

Plastic Alternative Guide

Food & Beverage Foodware Recommendations



The City of Irvine is actively educating the community on how businesses, residents, and City facilities can replace single-use plastics with reusable or non-plastic items.

Recent legislation such as **AB 1276** and **SB 54** is driving a statewide shift to reduce single-use plastic packaging and increase the use of reusable and recyclable materials. In response, the City of Irvine is highlighting reusable and nonplastic alternatives to help businesses transition smoothly. As the market shifts toward reduced waste alternatives, Irvine aims to help businesses adapt, reduce waste, and prepare for future requirements.

GOAL: To reduce single-use plastics to protect our environment and communities.

Use reusables when possible and refer to our list of recommended non-plastic alternatives when needed.



REDUCING YOUR COSTS

Reusables reduce the frequency of purchases and disposal costs. This switch leads to long-term savings.

Long-Term Savings

- Plastics and alternatives are often comparable in costs.

Waste Management Savings

- Using reusables reduces trash hauling fees due to less waste.

Cost-Cutting Strategies

- Use dispensers for straws and napkins to reduce unnecessary waste.
- Offer bulk condiments to further reduce costs.
- Train staff to give out disposable items only upon request.



ATTRACTING NEW CUSTOMERS AND EARNING THEIR LOYALTY

Numerous California cities and counties, covering over 18 million people, have implemented single use plastic reduction efforts.

Environmentally Conscious Businesses

- Create positive public perception and brand recognition.
- Attract new customers and reward them for sustainable behavior changes, securing loyalty.
- Increase revenue.
- Reduce waste and conserve resources.
- Increase sustainable consumption.



ECOLOGICAL HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY

Reusables lessen the impact of fossil fuel extraction, manufacturing, and waste management.

Reduction of Plastic Pollution

- Reusable and non-plastic items significantly reduce plastic waste in the environment. This change creates healthier ecosystems and cleaner water ways.

Lowering Carbon Footprint

- Single-use plastics contribute to greenhouse gas emissions throughout their lifecycle.
- By switching to reusables and non-plastic items, businesses can reduce their carbon footprint and help combat climate change.



Guide Criteria

The items featured in the Irvine Plastic Alternative Guide were selected based on strict health, safety, and environmental criteria to ensure they truly represent sustainable choices.

Products included contain **no plastic of any kind** (such as polyethylene, polypropylene, or PET), and deliberately exclude so-called “compostable” **bioplastics** like **PLA** or **PHA**, which often fail to break down properly.

To protect human and ecosystem health, they are free from **PFAS** (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), **bisphenols** (BPA, BPS, etc.), **polystyrene** (including Styrofoam), and **ortho-phthalates**, all of which are known for their toxicity, persistence, or hormone-disrupting effects.

Whenever possible, items also avoid **plastic packaging**, including **shrink wrap, plastic caps, labels, and trays**, in order to reduce hidden sources of waste.

Materials are chosen with an emphasis on **BPI certification** or other **third-party compostable verifications** to guarantee end-of-life responsibility.





In addition, all products are vetted to ensure they do not rely on **toxic glues, inks, or coatings**, nor do they use **plastic linings on aluminum products**, which often compromise recyclability.





Save money and the environment!

Reusable foodware can reduce costs for your business.

| | Reusable | Lifetime | Disposable |
|---|--|------------------|--|
|  | 1 ceramic plate 9 in. \$1.39 | 1000 uses | 1,000 plates Paper with plastic \$12.74 Paper \$21.97 Compostable \$77.90 Styrofoam \$36.86 |
|  | 1 metal fork \$0.12 1 metal knife \$0.29 1 metal spoon \$0.10 | 1000 uses | 1,000 flatware Plastic fork \$6.29 Plastic knife \$6.29 Plastic spoon \$6.29 Set of 3 \$32.98 |
|  | 1 ceramic mug 12 oz. \$2.95 | 500 uses | 500 hot cups Paper with plastic \$26.65 Compostable \$38.48 |
|  | 1 glass cup 12 oz. \$1.54 | 1000 uses | 1,000 cold cups Plastic \$47.70 Compostable \$96.94 |
|  | 1 plastic basket red \$0.27 | 100 uses | 100 baskets Clay-coated paper \$1.21 |

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ALL FOOD SERVICE BUSINESSES:

AB 1276 requires all food service businesses to provide single-use foodware, condiments, and utensils only upon customer **request**, in an effort to reduce plastic consumption.

