

Consumer Swaps Disposable vs. Reusable Coffee Cups

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Reusable vs. Disposable Coffee Cups

Did you know that coffee giant Starbucks intends to completely phase out disposable cups by 2025? While their disposable cups are iconic, they pose a quandary for a company, who wants to decrease their footprint. "Our cup is ubiquitous, and we love that," said Michael Kobori, Starbucks chief sustainability officer. "But it is also this ubiquitous symbol of a throwaway society." (CNN) By the end of 2023, they hope to have completely rolled out the option for customers to provide their own mug, and later to allow them to borrow a reusable mug that can be dropped off for a refund of the fee to do so.



Source: Wiener-Bronner, Danielle. "Starbucks Is Planning to Phase out Its Iconic Cups." CNN, Cable News Network, 15 Mar. 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/15/business-food/starbucks-cup-sustainability/index.html>.

The Harm of Disposable Coffee Cups

You don't have to wait for Starbucks or other companies to begin phasing out coffee to curb your own disposable cup use. "In New York City alone, seven million cups are tossed into trash bins on a daily basis." (Weber) and overall, the impact is staggering. The amount of waste in a year from disposable coffee cups equates to 20 million trees, 12 billion gallons of water, and enough energy to power 54,000 homes for a year. (Weber) Making a habit of brewing your cup of coffee at home (which is also cheaper, faster, and more convenient) and pouring it in your reusable mug could slash your disposable cup consumption over a year. If you bring that container to your favorite coffee shop that allows you to fill up your own cup when you want to treat yourself, you'll be eliminating waste in that area of your life entirely.

The Benefits of Reusable Coffee Cups

There are many advantages to starting a reusable coffee cup habit beyond picking the aesthetics of your mug. Higher quality, reusable coffee cups tend to have vastly improved insulation, keeping your preferred beverage hot or cold for hours potentially. In addition, the plastics in disposable cups have been subjected to scrutiny about whether or not their chemicals can seep into your drink and make its way into your system. When you purchase a reusable mug, you take control of what materials it is made of and what you are comfortable using for your health.

Works Cited

Weber, Kristianna. "Your Coffee Habit May Be Harming the Environment – Here's What You Can Do Now." One Green Planet, One Green Planet, 27 Oct. 2016, <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/environment/paper-cup-waste-and-environment/>.

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