

BRING-YOUR-OWN-DISH PROGRAMS



► Why can't we just use disposable plates and utensils?

Paper products require the **harvesting of virgin wood fiber**; this **depletes the forests** and the benefits of the forests. Plastic and styrofoam are derived from petroleum and **do not decompose**, remaining in the environment for long periods of time. Over 137 billion paper, plastic, and styrofoam plates and cups are discarded each year. *Reusable dishes help to save natural resources, reduce production pollution, and decrease the waste stream.*

► Doesn't it waste more water to wash the dishes?

A significant amount of steam and water is used in the production of every disposable plate or cup. Plus, if you take into account the **pollution released into the air during manufacturing**, the effects on ecosystems from depletion of natural habitat, and all that waste, the clear choice is to reuse.

► Are you saying that we shouldn't use disposable tableware at all?

That would be ideal, but we understand that bringing your own dish is not always an option. For those times when disposable is necessary, try to **seek out vendors that offer biodegradable products** made of renewable resources such as sugarcane fiber or corn starch resins. Keep plastic utensils or food containers and reuse them at home for leftovers or snacks.

► What else can I do to help on campus?

Bring your own water bottle for fountain drinks instead of purchasing a throwaway cup. **Choose items that have less packaging.** Be active in encouraging the use of **environmentally friendly tableware on campus.** If you are interested in learning more about sustainable living, ask your RA! That person can suggest other ways to decrease your environmental footprint here at IWU and direct you to more resources.