

Houston Zoo

GO PLASTIC STRAW FREE

PARTNER TOOLKIT



Why go plastic straw free?

Straws cannot be recycled and are one of the top ten pieces of garbage polluting the oceans. Animals like sea turtles may mistake a plastic item for food, ingesting it and causing them to get sick. By getting rid of plastic straws, you can keep hundreds of thousands of them from going into landfills and our oceans each year.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN MAKE THE SWITCH

- If you still have existing plastic straws, you can offer them only upon request, which will allow you to work with your existing inventory.
- Get your staff on board with why you made the switch.
 - Dedicate a portion of pre-shift or staff meetings to go over the initiative.
 - Empower your team with the information needed to speak confidently about this initiative.
- [Insert venue name] is dedicated to helping marine animals by reducing the amount of single use plastics we use.
- We have changed to giving out straws upon request.
 - Place your straws out of reach from bartenders and waiters to help break the habit of automatically placing a straw in a beverage. They will use less straws and you will save money.
 - Being selective on which drinks receive a reusable or non-plastic straw. Certain cocktails and drinks, as well as water glasses, should never receive a straw.
- Order your reusable or non-plastic straws. There are many options that won't compromise the quality of the cocktail.
 - If you are going straw-free (which is what we recommend!), always remember to have a straw option on site for younger patrons and people with diverse abilities. See below for an easy-to-use spreadsheet of reusable or non-plastic straw options.

SHOUT OUT YOUR COMMITMENT AND SUCCESS

- **In your establishment**
Help your patrons understand why you made the change/switch and how it benefits wildlife by placing messaging around your establishment.
- **On social media and your website**
Share your success and influence others in making a positive change for wildlife.
 - We have pre-made social shares in this toolkit that you are welcome to use!
- **In the Press**
Create and distribute a press release. As a leading restaurant/bar in your community, your commitment to eliminating single-use straws is newsworthy. Push the news out to relevant media. Include mentions of your commitment in existing press interviews/opportunities.

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM HIGH TRAFFIC BARS THAT HAVE GONE PLASTIC STRAW FREE

- Bars save money after switching to offering reusable or non-plastic straws on request only. It's much cheaper in the long run!
- Establishments that have made this transition away from plastic straws have had an overwhelmingly positive response from their patrons.
- Other bars followed quickly, starting a positive trend within the city.
- It was easy to transition away from other single use plastic items, like garnish skewers, stirrers, and cups.

See them. Save them.



Plastic Straw Alternatives

MATERIAL	COMPANY NAME	WHOLESALE/ BULK AVAILABLE?	SHIPPING TIME ESTIMATE	CONTACT
Paper	Supreme Bar Supply	✓	Delivers Monday–Friday to establishments in the greater Houston area, College Station, and Galveston	No website 713–688–3373
Paper	World Centric	✓	3–7 days after order is processed	store.worldcentric.com
Paper	Aardvark	✓	Varies based on demand	aardvarkstraws.com
Bamboo	The Bamboo Crew	✓	Regular US orders available through Amazon with Prime Contact for wholesale info	bamboo-straws.com
Bamboo	Bamboo Straw Girl	✓	Contact for wholesale info	bamboostraws.bigcartel.com
Metal	Steelys Drinkware	✓	Estimate provided upon placing order	steelsdrinkware.com
Silicone	Softy Straws	✓	Regular US orders available through Amazon with Prime Contact for wholesale info	softystraws.com
Glass	Strawsome	✓	Contact for wholesale info	strawsome.com
Pasta	Pasta Straws	✓	Contact for wholesale info	pastastraws.org
Hay	Hay! Straws	✓	Contact for wholesale info	haystraws.com
Corn Based Plastic (PLA)	Without access to a commercial composting facility (which Houston currently does not have) these straws can take anywhere from 100 to 1000 years to decompose in a landfill, which is why they are not included as a wildlife-friendly option. They also look like regular plastic straws, which can create confusion for your patrons.			