



just salad

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020

Published Feb. 22, 2021

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO & CSO

The past year has tested Just Salad in unimaginable ways. We started 2020 with bold plans to expand our zero-waste initiatives along with our company's geographic footprint. By March, we were facing a whole new set of unexpected — and urgent — priorities. As a global pandemic took hold, we focused on keeping customers and staff safe, supporting local healthcare workers with daily meal deliveries, and surviving this dark period with our brand and values intact.

Meanwhile, we watched with alarm as the pandemic took its toll not only on human lives but environmental health as well. Household waste spiked by double-digit percentages. Community composting programs suffered budget-related setbacks. Private waste haulers paused compost pickups. Disposable masks became a ubiquitous new form of litter. With indoor dining suspended or curtailed, our Reusable Bowl program came to a halt for several months.

These developments made it seem as if human safety and environmental health were a zero-sum game, where one comes at the expense of the other.

We've never bought into that — and fortunately, we weren't alone. In 2020, the zero-waste movement gained traction at home and abroad. Countries like Canada and Germany banned certain single-use items. More than 100 health experts publicly affirmed the safety of reusables.¹ Zero-waste food delivery models established footholds on the East and West Coast. A grocery business that we started in April evolved into a meal kit brand, Housemade, that has 90% less packaging and no plastic pouches or containers.

Another exciting development was carbon transparency. At Just Salad, we added carbon labels to our menus, highlighting the close link between dietary choices and climate change. The age of the climate-smart, waste-conscious consumer is here, and Just Salad is proud to be one of the earliest brands to champion carbon labeling.

Overall, we emerged from 2020 with an even stronger grasp on our brand values. We rewrote our company's purpose with a new mission statement — to make everyday health

and everyday sustainability possible. We connected with our community in new ways — including a partnership with Mt. Sinai Health System to deliver \$1 million in meals to healthcare workers at a rate of 10,000 meals a day.

In 2021, we're moving ahead with our ambitious waste reduction programs that were delayed by the unanticipated demands of 2020. These include a use-and-return system for our Reusable Bowls with centralized collection and sanitation. Customers will be able to order digitally from Just Salad in Reusable Bowls and return these containers to our stores for professional washing and sanitation. We'll begin testing this program in select locations in 2021.

Longer term, we plan to redesign our loyalty and rewards program within the Just Salad App, rewarding sustainable behaviors — such as Reusable Bowl use or ordering from our Climatarian menu.

Excitingly, these programs will take root as Just Salad expands its U.S. retail footprint in the months and years ahead — amplifying their scale and impact.

In 2020, our world changed but our values did not. If anything, the COVID pandemic made us more determined to create a new normal for our industry — one in which waste is taboo, reusables are taken for granted, and doing “less bad” is not good enough.

We look forward to your feedback on this report. Email us at sustainability@justsalad.com.

Best regards,

Nick Kenner, Founder & Chief Executive Officer



Sandra Noonan, Chief Sustainability Officer



¹Health Expert Statement Addressing Safety of Reusables and COVID-19, June 2020, uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5d696bc69fa6c2515873360a/5ef0e189dfa56f4fdf111e83_Health%20Expert%20Statement%20Version%209.pdf.



2020 MILESTONES

FOOD & CLIMATE	PACKAGING	PEOPLE
1st U.S. restaurant chain to display carbon labels on menu	1st U.S. restaurant chain to offer a meal kit with no plastic pouches or containers + 90% less packaging by weight	Provided \$1 million in meals to frontline healthcare workers
1st U.S. restaurant chain to offer a curated Climatarian menu	Eliminated plastic dressing and beverage cups	Launched Sustainability Champion program at all locations
Launched vegan smoothie menu and partnered with Daring to offer plant-based chicken	Launched utensil waste reduction program on orderjustsalad.com, 3rd-party platforms	Launched Sustainability Fellow educational internship program

FOOD & CLIMATE CHANGE

Carbon Labeling at Just Salad

More than half of Americans feel “helpless” to do anything about climate change.² Yet every day, we are given at least three opportunities to take meaningful action to forestall ecological destruction. Those opportunities come in the form of breakfast, lunch and dinner.

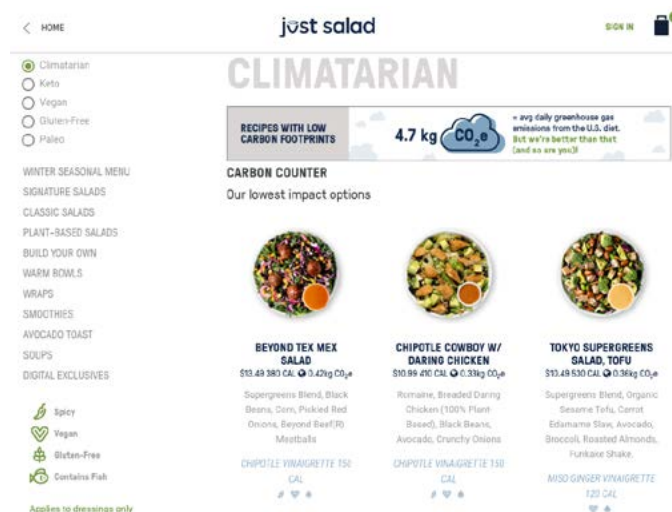
People underestimate the ecological impacts of their food choices. The global nonprofit EAT puts it bluntly: In high-income countries, dietary choices are destroying the planet.³ If the world’s entire population ate in the same way as wealthy nations, one to seven Earths would be needed to support these food consumption patterns.⁴

