

The background features a mix of pastel colors: light teal, soft pink, and pale yellow. Large, overlapping circles in these colors are scattered across the page. In the top-left and bottom-right corners, there are stylized white snowflake icons. A cluster of small pink dots is located in the upper right area, and another cluster of small teal dots is in the lower left area.

RETE ZERO WASTE

Our Green Revolution

The guide to gently revolutionize your life

8 MAY - 2 JUNE

This month we will help you discover some small changes for a more sustainable lifestyle

Small steps...

SMALL DAILY ACTIONS FOR A ZERO WASTE LIFE



RETE ZERO WASTE

Rete Zero Waste is an Italian network of people with the same goal: make this planet a better place, one zero waste step at the time.

Rete Zero Waste has a website (www.retezerowaste.it) and an official instagram account (@retezerowaste). We are also on Facebook with an official page and a discussion group.

To raise awareness on how the baby steps can be important when going zero waste, we decided to prepare this guide and launch a zero waste challenge for the month of May.

The official challenge is in Italian but sbut we tried our best to translate it for our non-Italian followers/friends too.

We hope to have you on board!

Marianna, Bianca, Lisa e Anita

#sfidedirete

...big revolution!

SMALL DAILY ACTIONS FOR A ZERO WASTE LIFE



INTRODUCTION

Here's a simple guide to help you revolutionize your daily life and embrace a more sustainable, single-use plastic-free lifestyle! Throughout the whole month of May, we will show you some tips and alternatives to reduce our environmental footprint.

Why do we need a revolution?

Plastic pollution knows no boundaries. We are choking our seas with an enormous amount of plastic waste, namely single-use plastics. We don't want this to happen: when at the beach, we would rather find shells and pebbles than plastic debris. Every single one of us can make a difference, and this guide is full of small and simple actions to prove it. *Are you ready? We can't wait to get started!*

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Before we start



THE CHALLENGE

Each week of May will focus on a different theme. Feel free to interpret and tailor the challenge to make it suitable for your situation. Always remember that what may appear, at first sight, to be a small action, can really make a difference!

INSTAGRAM

You can find us on instagram!

This month we will share our most interesting posts and stories on the Rete Zero Waste account
[@retezerowaste](#)

Use [#sfidediRete](#) and tag one (or all!) of our profiles to share with us your daily changes for a cleaner world!

[@retezerowaste](#)

[@vivere_senza_rifiuti](#)

[@zerowastepath](#)

[@ecowinky](#)

[@storiediavanzi](#)

Enjoy it!



Organisation

8 - 15 MAY

Single-use items were invented because we considered them as convenient and easy to use. Let's debunk these two myths (once and for all). If we want to buy two single-use plastic forks, we need to go to a store, buy them, bring them home (or to the office). To cap it all, we then need to deal with the trash bin piling up. Is buying new things really worth it, when we probably already own reusable alternatives that cost us nothing?

Avoiding single-use items, even when you're not home, requires some initial organization and preparation. How do you avoid single-use products? Try to remember to bring your bags when going grocery shopping, bring cloth handkerchief with you all the time, or ask for a reusable cup at the café.

Question: "should i buy everything new?"

Noo! Believe it or not, the majority of what you need is already stored somewhere at home. Otherwise, we suggest that you borrow or swap things with friends and families, or you can try second-hand shopping.



Organisation

8 - 15 MAY

THE ART OF...

...Refusing

The first rule to zero waste is to REFUSE: let's keep this in mind, for instance, when we order something at the pub ("I don't need the straw, thank you"). Try to always be kind and nice, it will be easier for the waiters to remember your request.



CREATE A ZERO WASTE KIT...

Build a zero waste grocery shopping "kit" for the groceries (reusable bags, cloth bags, shopping bags) and leave it close to the entrance door or in the car. When going out, always bring with you at least one tote bag: it doesn't take much space and it can be useful for some last-minute shopping!

...OR TWO!

Keep a reusable water bottle, a napkin and a handkerchief in your bag or backpack. It's useful to be prepared and think ahead. For instance, bring a reusable mug and some pieces of cutlery if you go out to a local fair. Are you going out for dinner? You can bring a food container (doggy bag) for any leftovers.



The menu

15 - 21 MAY

Most of the every-day waste is linked to food: bottles, single-packages, but also all the disposable, from cups to cutlery. Even if in some cases they might be necessary or unavoidable, there are other situations where the packaging (and, even worst, the over-packaging) can be avoided. Fruits and veggies have already a protective layer (their skin!) from nature, still they are sold wrapped in one or more layers of plastic. This create a useless amount of waste that could easily be avoided.

As a good habit, at the market or in small shops, we ask the waiter or the vendor to use our reusable bags or to put everything in the same bag.

Every year, about 1/3 of all the food produced in the world for human consumption is lost or wasted throughout the food chain. We therefore try to avoid not only the waste associated with food, but also food waste: we only buy what we really need and pay attention to the expiring dates of the products.



The menu

15 - 21 MAY

BUYING IN BULK

If you have access to it, buying in bulk would be the best option. If you don't have a bulk shop in your area, explore your neighborhood and look for farmers markets, small grocery stores and organic grocery delivery services. People running these kind of businesses are often willing to build stronger relationships with their customers: ask them if you can use your bag and/or container...and don't forget to smile! Do not hesitate to ask about the origin of the products you are going to buy: this will probably help you create a relationship with the retailer. Moreover, you will also become more aware of what you are buying.



