

# About the Program

It is estimated that more than 22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes every year. Most of this plastic is packaging and single-use items commonly provided at restaurants. Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants say no to single-use plastic and reduce the amount of plastic entering our waterways by stopping the flow at the source.

## Here are some facts about single-use plastic items commonly offered at conventional restaurants:

- Straws and stirrers are one of the most commonly found items polluting our beaches worldwide.
- EPS foam products easily break into small pieces that litter the beach, poison marine species when ingested, and release toxic chemicals into your food.
- The 100 billion single-use bags used per year in the U.S. are easily replaceable with reusable and paper bags.
- Only about 5% of U.S. plastic waste gets recycled.

**The Surfrider Foundation created the Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants program to respond to the plastic pollution crisis in our lakes and along our coasts.** The goals of the program are to help restaurants reduce single-use plastic waste, eliminate the use of expanded polystyrene foam, and support sustainable practices that protect the marine environment through improved conservation efforts. The larger we grow our network of Great Lakes Friendly leaders, the more mainstream the concept of plastic-free becomes. Help protect the ocean and your local beach by supporting Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants near you.



Learn more:  
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