Put another way, the chances of meeting Paris Agreement targets are slim if we fail to adopt more sustainable diets and reduce food waste. Specifically, food-related per-capita greenhouse gas emissions must fall by half in high-income nations.⁵ How do we achieve that? According to the Exponential Roadmap Initiative, we must adopt “healthier and climate-friendly diets” which can be encouraged through “clearer labeling on goods [emphasis ours], certification schemes and public health campaigns.”⁶

If consumption choices are part of the problem, then consumer education is part of the solution. A survey by the Carbon Trust shows that 67% of consumers support carbon

labeling.⁷ In 2020, we became the first U.S. restaurant chain to launch a carbon labeling program, with the following components:

- All menu items carbon labeled on orderjustsalad.com, JS App and in-store. Online, we help customers contextualize carbon footprints by comparing them to a quarter-pound beef patty.
- Our online menu calculates the carbon footprint of a Build Your Own salad in real time
- A special “Climatarian” section, positioned alongside Vegan, Keto, Gluten-Free and Paleo offerings, provides a shortcut for identifying our lowest-impact menu items



By applying carbon footprint labels to our food, we are making the ecological dimension of eating explicit and quantifiable. And by placing them adjacent to the calorie label, we’re conveying that food choices have an impact on our bodies and our biosphere.



² Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Rosenthal, S., Kotcher, J., Ballew, M., Goldberg, M., & Gustafson, A. (2018). Climate change in the American mind: December 2018. Yale University and George Mason University. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

³ Loken, Brent et al. Diets for a Better Future: Rebooting and Reimagining Healthy and Sustainable Food Systems in the G20. Available at <https://eatforum.org/diets-for-a-better-future-report/>.

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ J. Falk, O. Gaffney, A. K. Bhowmik, P. Bergmark, V. Galaz, S. Henningsson, M. Höjer, L. Jacobson, K. Jónás, D. Klingefeld, T. Kåberger, B. Loken, D. Lundén, J. Malmmodin, T. Malmqvist, V. Olsson, A. Pearce, E. Pihl, T. Shalit, Exponential Roadmap 1.5. Future Earth. Sweden. (September 2019).

⁷ “2020 Consumer Research Shows Sustained Support for Carbon Labeling on Products.” Carbon Trust, 24 Apr. 2020, www.carbontrust.com/news-and-events/news/2020-consumer-research-shows-sustained-support-for-carbon-labeling-on.



Chipotle Cowboy salad with Daring™ plant-based chicken

We know that not everyone will pay attention to carbon footprint labels, just as not everyone reads nutrition labels. We also know that carbon labeling is in its infancy and consumer awareness has yet to go mainstream. And we acknowledge that carbon labeling methodologies may differ from one brand to the next.

But all of these problems have solutions. And we must pause to reflect that we've already achieved something important through carbon labeling: We've created awareness and dialogue about the link between food and climate change.

To be clear, we reject the “blame the consumer” mentality toward climate change solutions. Our intention is to empower our customers, not burden them. Informed citizens send clearer demand signals to the marketplace. Their educated choices push companies to adopt practices that safeguard human and ecological health. If our customers choose lower-emissions items, that is a demand signal that we should not ignore.

What's Next

To study the effects of our carbon labels on consumer behavior, we have partnered with research scientists at the University of Pennsylvania, Tulane University and Harvard University to devise a behavioral survey that will be administered and subsequently analyzed in 2021. We have also partnered with a team of executives enrolled at Cambridge University's Institute of Sustainability Leadership to estimate the incremental greenhouse gas emissions savings achieved by our carbon labeled menu versus our prior non-labeled menu.

In addition to carbon labeling, we took the following steps in 2020 toward a lower-impact menu:

- Relaunched our smoothie menu with vegan ingredients, removing dairy-based yogurt
- Launched Daring plant-based chicken alternative in our Chipotle Cowboy Salad
- Continued to offer Beyond Beef® in our Beyond Tex Mex salad.
- Created two vegan options for our new meal kit brand, Housemade (details below), including the Taco Tuesday Bowl featuring Beyond Beef®

Carbon Labeling Fast Facts

- Average carbon footprint of our salads: 0.71 kg CO₂e⁸
- Average daily carbon footprint of the U.S. diet: 4.7 kg CO₂e⁹
- Percent of consumers who support carbon labeling on products: 67%¹⁰
- 35%: Amount that U.S. diet-related emissions would fall if Americans replaced half of all animal-based food with plant-based alternatives ¹¹

To learn more, visit justsalad.com/carbonlabel

A LOWER WASTE MEAL KIT

Housemade

In December 2020 Just Salad launched the meal kit brand [Housemade](#). This concept was the outgrowth of Just Grocery, a delivery service we started in April after observing shortages of certain grocery staples in New York City after the onset of COVID-19.

