

## CASE STUDY

# SAN JOSE COMMUNITY RESTAURANTS

## INTRODUCTION

ReThink Disposable, working with a Silicon Valley Community Foundation grant, and in collaboration with Story of Stuff and Center for Environmental Health, was able to offer free technical assistance to three restaurants in San Jose to reduce the use of disposable foodware for dine-in customers. The conversions ranged from an array of several items to a simple chopstick & sauce cup conversion, which we use to show the impact even a small change can make in reduction of single-use disposables and plastics.

### AT A GLANCE

- 381,376 pieces of single-use foodware eliminated from the waste stream annually
- 5,695 pounds (the weight of a pontoon boat and it's trailer!)
- Collectively saving \$17,193 annually

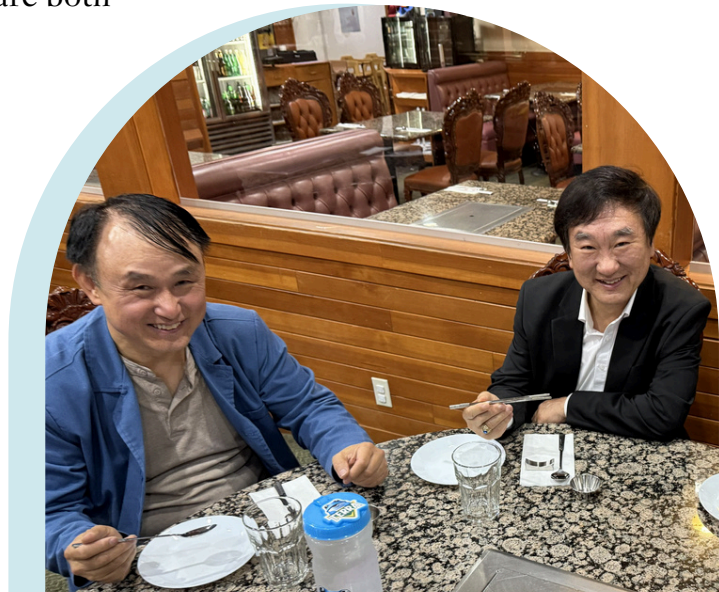
Restaurants received up to \$600 in funding to purchase reusable, washable dine-in foodware to help offset the cost of making changes. From the largest conversion at La Enramada, where customers now enjoy their meals with stainless steel utensils and hot cups of coffee in ceramic mugs, to the smallest conversion of chopsticks and sauce cups at Korean Palace, all three restaurants saw significant waste reduction and an annual cost savings. Combined, these restaurants were able to dramatically reduce plastic pollution in their operations, and all stand as real examples of businesses that are both eco-friendly and economical.

## PARTICIPATING RESTAURANTS

La Enramada Restaurant y Taqueria

Thai Chili Express

Korean Palace





## CASE STUDY

# LA ENRAMADA

Location: San Jose, California

Service Type: Dine-in and takeout services  
with indoor/outdoor seating

Warewashing: Three-sink system

## AT A GLANCE

- **82%** reduction in single-use disposable foodware
- **360,834 pieces** (4,840 pounds) of single-use foodware eliminated from the waste stream annually
- Saving **\$15,427** annually

La Enramada Restaurant y Taqueria is a community favorite in San Jose, California. The locals enjoy Brazilian caldo de pollo and authentic enchiladas Michoacanas along with delectable fish dishes. The restaurant utilizes a three-sink system and has seamlessly incorporated their new reusable foodware into their dishwashing duties.

With the help of our ReThink Disposable Zero Waste Specialists, La Enramada is eliminating 4,840 pounds (the weight of three grand pianos!) from the waste stream, and the business is saving \$15,427 annually that can be reinvested into other upgrades to the space. We can see that they were able to cut their disposable usage by 82% and totally eliminate disposable usage for dine-in service, now only utilizing single-use for take-out.

