

How to Reduce Food Packaging Waste

Single-use foodware items, such as plastic and paper cups, plates, and utensils, have a short lifespan but a long-lasting negative impact on human health and the environment. Additionally, most of these single-use foodware items are neither readily recyclable nor compostable, and contaminate recycling and composting programs. **Replacing single-use foodware with durable, reusable alternatives is essential to addressing these issues.**



StopWaste helps advance reusable foodware innovation and infrastructure in Alameda County through grant funding, outreach, technical assistance, and policy tools. A growing number of cities are adopting their own reusable foodware ordinances, including Berkeley and Oakland, and new pilots are underway that allow customers to get their favorite beverages and food to-go in reusables.

Here are ways we can all reduce food packaging waste in our everyday lives:

BYO is Best

The greenest way to avoid single-use items is by bringing your own reusables.



- Get to-go beverages in your own reusable cup.
- Keep reusable utensils in your bag so they're handy for eating on the go.
- Bring reusable shopping bags to the store. Keep a few in your car, bike bag, or personal bag so they're always available.
- Dining out? Bring a reusable container for any leftovers.
- Ordering in? Opt-out! Take-out restaurants and delivery platforms must now **offer the option** to skip the utensils, straws, and condiments.

No baggage: Buy loose and in bulk



Here in Alameda County, we're lucky to have many **farmers markets** as well as produce businesses where you can buy fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables loose or in your own reusable produce bags. Many stores also offer pantry staples like pasta, grains, and beans in bulk.

Bonus: Besides avoiding disposable packaging, you can get exactly the amount you need.



Make the pitch for take-out reusables

StopWaste grantee **DeliverZero** is expanding their successful take-out foodware service to Alameda County, and you can help!



[Become a DeliverZero Ambassador](#) to get your favorite restaurants on board with reusable foodware for take-out and delivery. As a DeliverZero Ambassador, you can earn cash for each business that you bring on while helping restaurants save money on foodware and reduce their environmental impact. Training and materials are provided.

Forgot your to-go cup? OKAPI has you covered

OKAPI Reusables is a reusable cup service that partners with cafes and coffee shops to let customers borrow hot and cold drink cups for to-go orders and return them at any participating business. They offer easy tracking via a phone app and no "rental" charge. Check them out at any of their **10 locations** (and counting!) in the City of Alameda.



More information on how you can help reduce food packaging waste is [available here](#).