With Housemade, our goal was to create a meal kit with drastically less packaging – including no plastic containers or pouches. Housemade meal kits have 90% less packaging by weight than a standard meal kit containing 12-13 types of packaging, and approximately 50% less packaging-related greenhouse gas emissions.

The only way to achieve these reductions was to rethink the meal kit concept. Typical meal kits require a subscription, and they are trucked to regional distribution centers during their journey to the customer. That requires more energy, more temperature control and more packaging.

In contrast, Housemade is subscription-free and delivery happens same-day by car or bike – not truck. We prep meal kits in existing Just Salad stores, which serve as micro fulfillment centers. And in 2021, we began offering grocery staples – helping to minimize gas-guzzling grocery store runs.

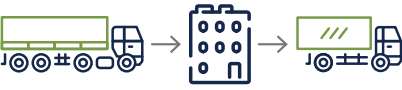
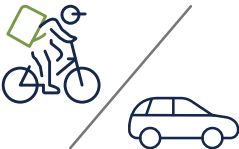
The Environmental Footprint of Meal Kits

Meal kits’ environmental footprint is determined by several dynamic variables including food waste, packaging and human behavior. Food waste is the simplest of the three: One study of 50 meal kit services found meal kits reduce food waste by 27% on average versus grocery-bought meals and decrease food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 45%.

Packaging is more complicated. Researchers agree it worsens meal kits’ footprint, but they disagree on how much. One study concludes that despite their packaging, meal kits are lower-impact than grocery store meals – using 20% less energy from farm to fork. Another study finds that meal kits consume 23% more energy – due mainly to packaging. (Both studies assume a meal kit contains 12-13 types of packaging material, including ice packs and mixed plastics.)

The third variable, consumer behavior, is an important swing factor. Take a household that drives to the grocery store twice a week. Even if that family purchased meal kits with 20% less packaging than normal, their frequent trips to the grocery store would negate the environmental benefits of the lighter packaging. Thus, one’s grocery store routines can swing a meal kit’s footprint in the right or wrong direction.

We concluded that two ways to reduce the environmental footprint of meal kits even further was to streamline packaging and reduce grocery store trips to once a week or less. For people who order groceries weekly and discard spoiled food consistently, these measures could make Housemade meal kits a better choice.

	FULLFILLMENT	DOWNSTREAM TRANSPORTATION + STORAGE	CONSUMER	DISPOSAL
Standard Meal Kit	 Refrigerated Fulfillment Center	 Heavy Duty Truck 3rd Party Local Delivery Hub	 Consumer	 A typical meal kit can contain up to 12 different types of packaging.
housemade	 Just Salad Store	 Bike or Car	 Consumer	 Housemade meal kit contains 3 types of packaging: paper, fiber seasoning cup (not pictured), plant-based sticky labels.

¹² Packaging weights for standard meal kits were based on data collected in: Fenton, K., 2017. Unpacking the Sustainability of Meal Kit Delivery: A Comparative Analysis of Energy Use, Carbon Emissions, and Related Costs for Meal Kit Services and Grocery Stores. University of Texas at Austin.

WASTE REDUCTION

In the book *The Story of Stuff*, Greenpeace USA Executive Director Annie Leonard writes: “There is no such thing as ‘away’. When we throw anything away it must go somewhere.”

Increasingly, that “somewhere” is air, water, land and sea. Plastics — even those that are recyclable — become nature’s problem all too often.

Across our operations, we apply a waste reduction framework to sourcing, packaging and operations. We prioritize REDUCING and REUSING, followed by COMPOSTING and RECYCLING. Below we share our progress applying this framework during 2020.

Reduce

Food Waste

Donated \$1 million in meals (10,000 meals/day) to the Mt. Sinai Health system.

In 2020, our delivery of \$1 million in meals to healthcare workers on the front lines of the COVID pandemic had the ancillary effect of minimizing surplus food volumes at the end of the day.

Just Salad tracks food waste daily. Using this data, we adjust store-level purchasing as necessary to minimize leftover food. Additionally, our 2021 food waste strategy includes a pilot partnership with [Too Good to Go](#), which enables us to sell surplus food directly to customers.

Single-Use Utensils

Required guests to indicate yes or no for disposable utensils on [orderjustsalad.com](#) and 3rd-party delivery platforms.

Utensil waste reduction is an ecological and financial win-win, yielding significant cost savings.

If 50% of digital pickup and delivery customers opt out of plastic utensils, the avoided production and landfilling of these materials represents 2.3 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions averted annually.

At the local level, we encourage policies that prohibit utensils in pickup and delivery orders unless the customer specifically requests them. This would enable restaurants and ordering platforms to withhold utensils by default with fewer concerns about customer complaints or confusion.