MEAL PLAN

Rough a meal plan based on which vegetables are in season and on the food you already have in your pantry: this will help you to reduce food waste and plan your grocery shopping.

LONG LIVE THE LEFTOVERS

Have a designated shelf in the fridge for leftovers, and store at the front the items with the closest expiration date. This way, you're more likely to use up the most perishable foods before they expire.

Get creative with your leftovers: look for recipes that can help you eat them (such as omelettes, soups, pies).

Self care

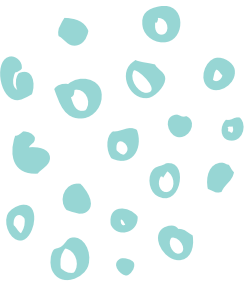
22 - 28 MAY

Going zero waste when it comes to toiletries and beauty products can be easy and hard at the same time.

On one hand, this area of waste production is completely personal, therefore it's easy to work on it even if you live with family members or partners that aren't into zero waste. Switching to a bamboo toothbrush or buying interchangeable heads is one of the first steps suggested by most zero waste blogs and books.

On the other hand it might be hard to find zero waste alternatives for every cosmetic product. It can take a little while to find the most suitable solutions for your routine, your wallet and your body.

As a starting point, you should finish what you already own to avoid any waste of resources. Once you're about to run out of your old products, start looking into alternatives.



Self care

22 - 28 MAY

MINIMALISM

Reducing the products you use and simplifying your routine will make the journey to a zero waste bathroom much easier. As every individual has different needs and tastes, making a simple dos and don'ts list would be impossible. A good way to understand which products are actually essential to us is to try and do without for a bit, giving ourselves a few weeks before purchasing a substitute.

UNPACKAGED PRODUCTS



The ideal solution would be to purchase products that are unpackaged or that are covered by a deposit return scheme. This way, you are eliminating completely the need for single-use packaging. Unfortunately, this type of products is not very easy to find yet! As an alternative solution, you can choose plastic-free items that come with containers that are easy to reuse or to recycle.

DIY

DIYs are definitely a very popular option when it comes to zero waste toiletries! If you fancy the idea of DIY products and you have the time to do so, it can be fun to experiment with recipes that are simple and anhydrous, as removing the need for preservatives can make playing with DIYs a lot safer. Often, basic recipes for things like toothpaste, deodorant and body butter have many ingredients in common, cutting out the need for complex and extensive initial investments.

Social life

29 MAY - 2 JUNE

With the right motivation, going zero waste can enrich our lives in many different ways. Not only do you learn to really take care of your planet, you also learn to take care of yourself!

It is therefore normal to feel the need to involve friends and families in our sustainability journey. But how do we do this without sounding too annoying... or even arrogant?

This week, try to test the ground: are your friends are willing to listen with an open mind? Start with those who seem the most curious, and let your actions speak louder than words! Simple actions, such as drinking from your reusable bottle or refusing a disposable coffee cup, will raise some questions and make people wonder.

In order to involve them, we should be able to accept and respect our differences, no matter how long it may take for them to get to where you are in the sustainability journey.

Judging or "throwing shade" at those who are still not zero waste is useless and even counterproductive.

There's no doubt that patience, empathy and the awareness that everyone is different will lead to greater results!



Social life

29 MAY - 2 JUNE

GOING OUT

Refusing single-use plastic doesn't mean that you have to give up on social events! On the contrary: every little thing you do can make a difference, especially if you do it together with other people. For example, In the UK people use over 7 million disposable coffee cups every day. Overcoming our shyness by asking for a mug "for here" instead of a disposable one is already a big step in the right direction... Imagine if all of your friends started doing the same!



WHEN IN ROME... OR AT HOME

There's nothing better than spending time with people you love: don't be afraid to welcome them in your home and showing them your new lifestyle! Use cloth napkins, reusable cutlery and glasses, style your home with minimalist and natural decorations. Look for unpackaged snacks (with homemade treats you can't go wrong!), use tap water (if potable) and... have fun!

TRAVELLING

Being zero waste doesn't mean you need to give up on a fun and comfortable life, even when traveling. In this case, organization is key. Remember to bring with you a reusable bottle and some tote bags, they will always come in handy!

Will you travel by train, by plane? Download the tickets on your phone, you'll save ink and paper. Travel "light" by choosing hand luggage over checked baggage. If you're traveling to Italy, don't forget to check on our zero waste Map, where you can find many Italian bulk shops (and much more!).



Thank you for reading our guide!

Whether you decide to participate or not, remember that every single action has an impact and that it can really make a difference!

Our guide is just a starting point. For the whole month of May, you will find further details and tips on our Instagram accounts.

Use the official #sfidediRete (the Rete's challenges) and share with us and the other participants your small victories: together we can really make a difference!

Good luck and... enjoy the challenge!

See you there!

#sfidedirete

@retezerowaste (in Italian)

@vivere_senza_rifiuti

@zerowastepath

@ecowinky

@storiediavanzi