

Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants

In response to increased pollution in the coastal zone stemming from single-use food service items, the Surfrider Foundation created the Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants program. This program aims to educate consumers and promote restaurants that are making a difference in protecting our Great Lakes, ocean, waves and beaches.

The goals of the program are to help reduce plastic waste, eliminate the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam, a type of plastic that is typically used for inexpensive, disposable products (cups, plates, 'clamshells', etc.) and to encourage more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices at restaurants.

Additionally, there are other types of pollution and environmental issues these restaurants face that, with minimal change in their daily practices, can greatly reduce their impact on the planet.

Help protect our Great Lakes, the ocean and your local beach by supporting Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants near you.



Program Criteria

RESTAURANTS PARTICIPATING MUST FOLLOW THESE SEVEN CRITERIA

- Only reusable foodware is used for onsite dining.*
- Paper straws are provided only upon request.**
- No expanded polystyrene use (aka Styrofoam).
- No plastic bags are used for takeout or to-go orders.
- Single-use utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items are provided only upon request for takeout and to-go orders.
- Beverages are not sold in plastic bottles.
- Proper recycling practices are followed.

RESTAURANTS MUST ALSO CHOOSE A MINIMUM OF THREE ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

- A discount is offered for customers with a reusable item (e.g. cup, container, bag).
- Vegetarian and vegan food options are offered on a regular basis.
- All seafood is 'Best Choice' or 'Good Alternative' as defined by Seafood Watch, or certified as sustainable.
- Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented.
- Energy efficiency efforts are in place.
- Concessions and pre-packaged food items are not sold in plastic packaging.
- Composting efforts are in place for food waste.
- Neither single-use plastic nor bio-based plastic containers are used for takeout or to-go orders, reusable containers are preferred.

* Foodware includes dinnerware, drinkware, silverware, and ramekins/containers.
** Exceptions may be made for naturally occurring materials (e.g. hay, bamboo) and reusables (e.g. metal, glass), not including bio-based plastic. Straws should be provided to anyone who needs one, including people with disabilities.



Restaurants that meet all program criteria will gain recognition as a Platinum Level Great Lakes Friendly Restaurant.