



OCEAN FRIENDLY RESTAURANTS

EASTERN LONG ISLAND TOOLKIT



STEP 1: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

GOAL

The Surfrider Foundation is fed up with pollution. As a response to increased plastic pollution in the coastal zone and ocean gyres, Surfrider Foundation Chapters started an Ocean Friendly Restaurants program. A main goal is eliminating expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam foodware (aka Styrofoam) and other disposable plastics because they are top items found at beach cleanups. There are additional types of pollution and other issues impacting the ocean that restaurants can help address to be truly "ocean friendly," so you will also see criteria for conserving water and serving responsible food.

The Surfrider Foundation Ocean Friendly Restaurants (OFR) program provides businesses with an independent verification process that has been vetted by a variety of stakeholders, Surfrider representatives, business groups and government agencies. Certifying through our program provides businesses with true marketplace value and credibility.

THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTIC IS...

- Scientists estimate that by 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in the ocean.
- EPS foam foodwares (cups, plates, 'clamshells', etc.) and other restaurant packaging are top items found at Surfrider beach cleanups
- EPS foam and other forms of plastic do not biodegrade in our lifetimes. They may photodegrade and/or break into small pieces if littered, which poses challenges for cleanups and additional complications for sea life.
- Animals can mistake plastic for food or nesting materials, with devastating impacts.
- Americans use an estimated 500 million plastic straws every day, generating needless waste.
- Restaurants use an average of 5,800 gallons of water per day, much of which could be saved with simple changes.
- As coastal communities feel the first impacts of climate change, restaurants typically use over twice the energy of other commercial buildings.

STEP 2: WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

CRITERIA

The program focuses on delivering a high standard of certification by having businesses meet a **seven point criterion** that is followed by an on-site assessment by a Surfrider representative. As part of this program we hope to see businesses participate and become coastal defenders in their communities while establishing a brand that is clearly recognizable with consumers.

Ocean Friendly Restaurants are certified by a Surfrider Foundation Chapter, Youth Club or staff representative after a physical inspection of the facility and the signed agreement is returned by the owner or manager. Ocean Friendly Restaurants make a commitment to use less plastic and take other steps to help protect the coast.

Restaurants participating in the OFR Program **MUST follow these four** criteria:

1. No expanded polystyrene use (aka Styrofoam™).
2. Proper recycling practices are followed.
3. Only reusable tableware is used for onsite dining and utensils for to-go food are provided only upon request.
4. No plastic bags offered for takeout orders.

And **choose a minimum of three** of these criteria:

5. Plastic straws are provided only upon request.
6. No beverages sold in plastic bottles.
7. Discount offered for customers with reusable cup, mug, bag, etc.
8. Vegetarian/vegan food options are offered on a regular basis. All seafood must be a 'Best Choice' or 'Good Alternative' as defined by Seafood Watch or certified as sustainable.
9. Water conservation efforts such as low-flow faucets and toilets.
10. Energy efficiency efforts such as LED lighting and Energy Star appliances.

Implement all 10 to be recognized as a **Platinum Level** Ocean Friendly Restaurant!

STEP 3: PASS ON PLASTIC

AVOID WITH ALTERNATIVES

Any to-go container option is better for the ocean than expanded polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam). While we tend to recommend using paper and cardboard options, they may not work in all situations. Not everyone who gets food to-go needs disposable utensils. Some people may take food home while others may carry utensils in their backpack or car. This is another example where simply asking people to opt-in can help reduce the use of disposable items. Plastic bags are the #2 threat to ocean wildlife behind derelict fishing gear. If you need to provide a bag to customers, please make it a paper bag and/or start a reusable bag program. Plastic bottles are another top-ten item collected at beach cleanups, especially in states that do not have a bottle recycling law that requires a deposit on bottles and cans. If individual containers are needed, glass bottles and aluminum cans are both more Ocean Friendly options.

There are so many alternatives to plastic. Here is a [list of just a few](#). Not all alternatives are more expensive especially when you consider in the fact that you are handing out less.

RECYCLING REGULATIONS

Proper recycling helps to ensure that items don't get littered and are diverted from the landfill to live a second life as something new. If you offer any items in glass bottles or aluminum cans, please provide a recycling container that is easily visible for customers. Ensure that cardboard and any other delivery packaging are recycled. To learn more about the recycling policies in your area click on your [Township](#) listed below.

[Southampton](#)

[East Hampton](#)

[Riverhead](#)

[Southold](#)

[Brookhaven](#)

DISCOUNTS FOR CUSTOMERS

Many cafes are offering discounts for customers who bring in their own cup. Most notably, [Starbucks](#) offers a 10 cent discount for customers. There are many ways to offer similar incentives for your customers. Whether it be bringing their own to go containers, bags, cups, utensils, straw, etc. This helps save you money in the long run and encourages customers to make more initiatives in their own lives.