In late 2019, we tested compostable wooden utensils at one Just Salad location. We did not proceed with these forks due to guest surveys expressing dissatisfaction with the product. We continue to seek a cost-effective disposable utensil with a better lifecycle environmental profile than plastic. Yet ultimately, source reduction — offering as few disposable utensils as possible — is the most effective solution.

Delivery Bags

Reduced size of delivery bags.

The paper saved through smaller delivery bags conserves the equivalent of up to 1 million paper bags annually¹³ and reduces GHG emissions by at least 32 metric tons of CO₂e.¹⁴

Bagless Pickup

Pickup orders are placed on pickup stations unbagged.

Paper bags saved through this program represent at least 8.85 metric tons of CO₂e averted annually.

¹³ This range assumes that at least 50% of customers opt out of bags when picking up digital pickup orders.

¹⁴ Versus a baseline scenario where customers recycle 100% of the larger bags. (Emissions savings would be even larger if the assumed recycling rate were lowered.)

Meal Kits

Reduced packaging by 90% versus standard meal kits (by weight).

Housemade meal kit packaging has ~50% less embedded GHGs. We are exploring the possibility of delivering meal kits in reusable containers. Because the reverse logistics and washing of reusable containers consume energy, we want to evaluate the overall benefits carefully before proceeding.

Bagging by Request

Guests ordering in-store are asked if they'd like a bag.

Assuming 50% of customers do not request a bag, this program saves at least 324,000 bags annually.

Reuse

Zero Waste Delivery

We launched a pilot test with the zero-waste online ordering platform DeliverZero at our Park Slope store in Q4 2020.

Reusable Masks

We partnered with Kenneth Cole to create reusable cotton masks for in-store teammates.



Together, the aforementioned REDUCE and REUSE programs save approximately 50,000 pounds of waste on an annualized basis.

Dine-In Bowls

We began offering non-disposable dine-in bowls in early 2020. The impact of this program will be realized more fully once in-store dining — which has been paused due to COVID — resumes in all markets.



Beverage Cups

We introduced a \$0.10 discount on reusable cups for smoothies in early 2020. Like other restaurants, we suspended BYOC (Bring Your Own Cup) after the COVID pandemic to develop an enhanced safety protocol¹⁵ that uses a receiving tray to eliminate touching of the vessel. We plan to implement this contactless BYOC system in 2021.

Reusable Bowl Program

Together, packaging and containers contribute 23% of landfilled materials in the United States. This figure includes food-related packaging like disposable takeout bowls and boxes.¹⁶ The U.S. goes through 7.3 billion pounds of disposable foodware each year — including food and pizza containers, cup lids and domes, carryout bags, beverage cups and sleeves, napkins, wrap paper, and portion cups.

Aside from creating waste, single-use disposable items contribute to carbon emissions and resource depletion. For a product whose lifetime is measured in minutes, precious natural resources are expended on their production.

¹⁵ Safety protocols for reusable cups have been demonstrated and tested by others; one such example is [here](#).

¹⁶ "Reducing Wasted Food & Packaging: A Guide for Food Services & Restaurants," US EPA, Aug. 2015, https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/reducing_wasted_food_pkg_tool.pdf

Reusable containers put a stop to the take-make-waste paradigm of single-use. This is why the Reusable Bowl is the linchpin of our mission to make everyday health and everyday sustainability possible.

In 2019, sales of the Reusable Bowl grew more than 100% YOY. In 2020, two developments halted this growth: Mandated restrictions on indoor dining during the COVID-19 pandemic and a shift in ordering volume from on-premise to digital. As a result, we fell short of our goal of diverting 100,000 pounds of disposable container waste from landfills.

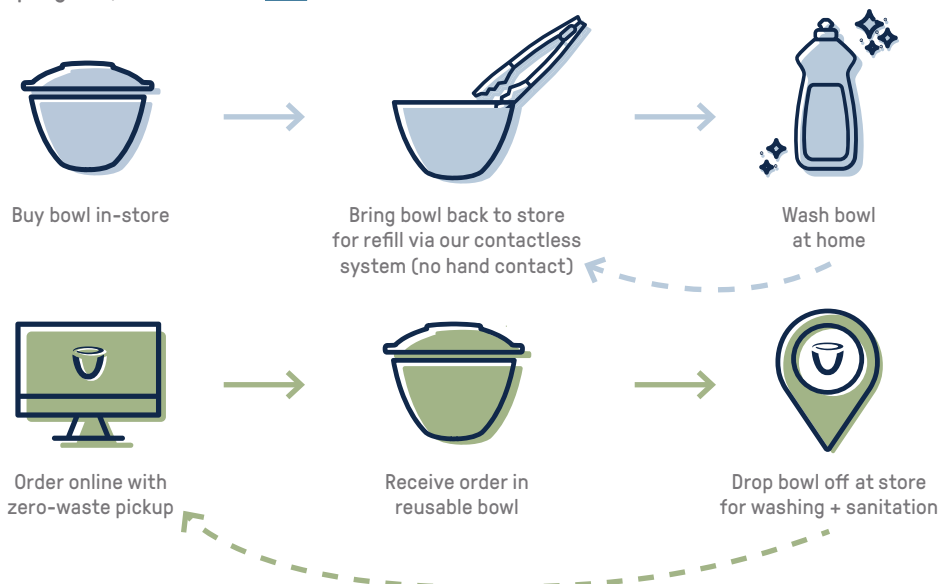
However, we emerged from 2020 with renewed conviction about the importance of this program – and plans to expand it. Under our existing program, customers purchase a Reusable Bowl for \$1 and reuse it every time they come back to the store. In the next phase of the program, we will

