

Week 2: Food shopping

Much plastic waste is created in the packaging of foods. When we shop, we find shrink-wrapped cucumbers, meat bundled up in Styrofoam, and plastic jugs of milk. In order to avoid plastic packaging from food and drinks, some research and planning ahead is required. Use the tips below to help you shop for plastic-free meals.

1. Buy in bulk: Buying in bulk is one way to reduce single-use plastics, especially for foods like pasta, rice, nuts, and beans (often packaged in plastic bags), and oils and nut butters (often in plastic jars).

Think about the stores you can go to that provide staples in bulk; do you know which ones will allow you to bring your own jars and containers to refill? Add glass jars and re-usable plastic containers to your zero waste shopping kit (and remember to ask for the tare weight).

2. Avoid pre-packaged meats and cheeses: In the late 1970s, the meat industry standard became polystyrene foam trays. Styrofoam is a petrochemical made with styrene, which is classified as a known hazardous substance and has many ties to cancer. Styrofoam toxins seep into the food contents, and according to the EPA, as styrene leaches from landfills into our drinking water, it causes liver, kidney, or circulatory system problems. Minorities and people living in poverty are more likely to live near landfills and factories, and are disproportionately affected.

Find and shop at a deli or meat counter that wraps with paper rather than plastic or Styrofoam, or ask if you can put products in your own containers.

3. Look for glass jars: Many condiments and food items that are sold in plastic jars (mayonnaise, catsup, salsa, peanut butter, oil, etc.) are also sold in glass. You may need to pay more, and you may need to search the shelves to find them.

4. Shop at a local bakery: At super markets, bread is always sold in a plastic bag, and most other bakery items come in plastic #1 PET thermoform clamshells. These are not recyclable, due to specific temperature needs and attached adhesives.

One option is to shop someplace where you can buy fresh bread and bakery items that come in paper bags, or cardboard containers: This eliminates plastic wrapping waste from shop-bought bread and you help support local businesses.

You might also want to sign this petition at [Change.org](#), to let supermarkets know your concern about clamshell packaging, and encourage them to find recyclable options for packaging their goods.

5. Buy berries and other fruits from farmers markets. Farmers often use sustainable packaging or will reuse what you bring. Freeze or can fruits when it is available seasonally, to avoid buying plastic bags of berries later.

6. Raise Your Voice: Talk to store managers. If the store has bulk foods, ask about bringing your own containers. Ask if plain paper can be substituted for plastic lined paper. Ask for changes in plastic wrapped produce, fish, and meat. Ask stores to stock products in glass containers instead of plastic; they need to hear from the customers that we want plastic alternatives! Say thank you where you see positive changes.

7. Remember Integrity: As you take action on reducing plastics in your life, you might feel some resistance to change, and regret at the loss of conveniences, but *you can do hard stuff*. Integrity requires us to live congruent with the Light, and for our belief and actions to be aligned.

Query: *How do you use the resources and strength you are given to meet the challenges of living a whole and honest life?*