

CASE STUDY: House of Dim Sum



BUSINESS PROFILE

Name:
House of Dim Sum

Location:
San Francisco, CA

On-site dining: 84

Take-out: 50%

Warewashing:
3-sink system

Employees: 8



House of Dim Sum is located in San Francisco’s iconic Chinatown and specializes in, you guessed it, dim sum! Before working with SF Environment and ReThink Disposable, Ying Huang, the owner, spent thousands of dollars each week on disposable foodware to serve dine-in customers. After a visit from SF Environment’s outreach team, she learned that the ReThink Disposable program provides funds to switch from disposables to reusables for on-site dining. Huang joined the program — resulting in the elimination of unnecessary landfill waste and produced tremendous cost savings, which further supports House of Dim Sum as a cultural point of significance and source of nourishment for San Franciscans and Chinatown visitors.

Changes to serviceware for less waste and more savings:

Napkins automatically included with all orders	→	Napkins only upon request
Open stack of napkins	→	Dispenser
Disposable hot cups	→	Stainless steel double-walled cups
Individually wrapped creamer	→	Carafe for bulk creamer
Plastic forks and spoons	→	Stainless steel utensils and teaspoons for stirrers
3 sizes of plastic clamshells, paper boats, and deli containers	→	Durable baskets and reusable plates

BEFORE and AFTER: House of Dim Sum switched to reusable foodware.



THE BOTTOM LINE

- \$429 upfront investment in reusable foodware
- \$33,561 in total annual net cost savings
- 2.2 million disposable items reduced per year
- 7.2 tons of annual waste reduction (equivalent to the weight of a San Francisco cable car)

“I encourage other businesses to work with ReThink Disposable and the City for the cost savings and to eliminate disposable items.”

— Ying Huang, Owner



RESULTS

		PACKAGING IMPACTS			COST IMPACTS	
Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized	Recommendation Implemented	Percent Disposable Reduction	Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced	Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)	Payback Period (months)	Annual NET* Cost Savings After Payback Period (\$)
1-ply paper napkins	Napkin dispenser and only available upon request	97.1%	2,024,881	8,100	0.1	\$9,675
Plastic fork	Stainless steel fork	25.0%	17,381	108	1.4	\$170
Plastic spoon	Stainless steel spoon	100.0%	24,333	151	1.3	\$238
8" clear clamshell container	Plates	46.7%	17,033	2,121	0.2	\$4,344
6" clear clamshell	Plates	28.9%	19,771	614	0.4	\$2,056
5" clear clamshell	Basket	82.5%	22,943	891	0.0	\$2,626
16 oz plastic deli container w/lid	Reusable bowl	90.0%	52,560	2,190	0.1	\$6,787
12 oz brown hot cup	Stainless steel cup	100.0%	27,375	329	0.0	\$7,665
		TOTALS:	2,206,277 pieces	14,502 lbs. (7.2 tons)	1.7 weeks (average)	\$33,561

*Net Cost Savings considers upfront and ongoing costs tied to the purchase and care of reusable items, capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable's recommendations, and discontinued disposable foodware purchases.

This case study was made possible through a partnership with the San Francisco Department of the Environment and their outreach team.

ReThink Disposable is a program of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund conducted in partnership with local organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Generous support is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: www.rethinkdisposable.org.

plastic free RESTAURANTS



SF Environment
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A Department of the City and County of San Francisco



Tel. (415) 369-9160
ReThinkDisposable@cleanwater.org
www.rethinkdisposable.org