extend this reuse system to digital, off-premise ordering. Customers will be able to order delivery or pickup, receive their order in a Reusable Bowl, and return it to a Just Salad store for washing and sanitation. Ultimately this use-and-return system would feature some kind of deposit or fee that incentivizes customers to return the containers.

This is the logical next phase of the program – as a greater proportion of our customer base orders online, the Reusable Bowl must become available online as well. Testing of this new phase will begin with a single-store pilot. To learn more, visit <https://justsalad.com/zero-waste-pickup-faq>.

In similar fashion, we are offering this use-and-return system to corporate partners participating in our Hub program, which provides free daily delivery to offices. To learn more, visit <https://www.justsalad.com/zero-waste-hub>.

ON PREMISE PROGRAM FOUNDED IN 2006



DIGITAL PROGRAM PILOTING AT SELECT STORES IN 2021

Reusable Bowl Program FAQs

What is the bowl made of?

Just Salad's Reusable Bowl is made of 100% polypropylene (PP), a recyclable plastic resin. Polypropylene is a desirable material for food serviceware because of its durability. It is dishwasher safe and meets FDA food safety standards.

How does the Reusable Bowl program work?

Our system is 100% contactless, meaning your bowl makes no hand contact with anyone except you.

Learn more at justsalad.com/reusablebowl.

How do I dispose of a Reusable Bowl?

Our Reusable Bowl is meant to be reused for long periods of time. We encourage anyone wishing to dispose of a Just Salad Reusable Bowl to place it in curbside recycling. Polypropylene has a lower recycling rate than other plastics, but a number of U.S. recycling facilities do accept it.¹⁷

Why don't you make the Reusable Bowl out of recycled plastic?

We're exploring this avenue.

¹⁷For a listing of U.S. facilities that accept, sell or purchase polypropylene, visit the Association of Plastics Recyclers website at <https://plasticsrecycling.org/markets/buyers-and-sellers>.

Carbon Footprint Analysis

How does the carbon footprint of the Just Salad Reusable Bowl compare to that of a disposable container, from production to disposal? We used the EPA's WARM tool¹⁸ to answer this question, using the following inputs and assumptions:

- The Just Salad Reusable Bowl weighs 2.8 ounces, is made of 100% polypropylene, is washed in a standard dishwasher after each use, and is eventually recycled (presumably after many uses)
- The disposable salad bowl weighs 1.5 ounces, is made of 100% PET plastic,¹⁹ was placed in the recycling bin after each use, and was successfully recycled

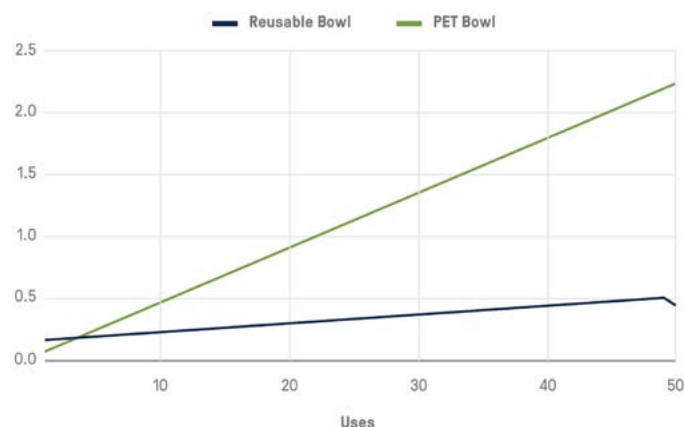
It is important to note that our greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE) estimates for both polypropylene and PET are based on emissions assumptions and data in the EPA's WARM tool. In addition, we used LCA studies of home dish-washing to estimate emissions from cleaning the Reusable Bowl at home. We then applied our own weight adjustments to arrive at a per-bowl estimate. This was not a formal life-cycle assessment – it is a simplified, preliminary model that helps us approximate the environmental benefits of reuse.

Our calculations suggest that the Reusable Bowl should be used four times to achieve the desired environmental

benefits over disposable bowls. After four uses, the cumulative emissions from single-use bowls exceed the Reusable Bowl's, and keep increasing in stepwise fashion (see chart below). Meanwhile, the only incremental emissions from the Reusable Bowl are from home dish-washing after each use. During the first three uses, emissions from the Reusable Bowl are higher because its heavier weight (which lends durability) makes production more emissions-intensive.

