

# SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Making hospitality happen for a more sustainable future



## What is biodegradable packaging and is it a sustainable choice?



### Biodegradable criteria:

Biodegradable packaging products are:

- **Made from renewable resources**

The term biodegradable means that a product or material is bio-derived (made from a natural, renewable resource) and will break down over time. The break down process is caused by either natural micro-organisms or by a chemical compound embedded in the material itself.

### Biodegradable material types:

There are many different types of biodegradable materials, some are environmentally inert whilst others are environmentally harmful.

Some biodegradable materials break down into micro-plastic, whilst others leave behind chemical and heavy metal residues in the natural environment.

### Biodegradable and compostable - understand the difference:

Biodegradable packaging is often confused for compostable packaging - but the two are not the same. When a product is biodegradable it does not mean that it is compostable also.

#### Biodegradable:

- No indication given of time taken to break down
- No instructions on ideal conditions for break down process to happen
- No information on what the product will break down into
- Will not break down in a landfill site due to insufficient oxygen levels
- Generally not accepted at commercial composting facilities

#### Compostable:

- Specific break down times given - generally 12 weeks
- Ideal break down conditions stated - generally a commercial composting facility
- Clear information on what the product will break down into - generally compost for crop production
- Will not break down in a landfill site due to insufficient oxygen levels
- Accepted at commercial composting facilities when carrying EN13432 certification

The misconception that biodegradable products are harmless and will break down in the natural environment is linked to increased littering of biodegradable products, which is harmful to the environment.



catering supplies

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