



CASE STUDY

UNIVERSITY TAQUERIA

Location: Berkeley, California

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

Warewashing: three-sink system

AT A GLANCE

- 55% reduction in single-use disposable foodware
- 52,664 pieces (1,050 pounds) of single-use foodware eliminated from the waste stream annually
- Saving \$1,224 annually

CHANGES TO SERVICWARE

Plastic Fork	➔	Stainless Steel Fork
Plastic Spoon	➔	Stainless Steel Spoon
Plastic Sauce Cup	➔	Stainless Steel Sauce Cup
Bioplastic Drink Cup	➔	Reusable SAN Plastic Cup

University Taqueria is a community favorite in Berkeley, California. Locals and university students alike enjoy the standard comfort foods: tacos, burritos, and incredible quesadilla plates that keep the neighborhood fed and satisfied! Their authentic flan dessert is something that you don't want to pass up when you're enjoying a meal at this local eatery.

With the help of our ReThink Disposable Zero Waste Specialists, University Taqueria is eliminating 1,050 pounds (the weight of about 70 full kitchen garbage bags!) from the waste stream, and the business is saving \$1,224 annually, which can be reinvested into other upgrades to the space. They were able to cut their disposable usage by 55% annually overall, and eliminate disposable usage for dine-in service.

University Taqueria is another example of small changes that make a big impact.



"The program has been very helpful...It helps us a lot, especially because we are saving money and there is less trash for us. You are making everything easier for us!...We've [already] been buying fewer forks and spoons since we have the metal ones, and the water dispenser is perfect!"

— Guadalupe Zarazua, Manager



UNIVERSITY TAQUERIA RESULTS

In collaboration with the City of Berkeley’s Zero Waste team, ReThink Disposable not only helped University Taqueria replace disposables for dine-in customers, but also supplemented their existing reusable plates and food baskets to allow employees to spend less time on washing dishes and having to resort to disposables. Finally, ReThink Disposable supported the restaurant with a glass water dispenser for customer self-service, which cut down on staff time as well.

		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 (\$)*
Plastic Forks	Stainless Steel Forks	53%	6,952	104.29	0.5	\$208.57
Plastic Spoons	Stainless Steel Spoons	53%	6,952	104.29	0.4	\$208.57
Plastic Sauce Cups	Stainless Steel Sauce Cups	53%	34,762	41.71	0.6	\$486.67
Bioplastic Drink Cups	Reusable SAN Cups	77%	3,998	799.52	1.3	\$319.81
TOTALS		55%	52,664 pcs.	1,050 lbs.	0.8 mo.	\$1,223.62

*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.

ReThink Disposable is a program of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund, conducted in partnership with local organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Generous support is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: www.rethinkdisposable.org