FOODWARE

The links and prices in this guide were updated in October 2025, and are subject to change as products, pricing, and relevant policies are updated.

The prices listed in this guide reflect standard retail rates. Most suppliers offer significant discounts for bulk orders, wholesale purchases, or subscription plans, which can be found on their website.

Recommended Takeout Containers / Clamshells



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Bagasse | Karat Earth | \$0.11 per container |
| Corrugated Cardboard | Sabert | \$0.20 per container |
| Palm Leaves | Verterra | Contact Company for Pricing |
| Sugarcane Fibers | Tellus | \$0.21 per container |
| Bamboo, Plant Fibers | World Centric | \$0.20 per container |
| Recycled Paper | Darling Foodservice | \$0.26 per container |
| Bagasse & Bamboo | Earth's Natural Alternative | \$0.43 per container |
| Bagasse | Pulp Safe | \$0.33 per container |

Recommended Single-Use Utensils



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Unbleached Plant Fiber | World Centric | \$0.07 per unit |
| Bamboo | Dixie Compostable Spoon | \$0.12 per unit |
| Bamboo | Dixie Compostable Fork | \$0.12 per unit |
| Bamboo | Dixie Compostable Knife | \$0.12 per unit |
| Bamboo | Bambu | \$0.28 per unit |
| Wood | Front of the House | \$0.12 per unit |
| Wood | WoodAble | \$0.06 per unit |
| Bamboo | World Centric | \$0.32 per cutlery set including napkin |
| Birch Wood | Vegware | \$0.06 per unit |
| Food Products (Edible) | Incredible Eats | \$0.39 per unit |
| Wood | PackNWood | \$0.09 per unit |
| Wood | Verterra | \$0.44 per cutlery set including napkin |



FOODWARE

Recommended Single-Use Plates



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|------------------------|---|------------------|
| Compostable Paper | Perk | \$0.14 per plate |
| Compostable Paper | Perk | \$0.17 per plate |
| Palm Leaves | VerTerra | \$0.52 per plate |
| Bamboo and Plant Fiber | World Centric | \$0.06 per plate |
| Sugarcane Fiber | Responsible Products | \$0.09 per plate |
| Palm Leaf | PackNWood | \$0.42 per plate |
| Paper | Bunzl | \$0.05 per plate |
| Paper | AJM Packaging Corporation | \$0.03 per plate |

Recommended Single-Use Bowls



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Bagasse | Tellus | \$0.03 per bowl |
| Bagasse | Greener Earth | \$0.16 per bowl |
| Bagasse | Perk | \$0.15 per bowl |
| Bagasse | Karat Earth | \$0.18 per bowl |
| Palm Leaves | PackNWood | \$0.53 per bowl |
| Bamboo, Plant Fibers | World Centric | \$0.10 per bowl |
| Plant Fibers | Responsible Products | \$0.08 per bowl |
| Uncoated Paper | PackNWood | \$0.22 per bowl |

