

Sustainable Dishware

Why?

Ensuring your venue is environmentally sustainable when you serve food and refreshments means choosing sustainable dishware and tableware options to reduce or prevent waste. Producing single-use dishware requires resources, and many single-use items are neither compostable nor recyclable (such as plastic cutlery in Montreal, which must be disposed of in the landfill). Selecting reusable or compostable options can lower your event's environmental footprint and help McGill on its way to becoming **zero-waste by 2035**.

How?

Guidelines

- If possible, always prioritize reusable dishware. Many caterers offer this option, so be sure to inquire when choosing a caterer.
 - Tip: Some caterers charge extra for reusable dishware, so make sure to plan for this in your budget.
- Encourage attendees to bring their cups, plates, and/or utensils, and, if appropriate, a reusable container for any leftover food.
- If reusable dishware is unavailable, look for compostable options and be sure to let attendees know to put these items in the compost stream when finished.
- If you need to use plastic dishware, check to see if it is recyclable.
 - Plastics #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 are recyclable in Montreal (except #7 PLA).
 - **If the plastic item has no number, it must go in the landfill.**
 - Note: this applies to nearly all plastic cutlery in Montreal.
- Note that some items that seem recyclable or compostable, such as many coffee cups, may not be, so be sure to **check in advance**.
- Consider offering food that doesn't require much dishware at all, such as finger foods, and keep only a small amount of plastic cutlery on hand for accessibility purposes.



Resources

- **McGill Plate Club** offers free dishware rentals for events of up to 400 people. Contact: plateclub@ssmu.ca.
- **Plumbers' Plates** offers free dishware rentals for small events held within the Faculty of Engineering (other Faculties can also access this service but Engineering is given priority).
- If you think you will be holding many events, consider buying second-hand dishware! You may apply for funding for used dishware for your club or unit through the **Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF)**.
- Check out brands that offer compostable dishware such as Compostable.ca or Greenmunch.ca.
 - Note: #7 PLA is not currently compostable in Montreal, so it must go in the landfill.