“Reuse and refill systems, when implemented correctly, can keep people safe and help to end our throwaway culture.”

– “Reusables Are Doable” (Greenpeace Reports)²⁰



Cumulative greenhouse gas emissions for the Just Salad Reusable Bowl and a PET plastic single-use bowl. Note that: (a) For the Reusable Bowl, Use #1 (x-axis) represents emissions from initial production of the Bowl + the first home dish-washing cycle. We then plot the incremental emissions from a dish-washing cycle after each use. The final use (Use #50) reflects the emissions offset from eventually recycling the Reusable Bowl. (b) For the PET bowl, each use reflects the cumulative emissions from production and disposal (via recycling) of a single bowl.

We estimate the GHGE associated with production and eventual recycling of a 2.8-ounce Just Salad Reusable Bowl to be 0.06 kg CO2e. Using previously published LCAs, we assume that a single home dish-washing cycle adds 0.01 kg CO2e, for a total of 0.07 kg CO2e per bowl. This compares to 0.05 kg CO2e for producing and recycling a single 1.5-ounce disposable PET bowl. (Emissions would be higher if either product were incinerated or landfilled.)

This simplified analysis illustrates why we encourage guests to use their Reusable Bowl consistently and repeatedly – hence the free topping we award with every use.

¹⁸ The WARM (Waste Reduction Model) tool calculates greenhouse gas emissions associated with various waste management practices and is available at <https://www.epa.gov/warm>

¹⁹ At Just Salad, our disposable salad bowl option is made of bagasse, a byproduct from the processing of sugarcane. As of this writing, the WARM tool does not provide emissions data for this material. We have consulted other lifecycle analyses of bagasse and have reason to believe that the reusable bowl's environmental benefit versus disposable bagasse bowls is at least as large as the benefit versus disposable plastic.

²⁰ Pinsky, David. “Reusables Are Doable.” Greenpeace, Greenpeace Reports, 25 Aug. 2020, www.greenpeace.org/usa/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/greenpeace-report-reusables-are-doable-august-2020.pdf.



COMPOST

Food

In 2020, we introduced front-of-house food separation at new stores and began retrofitting existing locations with a new front-of-house waste bin with a compartment for food scraps. This marked the second phase of our organics separation program, which began in 2019 in our kitchens and prep lines.

Unfortunately, actual composting of these organics came to a halt in 2020 with the onset of the COVID pandemic. With the closure of so many restaurants, haulers cited insufficient volume of organics and discontinued daily pickup of organics. In-store composting will resume when haulers are able to make daily collections in areas where municipal composting infrastructure exists.

Separately, Just Salad lent its support to the upcycled food industry by participating, through its Chief Sustainability Officer, on the Upcycled Food Association's Standard Committee in 2020. This committee developed an [Upcycled Certification standard](#) that will inform the Upcycled Certification, a third-party program that will help grow the upcycled food industry. Upcycled foods use ingredients that otherwise would not have gone to human consumption, are procured and produced using verifiable supply chains, and have a positive impact on the environment.²¹

²¹"Upcycled Food Association." www.upcycledfood.org/.



Just Salad smoothies with plant-based straws made by s'wheat®

Compostable Foodware

We offer non-plastic disposable bowls to guests who do not participate in our Reusable Bowl program. These bowls are made of bagasse, a byproduct from sugarcane production, and they are compostable in industrial facilities. In the past, we have contracted with commercial waste haulers to take compostable items to regional composting facilities or waste-to-energy plants. After the COVID-19 pandemic, our commercial haulers were unable to do daily compost pickups, citing insufficient volume.

Even if these services were to resume, compostable foodware is not a silver bullet. At-home, backyard composting is not yet a mainstream activity; municipal composting programs are still scarce; and many industrial compost facilities do not accept compostable foodware. As Closed Loop Partners writes, “there is a critical need to address the misalignment between production and end-of-life to ensure that compostable packaging does not end up in landfill.”²²

The issues with single-use plastic packaging are no less concerning. Plastic waste now contaminates all major ecosystems on the planet.²³ Moreover, plastic waste generated in the U.S. is among the highest contributors, globally, to coastal and marine litter.²⁴ Less than 10% of all plastic ever produced has been recycled.²⁵ And plastic foodware is recycled at much lower rates than generally recognized: Recycling facilities report that the small size of items like disposable utensils and straws prevents them from being recycled.²⁶

Below is an overview of our 2020 initiatives with respect to plant-based, compostable foodware.

Dressing Cups

Replaced plastic salad dressing cups with bagasse-based cups, which are compostable. (Bagasse is a byproduct of sugar manufacturing from sugarcane — it is the fiber that remains after the cane is processed into sugar. Bagasse products are made of a renewable, secondary waste material instead of a raw petrochemical feedstock.)

Straws

Replaced plastic straws with backyard-compostable s'wheat® straws made of natural reed stems and no chemical additives. A full roll-out will occur in 2021.

