

## Features

# Sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic

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**With travellers becoming increasingly aware of the damaging impact of plastic, many properties are opting to go plastic-free to cater to eco-conscious guests**

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Every year, over [300 million tons of plastic](#) is produced every year, 50% of which is for single-use purposes. From reducing single-use plastic to phasing out the products entirely, global giants and smaller accommodations alike are focusing on creating a more sustainable travel experience. Here, we discover some of the alternatives properties are using.

## Sustainability is key

**Reinard Korf, Hotel Manager at Hotel Breeze, says:** "Our room keys are not made from plastic, which is the norm. Instead, they are all made from recycled wood. This is a much more expensive option, but it's the right thing to do as many hotels consume [as many as] 15,000 keys a year. It is, however, a challenge to always find products that meet your needs, so it takes much longer to select a partner or items. You need to remain committed and patient.

The key is to accept not all plastic is bad and Rome was not built in a day. Select the easy wins like wrapping, packaging and straws as a start, and look at partnering with companies that can recycle your used items ... so you can instantly make an impact."

## Ditching tiny toiletries

**Catherine Dolton, VP Global Corporate Responsibility at IHG, says:** "Our commitment to replace miniature bathroom toiletries with bulk-size amenities across all of our hotels worldwide is an important step in reducing single-use plastics. IHG is working closely with its hotels, brand teams and operations teams to implement this change between now and 2021 across more than 5,700 hotels and counting. We will work closely with suppliers and listen carefully to our guests to choose the right solutions for each of our brands that offer the same great quality.

Around one-third of IHG's estate is already leading the way in this change, including Six Senses Hotels Resorts and Spas, which has used ceramic dispensers in its hotels from the get-go. There's an upfront cost associated with installing bulk-size amenities, with payback ranging from about one to three years depending on the hotel and so the transition makes sense both from a sustainability perspective and commercially."

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### Takeaway

- Over 300 million tons of plastic is produced every year, 50% of which is for single-use purposes
- Properties of all kinds are starting to focus on creating a more sustainable travel experience for guests, finding sustainable alternatives to plastic
- Alternatives include wooden keys, bamboo straws and refillable glass bottles

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**Anchalika Kijkanakorn, CEO and Founder of AKARYN Hotel Group, says:** “To avoid in-room plastics, we provide all our guests with ceramic refillable water bottles and toiletry containers that they can refill from our high-quality, organic toiletry dispensers in the hotel boutiques ... The feedback on the refillable toiletries has been astounding. As well as the amount of plastic we reduce by not using the miniature bottles, guests are buying our refillable amenities in bulk to take home.”



Photo: credit to Boxed Water is Better, Unsplash

## Banning bottles

**Liza Masías, Sales and Marketing Director at Inkaterra Hotels, says:** “This year at Inkaterra, we took yet more steps towards becoming plastic-free with the elimination of plastic water bottles from all of our six eco-lodge hotels, offices and research centres across Peru. In hotels, we have replaced single-use plastics with glass bottles that get replaced daily, while at the Inkaterra Guides Field Station, our volunteering research facility in the Amazon rainforest, guests receive a steel water bottle which can be refilled from various water stations dotted around the property.

For other hoteliers looking to reduce the use of plastic at their properties, we would encourage them to take it one step at a time as it’s a long but ultimately worthwhile process.”

**Ali Rifhaan, Marketing Communication Officer at Six Senses Laamu, says:** “Six Senses Hotels Resorts and Spas has the ambitious goal to be plastic-free by the year 2022. [One way] Six Senses Laamu is switching to plastic alternatives is bottling desalinated water in reusable glass bottles for guests and staff. This avoids the use of around 260,000 single-use plastic bottles each year.

When looking to reduce plastic at your property, start with guest education. Once your guests start understanding the impact that plastic is having on the planet and the steps you’re taking it will make the transition a lot easier.”

## The last straw

**Rachelle Hill, Director of Marketing and Communications at Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi, says:** “As part of the Accor Hotels’ Planet 21 initiative, Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi has banned plastic straws across all of its restaurants and bars, opting for bamboo straws instead.

There is no one cookie-cutter solution for [reducing plastic], however, education and awareness are very powerful. We take a very conscious effort in educating, training and involving our entire team to take part in all of our Planet21 initiatives.”

**Reinard Korf, Hotel Manager at Hotel Breeze, says:** “For adults, we use straws made from copper. For the kids, we use soft bamboo. This is an area where there is a lot of advancement, so now you can get many options. The low end is paper and high end would be [washable] glass, steel or copper. Mid-range is recycled plastic, but you can also get plant-based straws or fancier concepts like straws made from sugar or chocolate. There are many options.”



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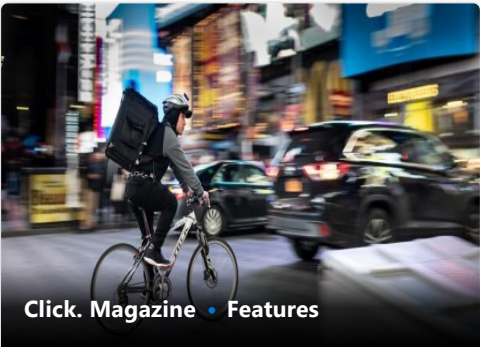


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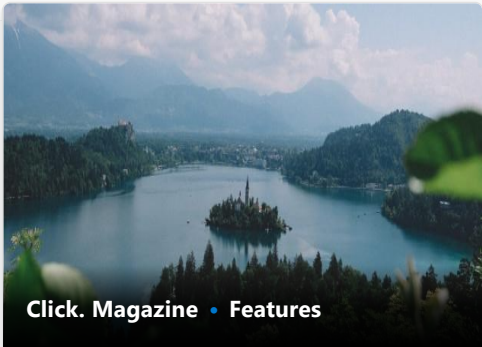


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