

# Disposable Pint Glasses – The Good, The Bad, and the Downright Ugly

## Why 100% compostable paper pint glasses are the good guys!

For the hospitality industry, disposable glasses of all sizes have always been a convenient way of coping with situations like busy nights, weddings, festivals and other outside catering functions. Cheap, lightweight, and convenient, they seemed like the perfect solution for keeping customers happy and bar staff doing what they do best – pouring pints and drinks.

But as anyone in the trade will tell you, there is no such thing as a free lunch and all that convenience has come at a great cost.

## Disposable Glasses – The Plastic Problem

Plastic pint glasses can only be described as an environmental disaster. These are the true villains of the story – In environmental terms, plastic glasses are downright ugly.

The good news is that one way or another, the end is nigh for plastic pint glasses. Legislation and consumer awareness are combining to sound the death knell for them.

For the hospitality industry, this could be seen as a double-edged sword. On one hand, their use is simply unsustainable. On the other hand, they are incredibly convenient.

But there are options, one is polylactic acid (PLA) glasses. These are manufactured from plant-based plastics, which is a better option. However, as we discuss a little later, they aren't a great option... In fact, they could be described as bad!

Luckily, there is a perfect solution in the form of 100% compostable paper glasses, that biodegrade in about the same time as a sheet of newspaper does. These are the true heroes of the story, paper glasses are the good guys!

## The Ugly – Disposable Plastic Pint Glasses

It would be hard to imagine that there is anyone who isn't aware of the problems that single-use plastics pose to the environment. It is easy to spout out facts about how many of these we use and how polluted our oceans and landscapes are, so let's just do that!

- **Time to Decompose – 450 years** – Or to put it another way, that plastic glass you drank from at your niece's christening will still be around long after you, your niece, and her offspring have all shuffled off their mortal coils.

- **Aren't they recyclable?** – Yes, but it is difficult and costly and very few actually are. Recent studies have concluded that 30% of the capacity of the world's landfill sites is made of polystyrene a material that is common in many types of plastic glass.
- **500 billion plastic cups used annually** – According to [earthday.org](http://earthday.org), the world uses 500 billion plastic cups and glasses each year.

These are just a few of the facts that go a long way to showing why plastic glasses are just downright ugly.

## The Bad – PLA Plastic Pint Glasses

Branded as an environmentally friendly and compostable alternative to plastic cups, PLA cups use plant-based plastics in their manufacture. These claim to be biodegradable and compostable and to be fair, they are.

However, dig a little deeper and all is not as it seems. For instance, when it boils down to it, they are still plastic, albeit plastic that biodegrades quicker than traditional plastic cups. However, left to their own devices in our landfills, oceans, and countryside, they will still linger for 80 years upwards.

The story is similar when you consider the “compostable” properties of these cups. Try throwing one of these in your home compost bin and you will wait decades for it to compost into nutrient-rich soil.

These types of disposable plastic glasses need to be composted in industrial composting facilities, where they can be exposed to the high heat required to begin the composting process.

These, then, aren't all that clever when it comes to protecting the environment. Some would go as far as calling them bad!

## The Good – Aqueous Coated 100% Compostable and Brandable Paper Pint Glasses

Cue Clint Eastwood riding in to save the day!

If all this sounds like doom and gloom for the hospitality industry then don't worry. There is a completely biodegradable, compostable, and sustainable option that does live up to its marketing hype.

Paper pint glasses that use an aqueous coating to liquid-proof the glass are manufactured using materials from sustainable sources and contain no plastics whatsoever. Drink from one of these at your niece's christening and it will be composted before she's out of nappies!

These are a cost-effective, practical, and sustainable option to traditional disposable plastic glasses. Unlike the PLA plastic glasses, these can be chucked into any home composting bin or simply disposed of in a paper recycling bin. If they do end up in a landfill site, that isn't a problem either. Aqueous-coated paper glasses won't linger

around for decades or centuries, rather they will take around 2 to 6 weeks to biodegrade.

## Benefits of Using Compostable Paper Pints

This is good news for the hospitality industry. The industry has had its well-documented struggles in the past couple of years and with the covid situation easing, businesses will want to make the most of the return to normality.

Paper pint and drink glasses let them do just this, and with a guilt-free conscience too! But it gets better, these are brandable glasses that let business proprietors advertise their brand and tell their customers that they are a brand that cares!

From a business point of view, with consumers increasingly basing their choices on environmental aspects, this makes complete sense. But, let's not forget the really important reason for switching to paper glasses – The environment!

## A Happy Ending

At Think Greener, we are proud of being the good guys! We know there is a long way to go, the bad and ugly will still be lingering around for centuries even if we all stopped using them today.

But, the tide is turning and the future is bright - thanks to innovative and green products that don't harm the planet we can stop wasting valuable resources and polluting our planet with a simple change of product.

And that's good news for the planet, for the consumer, and the hospitality industry.