Disposable Salad Bowl Lids

Replaced plastic salad bowl lids with bagasse-based lids, which are compostable. Like our fiber bowls, these are PFAS-free.

Paper Cups

In addition to the above, in 2020 we replaced our plastic smoothie cups with paper cups sourced from a FSC-certified, domestic paper mill that operates on 95% biodiesel. We are evaluating paper cups containing recycled content in order to reduce associated GHGs further.

²²Friedman, Hannah. “Navigating Plastic Alternatives in a Circular Economy.” Closed Loop Partners, Closed Loop Ventures Group, 27 Jan. 2021, www.closedlooppartners.com/research/navigating-plastic-alternatives-in-a-circular-economy

²³K. L. Law, N. Starr, T. R. Siegler, J. R. Jambeck, N. J. Mallos, G. H. Leonard, The United States’ contribution of plastic waste to land and ocean. *Sci. Adv.* 6, eabd0288 (2020).

²⁴ibid

²⁵R. Geyer, J. R. Jambeck, K. L. Law, Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. *Sci. Adv.* 3, e1700782 (2017).

²⁶Based on conversations with local recycling facilities.

SUPPLIER STANDARDS

In 2020 we introduced intake questionnaires for prospective suppliers of foodware, packaging and packaged snack products. The following information is requested:

- Is this product recyclable in municipal facilities?
- Is this product compostable?
- If you answered YES to the preceding question, please list any compostability certifications for this product
- What percent of your packaging is made of recycled content?
- If you have completed an LCA of this product, please provide
- *[For food products]* Does this product contain any upcycled ingredients? If so, which, and what percent of the product is upcycled?

Suppliers who provide robust answers to these questions are prioritized during the sourcing process assuming they meet our other quality, taste and performance standards.

Energy

In 2020 we sought out ways to reduce the carbon footprint of our stores and minimize energy use. We implemented a pilot partnership with Budderfly, an Energy Efficiency as a Service provider.

Starting with three locations, we kicked off the pilot in the third quarter. At no cost to Just Salad, Budderfly evaluated over two dozen packaged energy reduction technologies to reduce energy use and costs at these stores. These solutions included but were not limited to:

- Refrigeration systems that enhance control of compressors, evaporator coils and fans
- Refrigerant additives that extend the life of HVAC systems
- Night “curtains” to preserve cold temperatures of our beverage coolers overnight
- Metering inside electrical panels that trigger alerts to our Operations team if energy consumption, or temperatures, are higher than normal

Since these installs began, energy consumption at these pilot locations has decreased by as much as 20%.²⁷ Budderfly

continues to seek additional modifications to reduce energy usage, with the goal of achieving reductions of 25% or more versus each store’s historical average monthly usage. We added a fourth New York City location to the pilot in early 2021.

The Budderfly relationship is attractive to us because it requires little oversight and comes at no cost. Budderfly uses its own capital to invest in our stores. They bill us a negotiated amount that reflects a discount to historical energy usage at the pilot locations, while keeping some of the savings to recover invested capital and operational costs.

Our goal is to leverage Budderfly’s experience from its other clients, as well as its energy reduction technologies, to ensure that every Just Salad order is delivered with the lowest possible environmental impact.

Built Environment

We apply a sustainability lens to the design and procurement phase of new store construction and renovations. Our restaurant booths and tables are a good example:

²⁷ Budderfly bills for energy use a month in advance based on historical average monthly usage, so data is available on a lag and a full assessment of energy savings will occur in 2021.

For restaurant booths in new stores, we have switched to woven fabric instead of vinyl backs. The woven fabric is GREENGUARD Certified, meaning that it meets third-party chemical emissions standards relating to volatile organic compounds (VOCs), aiding in the creation of healthier indoor environments and reducing the risk of chemical exposure.²⁸ It also holds a Silver rating under Facts, a sustainability certification program for commercial textiles.

For our table tops, we have partnered with a vendor sourcing wood only from companies certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. FSC certification ensures the wood used for our table tops is harvested sustainably by setting standards that promote responsible forest management and help mitigate the effects of climate change.

In 2020, our Construction and Sustainability teams began using the Embodied Carbon in Construction Calculator (EC3) tool to understand the carbon footprint of various building materials including tiling, lumber and paint. We plan to incorporate this tool into procurement and design decisions going forward.

PEOPLE

We want our employees to feel a personal connection to our mission to make everyday health and everyday sustainability possible.

In 2020 we launched the Sustainability Champion program. At each Just Salad location, one teammate is given this title. Sustainability Champions receive additional training and education on Just Salad's efforts to minimize its environmental footprint. They also serve the crucial role of relaying feedback from our guests to our Chief Sustainability Officer.

In 2020, we held five trainings with our 40 Sustainability Champions on topics including Carbon Labeling, Source Reduction and Packaging.

We also launched the Sustainability Fellow program, a semester-long fellowship for 2-3 qualified graduate students to work alongside our Chief Sustainability Officer. We had four outstanding Sustainability Fellows in 2020 who made meaningful contributions.