## CHANGES TO SERVICEWARE

Plastic Fork	➔	Stainless Steel Fork
Plastic Knife	➔	Stainless Steel Knife
Plastic Spoon	➔	Stainless Steel Spoon
Plastic Sauce Cup	➔	Stainless Steel Sauce Cup
24 oz Paper Cold Cup	➔	24 oz Tumbler
32 oz Paper Cold Cup	➔	32 oz Tumbler
Paper Hot Cup	➔	Porcelain Mug & Saucer
Coffee Cup Sleeve	➔	Eliminated for Dine-in
Plastic Straw (paper wrapped)	➔	Glass Straws



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

“We stopped using all that plastic and paper—utensils, cups, straws—and switched to stainless steel, glass, and ceramic; it feels good, it looks better, and our customers notice the difference. For us, it’s about respect for the food and the planet.” – Victor Onofre, Owner of La Enramada



# LA ENRAMADA RESULTS

Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized	Recommendation Implemented	PACKAGING IMPACTS			COST IMPACTS	
		Percent Disposable Reduction**	Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced (pcs.)	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)	Payback Period (months)	Annual NET Cost Savings After Payback Period (\$)*
Plastic Forks	Stainless Steel Forks	84%	44,032	291.05	0.4	\$1,308.72
Plastic Knives	Stainless Steel Knives	83%	46,059	303.99	0.3	\$1,383.72
Plastic Spoons	Stainless Steel Spoons	88%	46,059	303.99	0.4	\$1,396.00
Plastic Sauce Cup	Stainless Steel Sauce Cup	88%	115,149	1,011.93	0.3	\$2,431.59
24 oz Paper Cold Cup	24 oz Tumbler	50%	26,071	935.70	0.1	\$2,681.76
32 oz Paper Cold Cup	32 oz Tumbler	88%	22,109	1,170.37	0.1	\$3,784.55
Paper Hot Cup	Porcelain Mug and Saucer	77%	19,988	637.22	0.9	\$1,732.38
Coffee Cup Sleeve	Eliminated for Dine-in	83%	10,950	140.52	2.5	\$297.45
Plastic Straws	Glass Straws	83%	30,417	45.63	1.0	\$410.71
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>82%</b>	<b>360,834</b>	<b>4,840.40</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>\$15,426.88</b>

\*Net Cost Impact considers any upfront and ongoing costs associated with the purchase and care of reusable items and capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable's recommendations. Net cost savings are based on avoided disposable foodware purchases.

\*\*The restaurant continues to use disposable foodware for takeout orders.

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## CASE STUDY

# THAI CHILI EXPRESS

Location: San Jose, California

Service Type: Dine-in and takeout services  
with indoor/outdoor seating

Warewashing: Three-sink system

Thai Chili Express is a long time favorite in San Jose, California. The locals enjoy traditional Pad Thai, a delicious Tom Yum soup, and they offer several vegetarian options for those who are craving authentic Thai cuisine but are meat free. The restaurant utilizes a three-sink system and has seamlessly incorporated their new reusable foodware into their dishwashing duties.

## AT A GLANCE

- 29% reduction in single-use disposable foodware
- 10,307 pieces (614.8 pounds) of single-use foodware eliminated from the waste stream annually
- Saving \$1,321 annually

With the help of our ReThink Disposable Zero Waste Specialists, Thai Chili is eliminating 614.8 pounds (the weight of a male black bear!) from the waste stream and the business is saving \$1,321 annually that can be reinvested into other upgrades to the space. We can see that they were able to cut their dine-in disposable usage by 29%, only utilizing single-use for take-out.

## CHANGES TO SERVICEWARE

Black Plastic Container w/ Lid	➡	Insulated Stainless Steel Bowl
3-Compartment Container	➡	Stainless Steel Plate
1-Compartment Clamshell	➡	Stainless Steel Plate
Plastic Spoon	➡	Stainless Steel Spoon
Black Plastic Fork	➡	Stainless Steel Fork
Plastic Deli Cup	➡	Insulated Stainless Steel Bowl



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

“I was willing to try out switching some of my most used disposable products with reusable versions and was excited by the prospect of reducing waste and saving money, but I was hesitant to switch some items to a reusable version because it may be hard to keep up with a 3-sink system. Now that my reusables are implemented and my customers are loving the changes, I am looking forward to changing more items like water cups.” - Thuy Vu, Owner of Thai Chili





