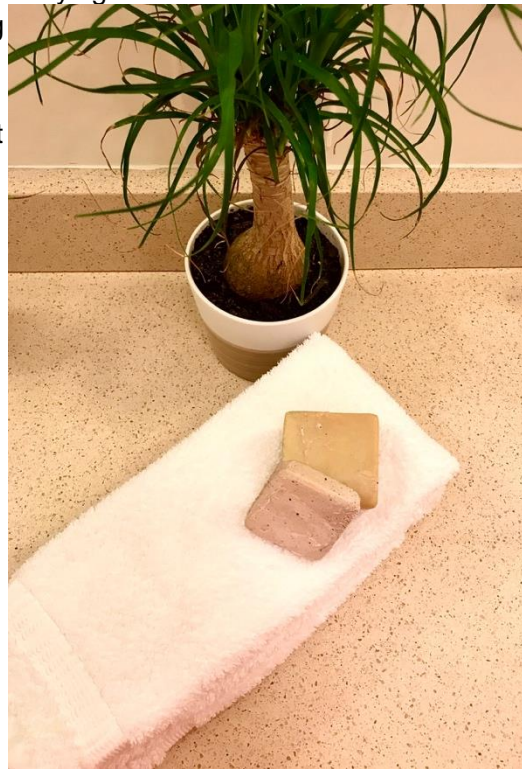


## Solid Waste & Recycling Newsletter

### Plastic Free July: Overall Thoughts from Kayla & Nasibah

#### Kayla's Goal: Reduce plastic meal packaging, beverage jugs, and toiletries

- **Simple Swap Success - Reusable Storage Bags and Stretch Lids:** "I started using freezer safe reusable silicone food storage bags and stretch lids. The reusable stretch lids are perfect for when all of your food storage containers are being used. You can just pop a reusable lid over your dish or bowl and you're done! The reusable food storage bags and lids are easy to use and come in a variety of sizes and material types. If you're tight on storage space, both are slim and don't take up a lot of room in refrigerators or cabinets. I definitely recommend trying them out!"
- **Simple Swap Success – Bar Soap:** "Moving the bar soaps I already had to front and center made me use them much more. If you already have plastic free options on hand that you haven't made a good habit of using yet, putting them in a visible location as a reminder is an easy first step."
- **Tackling Plastic Packaging:** "I didn't realize how tricky it would be to avoid certain packaging waste until I started this challenge. I made homemade no bake protein bites and a homemade almond drink to avoid the plastic packaging that comes with purchasing those items. Both were delicious, and I see many more batches of them in my future! However, a few of the ingredients came in some form of plastic packaging. I also didn't realize how tricky it would be to avoid plastic sunscreen tubes and bottles. I plan on learning more about sunscreen and it's potential packaging options to hopefully decrease plastics consumption in this area of my life."
- **Reflections:** "I was happy my journey allowed me to reduce one level of plastics in my life by making some things homemade, but next I'd like to take it a step further and focus on finding ingredients that are plastic packaging free. I'm also looking to avoid frozen meal packaging by storing freezer friendly meals that can be ready to eat in a flash in my reusable silicone bags. Many people choose store bought frozen meals out of convenience, but with just a little bit of planning I'll have my own frozen meals without the additional plastic waste. The Plastic Free July challenge helped me "see" plastic



items that have always been there but had previously overlooked. It also made me ask more questions about the lack of alternative packaging and package free options."

### Nasibah's Goal: Reduce plastic use in the kitchen

- **Reusable Silicone Bags.** "Switching out plastic single-use snack/sandwich bags for reusable silicone bags was one of the easiest swaps to make. Having them in a variety of sizes and storing them where I used to store my single-use bags made it easy for me to grab the right one without any hesitation. The bags I purchased weren't dishwasher-safe but washing them by hand hasn't been difficult and I've learned that they air-dry quickly when propped on top of a mug or glass."
- **Making Non-Dairy Beverages at home – Oat Milk.** "I've had a lot of fun experimenting with oat milk recipes over the last couple of weeks. If you'd like to try making oat milk at home, find a recipe you like, and if it doesn't already mention the tips below, tweak it by giving one of these a try! Remember, don't waste the leftover oat pulp! Freeze it until you're ready to use it, then try making pancakes with it or adding it to a smoothie. After trying several recipes I found online, here are some tips to help you make delicious creamy oat milk."
  - Soak the oats in hot water for about 15 minutes, and rinse them before putting them in the blender.
  - 20 seconds in the blender is all you need to get creamy oat milk without any sliminess.
  - Strain it through a tightly woven nut milk bag or other food-safe cloth, and don't squeeze too hard.
  - It's normal for oat milk to separate, so make sure to shake it up before you use it."
- **Reflections:** "While I was focusing on plastic waste in my kitchen this year, participating in this challenge made me think more about avoidable plastics in other parts of my life. Even though it can be overwhelming to recognize all the areas where I could improve, I'm glad I kept my goals specific because I'm confident that the low-waste kitchen habits I've picked up will be permanent, and I now feel more empowered to tackle different areas like the bathroom. I loved getting creative with my plastic reduction techniques this July and I look forward to reducing my waste in other areas!"



### Starting Your Own Plastic Free Journey

We've been surrounded by plastic packaging in our daily lives for so long that it often goes unnoticed. It's all around us and yet it blends into the background in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Taking the time to focus on finding plastic free options highlights the prevalence of plastics surrounding us every day. Here are some tips on getting started:

- **Set achievable goals:** If you're new to eliminating single-use plastics in your life, it's helpful to start with something that doesn't require a significant investment, whether it's time, resources, or both. You also want your efforts to be something challenging to you but not impossible. Start by setting small achievable goals.
  - **Repurpose items you already have:** Don't feel like you have to purchase the latest plastic free trendy item (we're looking at you, mason jars); you may already have something at home that you can repurpose to help you get started! For example, you can repurpose empty pasta sauce jars to drink out of or to store food/liquids, and best of all – it's free! Look to the store or online when you need to, but always utilize what you have first.
  - **Challenge a friend or family member:** Find someone to join you on your plastic free journey. An accountability buddy goes a long way in helping you stick to your goals and talk through problems!
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