATIVE
	Palm Leaf Ramekin	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	2 oz, 3 oz	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes	

OTHER		MATERIAL	CERTIFICATION & DISPOSAL METHOD	VENDOR	SIZES	COST PER UNIT	WHOLESALE AVAILABLE	OFR DISCOUNT
	Silipint Kids Cup with Lid	Silicone	Reusable	Silipint	8 oz	\$14.00	Yes	No
	Klean Kanteen Kid's Cup	Recycled Stainless Steel with Silicone Lid	Reusable	Klean Kanteen	10 oz	\$17.95	Yes	Yes
	Stainless Steel Rectangular Divided Tray	Stainless Steel	Reusable	Webstaurant	15.5 x 11.5"	\$6.25+	Yes	No
	Bar Bottle	Glass	Reusable	Crew Supply Co.	28 oz	\$18.25+	Yes	Yes
	Pour Spout	Silicone	Reusable	Crew Supply Co.	NA	\$2.49+	Yes	Yes
	Palm Leaf Tray	Fallen Palm Leaves	USDA BioPreferred 100% Biobased, Home Compostable	VerTerra	2 x 4", 4 x 4", 4.5 x 6, 6 x 9", 8 x 12", 10 x 14.5", 10 x 15.5"	Inquire for pricing	Yes	Yes

BEST CHOICE

GOOD ALTERNATIVE



Product Decision Matrix

When Reusables Are Not Available, How Do You Find the Most Ocean Friendly Single-Use Product? Use this tool to review products and avoid greenwashing. If you can answer **yes** across the board – then the product is likely a good option.

GUIDANCE	SPECIFIC QUALITIES	WHAT IT MEANS IF THE ANSWER IS "NO"
<p>Product is made completely of naturally occurring materials</p>	<p>All product ingredients are clearly listed on the product website (if not right on the packaging)</p>	<p>If No – be wary as transparency is a must in this industry. Too often, companies sneak plastics, plastic derivatives, or harmful chemicals (like PFAS!) into their products.</p>
	<p>Product looks and feels different from plastic</p>	<p>If No – this product could have had its natural ingredients chemically altered to be identical to traditional plastics, taking years (or decades) to fully break down, or designed in a way that only breaks down in industrial composters. It can also cause confusion for users on how best to dispose.</p>
	<p>Product is certified as 100% bio-based (e.g. USDA Biobased 100%)</p>	<p>If No – be wary as this can mean that fossil fuel-based plastics, plastic derivatives, or harmful chemicals have been added to the product, and it is therefore not “made of completely naturally occurring materials.” Note: There’s a 1% degree of error so products listed as 99% still meet this requirement.</p>
<p>Product is able to breakdown in the natural environment</p>	<p>Product does not require industrial composting facilities to fully breakdown</p>	<p>If No – this means that the product has not been confirmed to be able to fully breakdown in a home compost pile by a third-party certification. While certifications aren’t perfect, they provide some assurance that the product will break down in the conditions stated, over a specified time frame, and won’t cause any toxicity. This last bit is extra important since many seemingly natural products can be lined with toxic chemicals like PFAS.</p>
	<p>Product is certified as home compostable (e.g. TUV OK Compost Home)*</p>	<p>If No – this means that the product has not been confirmed to be able to fully breakdown in a home compost pile by a third-party certification. While certifications aren’t perfect, they provide some assurance that the product will break down in the conditions stated, over a specified time frame, and won’t cause any toxicity. This last bit is extra important since many seemingly natural products can be lined with toxic chemicals like PFAS.</p>
<p>Bonus! Product materials are born of the waste stream</p>	<p>Product materials are upcycled and would otherwise be discarded (e.g. corn husk, agave fibre, oyster shells).</p>	<p>If No – some of the materials in this product were ‘purpose-grown, meaning that you’ll need to consider the embedded emissions and environmental impact that went into growing the source material (e.g. land clearing, habitat loss, fertilizers, pesticides).</p>

*Certified Home Compostable or made completely from a single, unprocessed or minimally processed natural material that’s undergone toxicity testing.

Case Studies



CASE STUDY

Channel Islands Juice Co.

RESTAURANT DETAILS

Location: 291 E Thompson Rd Ventura, CA 93001

Industry: Fast Casual

Average Daily Guests: 0-100

Channel Islands Juice Co. has a simple mission. To make truly organic juice that is restorative and nourishing. Each hand-crafted blend is served in a returnable and reusable glass jar, that protects and assures freshness. Channel Islands Juice Co. is fiercely committed to using locally sourced ingredients from sustainable sources that nourish the mind, body, and soul.



