



# Slow Food Facts

## 'Plastic: not-so-fantastic'



### We're drowning in plastic

Plastic, especially single-use disposables (plastic bags, bottled water, take-away coffee cups, straws, cling-wrap, balloons, etc) are everywhere. But while plastic is convenient, it causes significant damage to our environment - especially our oceans, rivers, beaches, birds and marine life.

### What's the problem?

Plastic is a substance our earth cannot digest. It's a durable material made to last forever and contrary to what most people think, none of it biodegrades. That means **all the plastic we've ever made and used still exists**. And what's worse: it breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces which are then digested by birds and fish, and even plankton (the tiniest creatures in our oceans) - resulting in toxic substances poisoning our food chain. To date, 44% of seabird species, 22% of cetaceans, all sea turtle species and a growing list of fish species have been documented with plastic in or around their bodies. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that plastic chemicals (such as BPA) are being absorbed by the human body as well.

### What you can do

1. **REFUSE** disposable (single-use) plastic whenever and wherever possible. Choose items that are not packaged in plastic, and carry your own take-away cup, bags (or take a Boomerang bag - see [www.boomerangbags.org](http://www.boomerangbags.org)), containers and utensils. Say 'no straw, please.' Talk to your friends, family, and favourite cafe about plastic.
2. **REDUCE** your plastic footprint. Cut down on your consumption of goods that contain (excessive) plastic packaging and parts. Buy at farmers markets or from a bulk food co-op instead of at the supermarket. If what you buy creates plastic trash, don't buy it. Pledge to 'Take 3 for the Sea' (<https://www.facebook.com/take3forthesea/> and collect 3 pieces of rubbish on each beach walk) or join another beach/river cleanup activity.
3. **REUSE** durable, non-toxic straws, utensils, containers, bottles, bags, and other everyday items. Choose glass, paper, stainless steel, wood, ceramic and bamboo over plastic.
4. **RECYCLE** what you can't refuse, reduce or reuse. If you must use plastic, try to choose PETE or HDPE which are the most commonly recycled plastics.

For more information visit our website ([www.slowfoodaustralia.com.au](http://www.slowfoodaustralia.com.au)) or Facebook page (@SlowFoodAustralia) or get in touch with your nearest Slow Food community.

Every year, Australians consume more than 4 billion plastic bags. **That's 10 million new plastic shopping bags EACH DAY.** Of these, just 3% are recycled; the rest of them end up in our environment or in landfill.

**Plastic is a serial killer:** once a bag is ingested, the animal dies and decomposes - releasing the bag back into the environment ... only to then kill again.



Illogically, **33% of plastic is used ONLY ONCE** and then thrown away. If plastic pollution is not curbed in time, then plastic in oceans will outweigh fish by 2050



What comes up ... must come down: balloons are a great party-item but **once they fly away, they end up in the sea.** Next time, why not try paper lanterns instead?