Clean Energy

We have partnered with Arcadia, a technology company that connects homeowners and renters to 100% renewable energy.

Just Salad employees who live in areas with community solar projects receive an Arcadia membership for free. Employees who don't live in such areas can still enjoy the benefits of an Arcadia membership for \$5 per month.

This is a simple way for our team to take action against climate change. It also helps Just Salad reduce Scope 3 emissions related to teleworking, which became more prevalent during COVID-19.



“I think it’s a great cause; I’m saving the world in a sense. I even feel better [after learning about the benefits of plant-based eating]. I’m actually thrilled about the program.”

— ROSETTA, SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION, NEW YORK CITY

²⁸ Source: UL GREENGUARD Certification Fact Sheet. Available at <https://www.ul.com/resources/ul-green-guard-certification-program#>

CHALLENGES

For the second straight year, we feature disposable gloves as one of our biggest waste challenges. Below are the solutions we have considered and the difficulties posed by each.

Source Reduction

Gloves made of Nitrile are stronger and less prone to breakage than vinyl and latex, allowing for longer periods of wear and a lower volume of discarded gloves. However, at this time, switching to Nitrile gloves would not necessarily reduce Just Salad's glove waste. This is because our team members are preparing salads to order, and they get food on their gloves nearly any time they handle fresh ingredients like avocado, removing them from their skins. Gloves must be changed any time they become contaminated, and as a result, the toughness of the glove becomes a moot point—switching to tougher gloves would not slow down our disposal rate.

Recycling

It's possible to separate and recycle food service gloves into new items, like plastic trash bags, in partnership with a recycling facility. However, maintaining separate bins for

gloves is difficult in our space-constrained back-of-house areas. Additionally, recyclers require that used gloves have minimal food contamination, and sending gloves to the recycling facility is an added cost.

Composting

A number of compostable options for food service gloves do exist. These are manufactured from plant-based rather than petroleum-based plastic and are said to decompose in an industrial composting facility within 12 weeks. Based on our conversations with composting and waste management companies in New York, plant-based gloves are likely to be treated as contaminants, separated from organic waste, and sent to landfills.

PARTNERSHIPS



THE ROAD TO NET ZERO: A CALL TO ACTION

For global warming to remain below 1.5°C, the following must happen: Emissions need to peak in 2020, then halve by 2030, then continue to halve every decade thereafter, to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.²⁹ Businesses can and must play a role in achieving these reductions.

The Exponential Roadmap Initiative has created a four-part strategic framework for companies who support the transition to a net-zero world. Below is a sample of Just Salad’s initiatives and where they fall into this framework. Clearly, we have our work cut out for us. To accelerate our progress, we offer the following suggestions to our customers and local policy makers:

How Customers Can Help

- Opt out of utensils on [orderjustsalad.com](#)
- Order from our Climatarian menu
- Participate in our Reusable Bowl program
- Share feedback and questions with our teammates wearing the Sustainability Champion hat
- Ask their corporate offices to participate in the Zero Waste Hub program

How Policy Makers Can Help

- Pass legislation making straws and plastic utensils available by request only
- Provide tax incentives to businesses implementing waste-preventing measures, such as reusable container programs
- Support municipal and community composting programs

PILLAR 1 Reduce your own emissions	PILLAR 2 Reduce your value chain emissions	PILLAR 3 Integrate climate in business strategy	PILLAR 4 Influence climate action in society
Energy efficiency upgrades with Budderfly Energy usage alerts received daily (e.g., high cooler temperature) Reducing energy, emissions and resource use across operations (see Progress Report)	Introduced Supplier Intake form asking packaging companies to affirm the recyclability and/or compostability of packaging and describe packaging composition; food suppliers are asked if any ingredients are upcycled.	Company mission statement is to make Everyday Health & Everyday Sustainability Possible Sustainability Champions program for employee engagement and retention	Menus are carbon labeled; carbon footprint of each item is compared to that of a beef patty. Carbon labeling initiative is explained on justsalad.com/carbonlabel .
		Reusable Bowl is a circular-economy program for quick-service dining and provides a free topping with every use in-store.	

²⁹IPCC. Summary for Policymakers. In Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. Geneva, Switzerland: World Meteorological Organization, IPCC (2018). [https:// www.ipcc.ch/sr15/](https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/)

OUR GEOGRAPHIC FOOTPRINT

As of Q1 2021, Just Salad had 45 stores worldwide, including 41 in New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Florida.



ABOUT JUST SALAD

Just Salad is a fast casual concept with a mission to make everyday health and everyday sustainability possible. Empowering customers to eat with purpose, Just Salad is home of the world’s largest restaurant reusable program and the first U.S. restaurant chain to carbon label its menu. The company was founded in 2006 in New York City and has across 40+ locations in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, as well as 4 locations in Dubai. Learn more at justsalad.com

To provide feedback on this report, email sustainability@justsalad.com.