OCEAN FRIENDLY PRACTICES

- Only reusable foodware is used for onsite dining.
- Paper straws are provided only upon request.
- No expanded polystyrene is used (aka Styrofoam).
- No plastic bags are used for takeout or to-go orders.
- Single-use utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items are provided only upon request.
- Beverages are not sold in plastic bottles.
- Proper recycling practices are followed.
- A discount is offered for customers with a reusable item.
- Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered on a regular basis.
- Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.
- Energy efficiency efforts are in place.
- Composting efforts are in place for food waste.

REUSABLE BOTTLE PROGRAM

Channel Islands Juice Co. serves their cold-pressed juices in refillable and returnable glass bottles. Once a customer returns their glass bottle, they get a \$2 refund. Most customers use that \$2 refund to buy another juice or opt for a wooden token to be used on a juice order at a later date. Customers can also bring their own bottles for a discount. By using this model, this Ocean Friendly Restaurant sees a 50-60% return rate on their bottles and eliminates over 18,000 plastic bottles annually. While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, we estimate that Channel Islands Juice Co. saves \$900-\$2,000 per year after reaching their break-even point. Plus, this reuse model gives customers an excuse to come back!

**Cost comparison based on price for plastic bottles on [Webstaurant](#) as of October 2023.*

While the upfront cost of reusables may be more expensive, we estimate that Channel Islands Juice Co. saves \$900-\$2,000 per year after reaching their break-even point.

CASE STUDY

The Tiny Turtle

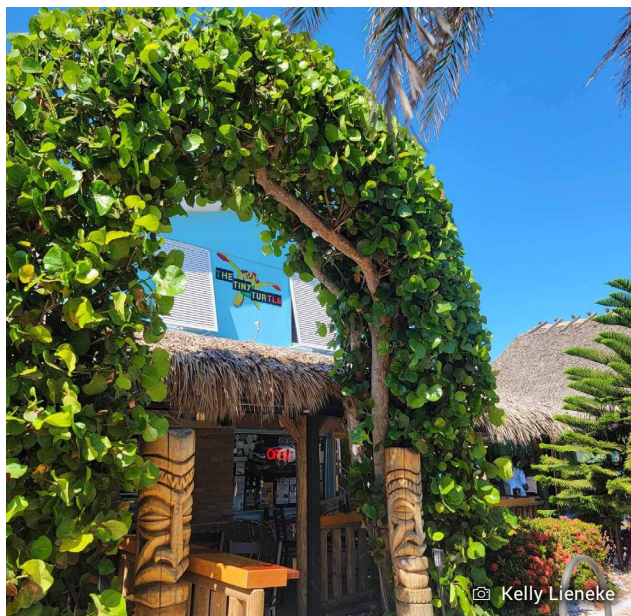
RESTAURANT DETAILS

Location: 249 Minutemen Causeway Cocoa Beach, FL 32931

Industry: Fast Casual

Average Daily Guests: 100-300

The Tiny Turtle offers a unique Puerto Rican cuisine with a touch of Caribbean Fusion. The Tiny Turtle opened its 'Food Truck Style' window during the annual art show in Downtown Cocoa Beach ten years ago. Over the years since, The Tiny Turtle has expanded and evolved into one of the top full-service restaurants in Cocoa Beach.



OCEAN FRIENDLY PRACTICES:

- Only reusable foodware is used for onsite dining.
- Paper straws are provided only upon request.
- No expanded polystyrene is used (aka Styrofoam).
- No plastic bags are used for takeout or to-go orders.
- Single-use utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items are provided only upon request.
- Beverages are not sold in plastic bottles.
- Proper recycling practices are followed.
- Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered on a regular basis.
- Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.
- Energy efficiency efforts are in place.
- Neither single-use nor bio-based plastic containers are used for takeout or to-go orders.

PAPER STRAWS UPON REQUEST ONLY

The Tiny Turtle serves paper straws upon request by the customer only. They serve about 200 guests daily and staff estimate that roughly 20 customers ask for a straw every day. With this 90% percent reduction in paper straw usage, we estimate that **The Tiny Turtle saves over \$3,000 every year.** See the breakdown below.

STRAWS OFFERED	COST PER STRAW	APPROX. STRAWS PER DAY	APPROX. ANNUAL COST
Without Request	\$0.05	200	\$3,650
Only Upon Request	\$0.05	20	\$365
Estimated Annual Savings			\$3,285

Tip! Some ways that The Tiny Turtle reduces straw usage is by keeping them out of sight and out of mind. Staff do not keep straws in their aprons and they have educational signs on their tables explaining why they are an Ocean Friendly Restaurant. This way, customers know what to expect and become informed about the harms of plastic pollution on marine life.



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