

Case Study 2: Organic Krush Lifestyle Eatery, New York, Connecticut, & Virginia (10 locations)



Organic Krush provides health-focused, casual dining and has been in operation since 2015. The restaurant launched in 2015 with a commitment to sustainability. Its menu is crafted around the use of organic fare, and supports a health mission centered on eliminating genetically modified ingredients, hormones, and toxins from food and foodware. Organic Krush provides catering and takeout in addition to sit-down dining.

- ~ Years of reducing plastic: **7**
- ~ Table tops: Between **15** and **70** **depending on location**
- ~ Meals served per day: **200+** **per location**

Green Measures

Responsible environmental practices have been central to Organic Krush’s business model since the restaurant’s inception. The eatery relies on reusable bamboo dining ware and compostable to-go containers. Knowledge about the acidity of juices prompted Organic Krush to bottle its cold-pressed juices in glass so as to prevent the leaching of harmful chemicals, and to preserve the taste and odor of its beverages.

Why

Natural health and ecological stewardship sit at the center of Organic Krush’s brand, and guide the co-owners’ choices. “We’re alarmed by the damage being done to our planet by single-use plastics,” one remarked in a 2021 interview, “and we knew our business had to step up to the challenge of going plastic-free.”⁴⁷ Doing so furthered their commitment as concerned global citizens, and brought emotional and physical rewards.

How they selected products and vendors

Choosing sustainable service ware and vendors required an intensive labor of research early on. To ensure that materials worked well and did not affect the taste of the restaurant’s food, they experimented with plating, packing, and then tasting their own cuisine on sample ware. They currently purchase the eco line of products from a general supplier, and have noticed that reduced plastic alternatives have improved since their initial purchases seven years ago. Organic Krush is now a member of the Surfrider Foundation’s Ocean Friendly Restaurants program, which assists restaurants in their environmental stewardship by guiding decisions surrounding packaging, recycling, ingredient sourcing, and energy efficiency.

Difficulties

Responsible products cost more. Reusable materials such as glass are not only more expensive, but they take up a lot of storage space and are fragile. The owners let their principles guide their budget, however, and carefully walk the line of what they can absorb as a business and how much of the cost to pass on to customers.

Reception and Impact

The business is thriving, and has expanded from one to ten locations in its seven years, even amidst the Covid pandemic. Customers have demonstrated more interest in the restaurant’s mission than its prices, and are tolerant of higher costs. Staff, too, are attracted by the business’s commitment to sustainability. The co-owners hope that more restaurants will be enticed to move away from plastic serviceware, which will reduce prices for alternatives.

