

Emirates recycling program going strong



RECYCLING ON BOARD

Emirates has recycled more than 500,000 kilograms of plastic and glass over the course of a year, by collecting discarded bottles onboard for repurposing.

500,000 kilograms is almost the same weight as a fully loaded Emirates flagship A380 aircraft!

All our recyclable waste is taken to specialist facilities in Dubai, where it is given a second lease of life as new glass bottles, textiles, binding strips, and more.

The plastic and glass came from discarded bottles collected over the course of 2022 onboard Emirates flights

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Onboard every flight that lands in Dubai, Emirates Cabin Crew works hard to quickly separate glass and plastic bottles before they are sent to a recycling plant in Dubai. The glass is separated by colour and crushed. This "cullet" or recycled glass that is ready to be re-melted, is then sent to glass manufacturers in the UAE to include in their batch mix for new bottles. The plastic bottles are cleaned, chopped into flakes, melted into pellets, and sent to manufacturers to make other plastic products. As a result, Emirates and Emirates Flight Catering divert thousands of kilograms of glass and plastic away from landfill each year, according to a February 22 press release.

The glass and plastic recycling initiative onboard was suggested by environmentally conscious Emirates Cabin Crew in 2019, as part of regular webinars and events where they are given a platform to share feedback and encouraged to share innovative ideas with key departments. The proposal was well-received and implemented within weeks.

Emirates has several other initiatives which focus on repurposing plastic or using sustainable materials where possible:

Emirates blankets made from recycled plastic



Emirates blankets are made from recycled plastic bottles

For the last 6 years, Emirates has offered cozy sustainable blankets made from recycled plastic bottles to Economy passengers on long-haul flights. The soft and warm blankets are made from 28 recycled plastic bottles. The bottles are shredded into plastic chips before being turned into yarn, creating a fleece material. The fine thread is then woven into soft blankets. Over the 6 years since the initiative was introduced, Emirates blankets have prevented more than 95 million plastic bottles from going to landfill. As the largest sustainable blanket programme on board in the airline industry, the manufacturing process of using recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) also reduces energy emissions by around 70 percent.

Prioritizing responsible sourcing

Consuming responsibly is a key environmental focus area for Emirates, which has embedded an environmental requirement in the supplier code of conduct and considers the entire lifecycle of products from the design stage. For example, wooden tea and coffee stirrers, paper straws and inflight retail bags are made using wood and paper from responsibly managed forests.

Emirates children's toys made from sustainably sourced material



Emirates youth amenity kits

For Emirates' youngest customers, the airline's complimentary toy bags, baby amenity kits and plush toys are also made from recycled plastic bottles and other sustainable materials. Belt bags, duffel bags and backpacks are designed with specific age groups in mind and are constructed from yarn made from 100 percent recycled plastic bottles. Each Emirates kids' backpack is made from 5.5 recycled plastic bottles and each duffel bag is made from 7. The production of Emirates children's bags has saved 8 million plastic bottles from landfill. The swing tags are made from recycled card, and even the outer cases that the products are shipped in are made from recycled card that can be recycled again.

Emirates reusable onboard amenity kits



Emirates' Premium Economy and Economy Class range of amenity kits

Emirates' Premium Economy and Economy Class range of amenity kits are complimentary for customers on long-haul flights, and feature designs that represent the four essential elements of nature — fire, water, earth, and air. The pouches are reusable and made from washable kraft paper with bespoke art printed in non-toxic soy-based ink. The contents include a selection of durable travel essentials made from environmentally friendly materials. The toothbrush is made from a combination of wheat straw and plastic, and the socks and eyeshades are made from recycled plastic, in this case, rPET (recycled polyethylene terephthalate). The packaging used for the dental kit, socks and eyeshades is made from 90 percent rice paper.