Greetings!

Steps taken to eliminate the use of single use plastic – the case of Mara Bush Camp

Tourism is one of the major drivers of Kenya’s economy. Development benefits aside, tourism has also had adverse impacts on the environment and human health and safety in the form of increased waste generation, air pollution and water pollution. The onus is therefore on tourism industry players such as accommodations to adopt transformative approaches to minimize these impacts, and create real and long-lasting difference in sustainability.

The good news is that ecorated facilities are already leading the way in reducing their foot print on the environment. This week’s article will focus on the menace of single-use plastics, and highlight the sustainable alternatives and measures that the Gold-rated Mara Bush Camp has integrated in its operations to address this challenge.

Replacing of the single use plastic

Mara Bush Camp replaced all single use plastic bottles for clients in July 2018 with stainless steel bottles which they could also use during their game drives. What informed this investment is the study that revealed that their guests stay an average 5 nights at the camp, consuming 0.5 litres x 3 bottles per day per person. This amounted to 75 bottles per person in a single stay. The illustration below is a picture of a stainless steel water bottle taken by the ecorating team at the Gold-rated Mara Bush Camp, during the ecorating reassessment of the property in October 2020.
Use of metallic tiffin boxes for picnics

The camps picnic meals are packaged in metal tiffin boxes. Recycled serviettes are added to each box. They also no longer offer yoghurts in plastic cups or the usual packed juice. Plain yoghurt with freshly pureed fruit (such as Mango / strawberry / Passion Fruit) is served in re-usable glasses, well-sealed and packed. In addition, freshly prepared fruit juice (Mango / Passion / Pineapple) is offered in re-usable glass bottles. Mara Bush Camp only uses “glass soda bottles” which are returned after usage to our head office for return to our supplier. Picnic cutlery provided is also made out of bamboo or wood only – no single use plastic cutlery used.

Use of refillable toiletries and cleaning materials

The Camp uses sizable refillable guest amenity dispenser containers for shampoo, body wash, conditioner and body lotion from Cinnabar Green Company as opposed to the miniature single use plastic containers as a way of cutting on the single use plastic generated from the facility. The rest of the cleaning products (e.g. disinfectants, dish washing soap etc.) are from a company
known as Grounded. It’s the preferred choice of product for use because they reuse all packaging materials, not to mention they offer their products in bulk and are nonhazardous. The picture below is of refillable toiletries at Camp, taken during the ecorating reassessment of the property in October 2020.

![Refillable toiletries at Camp](image)

**Safari Lounge for tea bags**

The camps tea bags are offered in a lovely wooden tea box and from a company called Safari Lounge who supplies biodegradable tea bags made of corn starch. They are packed in bulk and no plastic packaging is used like with some local tea manufacturers.

**Use of metal straws**

Mara Bush Camp does not provide straws to their guests. They only offer “metal straws on request” as a way of cutting on the single use plastic waste it generates. In most instances plastic wastes end up in the landfills and into the oceans causing harm to the marine ecosystems from coral reefs to animal species. It’s estimated that annually, about 8.8 million tons of this plastic waste enters and pollutes our oceans. In addition, plastic debris constitutes marine pollution. Studies further show that several species worldwide have been affected by plastic ocean pollution, including sea turtle species, seabird species, and marine mammal species.
Therefore, it’s through such innovations that the industry as a whole can help tackle the big problem of single use plastic that ends up polluting the environment and the water bodies. We hope this article will help you learn new techniques on how to cut on your plastic wastes and in the long-term contribute to a cleaner earth.