# THAI CHILI EXPRESS RESULTS

		PACKAGING IMPACTS			COST IMPACTS	
Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized	Recommendation Implemented	Percent Disposable Reduction**	Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced (pcs.)	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)	Payback Period (months)	Annual NET Cost Savings After Payback Period (\$)*
Black Plastic Container with Lid	Stainless Steel Plate	30%	1,369	140.07	4.1	\$350.66
3-Compartment Container	3-Compartment Stainless Steel Plate	30%	1,369	178.85	5.1	\$361.93
1-Compartment Clamshell	Stainless Steel Plate	30%	1,643	221.19	3.9	\$463.69
Plastic Spoon	Stainless Steel Spoon	30%	1,217	6.84	23.7	\$16.40
Black Plastic Fork	Stainless Steel Fork	30%	4,563	53.52	3.9	\$93.07
Plastic Deli Cup	Insulated Stainless Steel Bowls	10%	146	14.34	45.3	\$35.73
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>29%</b>	<b>10,307</b>	<b>614.81</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>\$1,321.48</b>

\*Net Cost Impact considers any upfront and ongoing costs associated with the purchase and care of reusable items and capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable's recommendations. Net cost savings are based on avoided disposable foodware purchases.

\*\*The restaurant continues to use disposable foodware for takeout orders.

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## CASE STUDY

# KOREAN PALACE

Location: San Jose, California

Service Type: Dine-in and takeout services  
with indoor/outdoor seating

Warewashing: Auto-Chlor

Korean Palace is a family-friendly restaurant and banquet hall in San Jose, California. They enjoy hosting events and welcome community to enjoy their delicious Korean cuisine. Their best sellers are the authentic Hot Pot BiBimBap and their delicious seafood pancakes. The restaurant utilizes an Auto-Chlor dishwasher and has been able to seamlessly incorporate their new reusable foodware with their system.

## AT A GLANCE

- 29% reduction in single-use disposable foodware
- 10,235 pieces (240.1 pounds) of single-use foodware eliminated from the waste stream annually
- Saving \$444 annually

With the help of our ReThink Disposable Zero Waste Specialists, Korean Palace is eliminating 240 pounds (the weight of a competition winning pumpkin!) from the waste stream, and the business is saving \$444 annually that can be reinvested into other upgrades to the space. We can see that they were able to cut their dine-in disposable usage by 29%, now only utilizing single-use for take-out.

## CHANGES TO SERVICEWARE

Branded Disposable Chopsticks	➡	Stainless Steel Chopsticks
2 oz Plastic Sauce Cup	➡	2 oz Stainless Steel Sauce Cup
4 oz Plastic Sauce Cup	➡	4 oz Stainless Steel Sauce Cup



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

“We’re thrilled to switch to Rethink Disposable’s reusable chopsticks, rests, and sauce cups. The heavy weight and elegant styling feel just like what we use at home. Our only worry? They’re so nice, someone might want to take them! Still, we’re excited to make this change and help reduce the number of trees being cut down.”

– Daniel Woo, Owner of Korean Palace



## KOREAN PALACE RESULTS

Korean Palace was already using as much reusable foodware as they thought possible for their dine-in and banquet customers. As part of a community case study, we like to add one restaurant that makes small changes in their reuse plan, like Korean Palace, that only needed to convert disposable chopsticks and sauce cups. We can see even with small changes there is a large impact. Korean Palace is now diverting over 10,000 pieces of single-use disposable foodware from the waste stream annually!

		PACKAGING IMPACTS			COST IMPACTS	
Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized	Recommendation Implemented	Percent Disposable Reduction**	Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)	Payback Period (months)	Annual NET Cost Savings After Payback Period (\$)*
Branded Disposable Chopsticks	Stainless Steel Chopsticks	20%	8,000	168.00	7.2	\$389.68
2 oz Plastic Sauce Cups	2 oz Stainless Steel Sauce Cups	20%	1,304	65.18	3.2	\$18.27
4 oz Plastic Sauce Cups	4 oz Stainless Steel Sauce Cups	14%	931	6.96	2.9	\$36.34
TOTALS		29%	10,235	240.14	6.9	\$444.29

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