

Tips to ditch single-use plastic

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Plastic cutlery can't be easily recycled in Australia. Because the items are flat, sorting machines often mistake them for paper. If you grab lunch out of the office, it's likely you'll be offered plastic cutlery. You can simply say no. Bamboo utensils are great, but having a set of cutlery at work is even better. Grab cutlery and a plate and have them ready at your desk to avoid plastic or Styrofoam containers.

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Plastic bags fill our tips, kill wildlife and break up into smaller particles causing ongoing environmental harm. Check out our guide to the best alternatives to plastic bags. In short, hessian is the best option. If you have a stack of 'green' bags from the supermarket, make sure you use them for at least 2 years. Also, don't put your fruit and vegetables in plastic bags. Just let them loose in the trolley, at the register and in your shopping bag.

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Supermarkets package many items in plastic, including fresh produce. Try local markets, co-ops, bulk food stores and independent grocers instead. Spending your Saturday or Sunday morning strolling around local farmers markets is not only a great pastime but also a convenient way of finding local produce. By purchasing locally grown food in season, we're eating foods at their most flavoursome, the most abundant, and the least expensive.

If the thought of getting up early on weekends to make it to the farmers market isn't your cup of tea, finding a local produce box system might be the way to go.

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Materials like nylon and polyester shed microfibers when washed. This means, your clothes release millions of tiny plastic pieces into our drains. Look for cotton and wool instead.

Aside from materials, consider buying second-hand clothes. That is always the better choice, as this saves unwanted clothing from the tip. You can do better than the 1 in 5 Australians who throw clothes in the bin after 1 wear.

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