

# How to REDUCE

As we go about our days, ordering take-out and making stops at coffee shops, it's easy to pick up unnecessary waste. These items may seem like innocent gestures of convenience, but each material has its own history of natural resource extraction, pollution, water consumption, and carbon impact. REFUSING single-use, wasteful products and REUSING durable, long-lasting items instead is key to living a Zero Waste lifestyle!

**Here's our start-up guide for disposables to avoid and their reusable, durable alternatives.**

## AVOID



Americans dispose of more than 100 billion plastic bags every year, and only a fraction are ever recycled. Up to 100 MILLION barrels of oil are needed to make the world's plastic bags each year. Yet, typical usage of a plastic bag is just 20 minutes.

→ **Instead, stock up on reusable bags and totes.**

## USE INSTEAD



Polystyrene foam, commonly called Styrofoam, contains styrene, a known carcinogen that can leach chemicals into food and drinks. Because polystyrene is so light, it can easily blow away and crumble into microplastics that pollute soil and water for centuries.

→ **Instead, bring your own cups for beverages and reusable containers to hold leftovers or take-out.**



Bottled water uses more than 17 million barrels of oil per year to produce, and is often just tap water sold at 10,000 times the price. An estimated 50 billion paper coffee cups are thrown away in the US every year; these paper cups are lined with plastic and are not typically recyclable.

→ **Instead, remember to bring your own water bottle and travel mug.**



About 40 billion plastic utensils are used in the US each year for just a few minutes before they are discarded and sent to the landfill because they are not recyclable. Lightweight plastics like utensils and straws often end up in the environment, polluting

→ **Instead, carry your own set of reusable utensils with you.**



**\*Combine all the reusables listed on this page to create your own Zero Waste on-the-go kit!**