



What does it mean to be rethinking plastic or BADFive FREE **#BFF**? Why would a restaurant want to undertake this goal? Many restaurant owners are already doing things to show they are rethinking plastic, such as not using polystyrene To-Go containers, skipping the straw and promoting the use of bringing your own To-Go container. These acts are not always apparent to customers. So how do customers find out that the restaurant they visit cares about our waters, the environment and about reducing waste? Rethinking Plastic has developed the BADFive Free designation. Our goal is to educate, recognize and promote the restaurants that strive to be BADFive Free. We realize this is a process and would like to showcase the progress, while restaurants rethink plastic and the effects it has on their community and the world. The starfish recognition, identifies their transition and work towards becoming BADFive Free. The first step is to pledge to be rethinking plastic - refusing the BADFive through a timed reduction. *A minimum of two of the five must be attained to get started.*

“I, [business owner name], pledge to reduce single use plastic within my establishment, creating a more sustainable future for Sarasota, by ensuring [business name] continuing efforts to meet or exceed the RP guidelines for reducing plastic/polystyrene and educating our employees on the problems of single use plastic usage.”

This first step shows your customers that you are serious about greening your business. Each pledge comes with a Rethinking Plastic window sign to share your #BFF status, downloadable templates for table tents and coasters and your first years Rethinking Plastic BADFive Free membership fee waived, upon request. RP is available to support you while you are Rethinking Plastic by assisting with further education or questions, and to share updates on new sustainable alternatives.

How to easily comply:

1. No expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam or plastic ToGo/Leftover Containers are used.

Expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam, a type of plastic typically used for inexpensive, disposable products (such as cups, plates, clamshells, etc.), are often found in the majority of beach cleanups. EPS foam impacts marine life, ecosystems, the ocean and coasts. While we recommend using paper and cardboard options, they may not work in all situations. The first of the three R's of conservation is to REDUCE, so finding ways to create less waste and embrace reusable items whenever possible should be a top goal, which can also lead to cost savings. At this time we recommend plant based products as opposed to biodegradable and compostable ones.

2. No Plastic/plastic lined Cups/Lids/Straws.

Reusable cups for inhouse drinks like ceramic mugs, glasses and plant lined paper cups to go. Choose to reuse! Offering a small discount for customers that bring their own coffee mug or drink cup will build loyalty and reduce waste. Reusable items are a top choice for retail conservation and can make the biggest impact for a clean beach and ocean.

We recommend no lid but because that is not always possible, we suggest PLA based ones which are made of plant based materials and can be composted in an industrial facility - that we do not have in our area - hence, the lesser evil.

Paper straws are available in every shape and format, from wide milkshake straws to elegant cocktail stirrers. While skipping the straw is the best option, using paper-only for the few customers that still want one. By asking people to request a straw rather than automatically handing them out or placing them in drinks. By refusing to offer plastic straws you reduce the item found most in beach cleanups.

3. No beverages are sold in plastic bottles.

Plastic bottles are another top-ten item collected at beach cleanups. If hermetically sealed containers are necessary, glass or aluminum are alternative options. Discounts to those that bring their own container is a welcome gesture.

4. No plastic bags are offered for ToGo orders or Leftovers.

Plastic bags are a top threat to ocean wildlife. If you need to provide a bag to customers, please make it a paper bag and/or start a reusable bag program. Choose to reuse! Offering a small discount for customers that bring their own reusable bag will build loyalty and reduce waste. Reusable items are a top choice for retail conservation and can make the biggest impact for a clean beach and ocean.

5. Real silverware is used and sustainable utensils for takeout food are provided only upon request.

Not everyone who gets ToGo food needs utensils. Some people may take food home while others may carry utensils in their backpack or car. This is another example where asking people to opt-in can reduce the use of disposable items and save you money! There are a variety of affordable wooden utensils on the market for those that need them.