STEP 4: BEYOND PLASTIC

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN OPTIONS & SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

Offering vegetarian and vegan food options can reduce the impact of climate change, rainforest destruction, and pollution, while saving water and other precious resources. Not to mention, having this variety may draw in new customers!

Although the oceans may seem infinite, it's resources have a limit. From overfishing to harmful fishing techniques, humans are having a negative impact on our oceans. By choosing sustainable seafood you can feel confident that the fish you sell are coming from healthy populations and are caught using methods that are less harmful to the environment.

Choosing sustainable options is easier than ever with access to free online resources.

Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch is a great resource to determine if your restaurant is using sustainable seafood.

Check out their [complete recommendation list](#) to see how sustainable your choices are now and what changes you may need to make.

There is even a quick [training module for restaurant owners](#) which walks you through some simple steps to work with your suppliers.

Here is a [sample letter](#) to send to your seafood suppliers that can be easily personalized.

Here is the [Northeast Consumer Guide](#) you can print and make available for customers.

There are so many resources available at the [Seafood Watch website](#) so be sure to check it out to learn more!

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is another resource to help you determine if you are purchasing sustainable seafood.

The [MSC website](#) allows you to search by supplier, species, and product type.

WATER CONSERVATION

Here is a helpful [Restaurant Checklist](#) for you to follow and a few key points to consider are listed below.

A) Providing water to customers only upon request is a simple action to take. Another is installing low flow faucets and toilets, which can help to conserve a significant amount of water.

B) Conserving water also helps reduce urban runoff. Make it a company policy to use a broom, rather than a hose, to clear sidewalks, driveways, loading docks and parking lots. If more intense cleaning is needed, try spot cleaning with a bucket and brush instead of power washing and capturing the water. Note, many municipalities prohibit restaurants from using any cleaning process for outside areas that generates urban runoff.

C) Conserving water and reducing sewage spills as part of proper handling of fats, oils, and greases (FOG). When poured down the drain, FOG hardens inside sewer pipes, constricting wastewater flow and clogging the pipes. This can lead to sewer overflows that can potentially reach the ocean. Additionally, it can take extra water to attempt to 'flush' FOG down the drain. Make it a priority to follow your local requirements for a grease trap and FOG management.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Climate change is already impacting the coastline. Lower your carbon footprint by saving energy can help to lessen the impacts. Restaurants are the most energy intensive commercial buildings in the United States according to the Energy Information Administration. There are a number of options for energy and cost savings for both equipment and lighting. Here is a list of [Energy Star certified products](#). There are also many programs you can take advantage of for even bigger savings. Here is a list of both [regulatory policy and financial incentives](#) that you may be eligible for.

STEP 5: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

PROMOTION

Besides the fact that you will be doing an ocean of good, you will also be aligned with our Surfrider brand. Surfrider Foundation has an extremely credible brand with significant reach that even small businesses want to be associated with. This speaks to the success of the OFR Program and why it's growing so rapidly. For example, Surfrider Foundation's social media and outreach presence alone is compelling:

Website:	100K-200,000K
Facebook:	285,000+K
Twitter:	122,000K w/20K daily impressions
Instagram:	90,000K
YouTube:	2,984 subscribers
Vimeo:	3,000 views/month
Making Waves:	57,000
PR/Earned Media:	11,980 views & hits

Website & Social media: We plan to use our reach to promote your restaurant to our followers. You will be featured on our website as an OFR and promoted in our social media posts.

Promo videos: This summer we will be creating a promotional video for OFR in which we will feature our participating restaurants.

Media attention: The first restaurant to be certified in the Eastern Long Island chapter will receive a press conference and press release to celebrate the launch party. Additional articles and press releases will be completed as time and availability allow.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

OFR has been initiated in at least 10 other chapters across the country. We are building a database of all the OFR across the nation and will be developing an interactive map so our supporters can easily find an OFR near them, even when they are traveling.

COST SAVINGS

By having customers ask for items like straws and to go utensils you will need to give out less which means you will need to buy less. This can lead to big savings. Read about some [success stories](#) where restaurants have saved between \$2,000-\$5,000 by rethinking their disposables. Check out the Breakeven Point Calculator on page 4 to determine at what point you will start saving after you switch from plastics. Also, avoid bioplastic options for a [variety of reasons](#).

SWAG

We will supply you with your very own OFR window sticker to display proudly in your window so your customers can feel even better about choosing your business. We can also provide table toppers and bill inserts so your customers can learn about the work you are doing to be an OFR. Additionally, you can upload the OFR website badge so customers can easily recognize your accomplishments.

TRAINING FOR STAFF

Making sure you staff understand what it means to be an OFR and why it matters is crucial to ensure proper fulfillment of the OFR criteria. We know you're busy and that's why we will send a Surfrider volunteer to give a brief introduction and overview of our OFR program and which criteria your restaurant has agreed to follow. We want to see you succeed and will always be here as a resource to help guide you and provide support along the way to becoming as ocean friendly as you can be!