

Plastic Free Lunch Day USA



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Coming November 2nd, 2022

Creating A Plastic Free Culture!

The first Plastic Free Lunch Day (PFLD) was spearheaded by fifty-six PS 15 fifth-graders in Red Hook Brooklyn, as portrayed in Cafeteria Culture's award-winning student-led movie, **Microplastic Madness**. On PFLD, students eliminated plastic utensils, drinking cups, and condiment packets. Students conducted a before and after waste audit and on PFLD counted 558 fewer lunchtime single-use plastic items!

What is Plastic Free Lunch Day?

A day when school lunch is prepared without plastic!

An action day to reduce as much plastic as possible.

A way to protect the environment and student health.

Provide a glimpse of a plastic-free school cafeteria future.

Connect with students everywhere, who are taking climate action in their cafeteria.

<https://vimeo.com/cafcu/plasticfreelunch>

Cafeteria Culture is an environmental education nonprofit and the force behind the award-winning student-led film **Microplastic Madness**. Plastic Free Lunch Day grew out of Cafeteria Culture's partnerships with the New York City students, DOE Office of Sustainability, and DOE Office of Food and Nutrition Services, a founding USFA member.

The Results from the First Plastic Free Lunch Day at PS 15

The students compared before and after data



There were 558 fewer items on Plastic Free Lunch Day

<https://vimeo.com/361115158>

Nationwide, **school cafeterias serve 7.35 billion meals annually**, making a large contribution to the global plastic waste stream. School lunches are loaded with single-use plastics, such as plastic wrap, utensils, utensil wrap, cups, lids, bowls, straws, condiment packets, cartons, chip & snack bags, baggies, clamshells and styrofoam trays. Collectively, US school cafeterias have the potential to significantly reduce plastic pollution.

Most plastic is not recycled and ends up in landfills or the environment. And because plastic does not biodegrade, it stays around for centuries, endlessly fragmenting into small pieces, first microplastics, then nanoplastics. **Plastic pieces now permanently contaminate our soil, water and air.** We eat a credit card's worth of plastic each week and we breathe even more. Scientists have found plastic particles in the human placenta, and in our lungs, liver, digestive tract and blood. Plastic food packaging and foodwearer create additional health problems. They leak petrochemical monomers, heavy metals, and persistent organic pollutants into our food and drink. About 12% of plastic is burned in incinerators where it emits dioxins and other toxic gasses.

Will you join us on November 2nd and be plastic free in your schools too?

Click here to participate and share your plastic free lunch action idea!



Cafeteria Culture works creatively with youth to achieve equitable zero waste, climate-smart school communities and a plastic free biosphere. Our programs foster youth-led solutions by merging citizen science, civic action, media, storytelling and the arts.



USFA is committed to creating a culture within our organization that ensures an equitable experience for all stakeholders and equitable access to healthy school meals for all students. In pursuit of this, we are committed to fostering a diverse workforce, board of directors and membership base and being intentional about including a diversity of voices in school food conversations.