

Emirates launches closed-loop recycling initiative



The new close-loop initiative involves Emirates' partnership with deSter to reuse recycled plastic

[Emirates](#) has unveiled a closed-loop recycling initiative aimed at reducing plastic waste.

The new program will see millions of plastic trays, bowls, snack and casserole dishes — which are used onboard Emirates flights — recycled locally and transformed into fresh, ready-to-use meal service products.

Emirates is set to introduce the new recycled utensils on its flights starting this month, coinciding with the United Nations World Environment Day. This move aligns with the theme of #BeatPlasticPollution, representing a noteworthy advancement in implementing the principles of a circular economy, which aims to reduce, reuse, and recycle items.



The closed-loop initiative includes a range of processes to ensure the reuse of recycled products

The program involves collecting old and damaged meal service items from Economy and Premium Economy Class dining after flights. These items will undergo a meticulous cleaning and damage inspection before being transported to a facility in Dubai. At the facility, the items will be ground down, reprocessed, and transformed into new dishes, bowls, and trays. The recycled products will then be sent to Emirates Flight Catering, where they will be utilized once more to serve thousands of meals during flights.

Emirates has partnered with [deSter](#) to help enable the airline to reuse plastic materials that have reached their end of life and would otherwise be discarded. The new trays, casseroles, snack dishes, and bowls will contain at least a quarter of recycled material (recyclate) and will gradually increase in proportion over time.

deSter is part of the CE100 network, a group of leading circular economy companies around the globe. deSter's recycling facility in the UAE helps reduce the carbon emissions associated with transporting products to another country for recycling. Its factory also implements sustainable design principles such as solar power, efficient water usage and waste reduction.

Emirates' commitment to minimizing plastic waste

This closed-loop recycling initiative is just one of the steps Emirates has taken to combat plastic waste. The airline has already implemented several other initiatives, such as replacing single-use plastic straws, inflight retail bags, and stirrers with responsibly sourced paper and wooden alternatives, diverting over 150 million plastic items from landfills each year. Emirates blankets are now manufactured from 28 recycled plastic bottles, saving 88 million plastic bottles from being discarded annually.

In addition, Emirates' inflight toy bags, baby amenity kits, and plush toys are made from recycled plastic bottles, repurposing over 8 million bottles during 12 months of amenity kit production. The

hygiene covers for bowls on Emirates meal trays and plastic tumblers are made from 80 percent recycled plastic (rPET). Moreover, the airline's Economy and Premium Economy amenity kits are made from alternative materials like kraft paper, rice paper, and recycled plastic, reducing the consumption of virgin plastic.

To support recycling efforts, Emirates Cabin Crew members in Dubai segregate glass and plastic bottles for recycling, diverting approximately 500,000 kilograms of plastic and glass from landfills in 2022 alone.