DRINKWARE

Recommended Sustainable Single-Use Straws



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Wheat Plant Stem | Hay Straws | \$0.03 per straw |
| Wheat Plant Stem | Hay Straws (Jumbo XL Straws) | \$0.10 per straw |
| Bamboo | Bambu | \$0.26 per straw |
| Wheat | Holy City Straw Company | \$0.09 per straw |
| Reed Plant Stems | Holy City Straw Company | \$0.16 per straw |
| Paper | Napkins.com | \$0.06 per straw |
| Paper | Napkins.com (Jumbo) | \$0.06 per straw |
| Seaweed | Loliware | Contact Company for Pricing |
| Pasta | Pasta Life | \$0.04 per straw |
| Pasta | Pasta Life (Jumbo) | \$0.08 per straw |
| Cornstarch | Corn Next | \$0.03 per straw |
| Water Grass | Green Straws | Contact Company for Pricing |
| Wheat Stems (Gluten-free) | Green Straws | Contact Company for Pricing |
| Sugarcane | Green Straws | Contact Company for Pricing |
| Rice Flour & Tapioca Starch | Green Straws | Contact Company for Pricing |

Recommended Single-Use Cups



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Plant Fiber | Responsible Products | \$0.14 per cup |
| Paper | Sofi | \$0.15 per cup |
| Uncoated Paper | Bunzl | \$0.03 per cup |
| Uncoated Paper | SOLO | \$0.14 per cup |
| Plant Fiber | Responsible Products | \$0.24 per cup |
| Bagasse | ECO SOUL | \$0.40 per cup |
| Bagasse | Sincere EcoTech | Contact Company for Pricing |

COFFEE MACHINES (K-CUPS & ALTERNATIVES)

K-cups are made from plastic, and the puncturing process during brewing can contribute to microplastic exposure. To reduce plastic waste and support healthier, more sustainable coffee options in City facilities, consider transitioning away from single-use coffee pods.

Recommended Alternatives:

- Switch from Keurig machines to a drip coffee maker or other pod-free coffee system.
- If a pod-based system is preferred, ensure proper recycling by using a K-cup recycling bin and following the Keurig K-Cycle recycling process.
- Use a refillable, reusable K-cup pod with existing Keurig machines to eliminate single-use plastics.

For more information on K-Cup recycling options, visit Keurig's K-Cycle Program: <https://keurigkcycle.com/>

DRINKWARE

Recommended Stirrers, Lids, and Lid Plugs



| Stirrer Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Wheat Stem | Hay! Straws | \$0.023 per stirrer |
| Bamboo | Cycle of Life | \$0.0009 per stirrer |
| Bamboo | Cibo Wares | \$0.008 per stirrer |
| Bamboo | World Centric | \$0.01 per stirrer |
| Wood | amerCare Royal | \$0.01 per stirrer |
| Wood | Choice | \$0.01 per stirrer |
| Wood | Darling Foodservice | \$0.01 per stirrer |
| Wood | Royal | \$0.007 per stirrer |



| Lid Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Bagasse | Karat Earth | \$0.06 per lid |
| Unbleached plant fiber | World Centric | \$0.08 per lid |
| Unbleached plant fiber | World Centric | \$0.08 per lid |
| Bamboo | World Centric | \$0.10 per lid |
| Sugarcane fiber | Eco-Products (sauce) | \$0.06 per lid |
| Bagasse | Pulp Safe (soup) | \$0.34 per lid |
| Bagasse | Karat Earth | \$0.07 per lid |



| Lid Plug Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Bagasse | Pak 360 | \$0.01 per lid plug |
| Wood | Food Packaging Online | \$0.04 per lid plug |
| Poplar wood | Pick On Us | \$0.06 per lid plug |
| Wood | Pick On Us | \$0.07 per lid plug |

Recommended Water Bottles



| Material | Brand/Link | Price |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Aluminum | RAIN | \$1.25 per bottle |
| Aluminum | Open Water | \$1.79 per bottle |
| Aluminum | Open Water | \$1.17 per can |
| Aluminum | CannedWater4Kids | \$0.99 per can |
| Aluminum | CannedWater4Kids | \$1.95 per bottle |
| Aluminum | Blue Can | \$1.25 per can |
| Aluminum | Liquid Death | \$1.05 per can |

Learn more: cityofirvine.org/sustainability-division
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