No More Plastics by Martin Dorey

What You Can Do to Make a Difference

Suzhou Slow Living Book Club

Apr 21, 2024

Summary

A Book Recommendation

Plastic Wastes Are Everywhere

Microplastics Are Everywhere

Is Recycling the Solution to Plastic Pollution?

What Can We Do to Reduce Plastic Pollution?

A Book Recommendation

Today's Book Recommendation: No More Plastic

Martin Dorey is a ✏️, 🏄, 🏊, 🚲 and environmentalist.

In his book *No. More. Plastics.*, he wrote:

> *In 2009 I moved to a quiet beach. One day I came across an area that was knee deep in plastic bottles. I vowed to do something...*

Figure 1: Today's book

Today's Book Recommendation: No More Plastic

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Figure 1: Martin Dorey

Two Minute Beach Clean

Dorey started #2MinuteBeachClean hashtag on Instagram in 2013.

The 💡 is to inspire people to pick up litter for just 2 minutes.

As of today, there are 177k post with this hashtag.

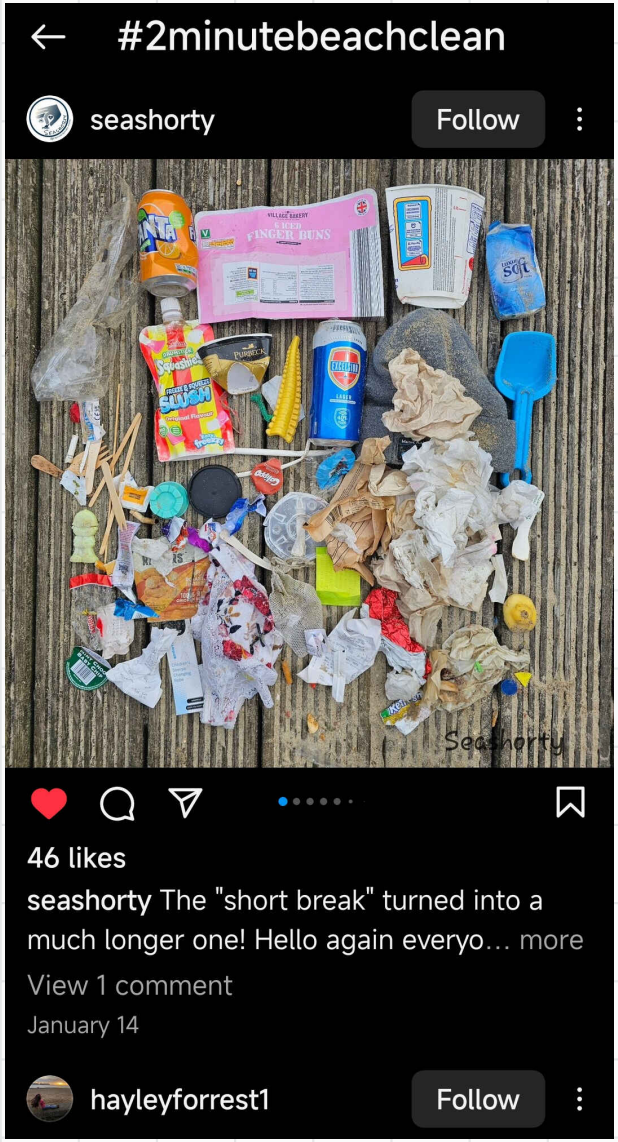

Figure 2: A recent post

Plastic Wastes Are Everywhere

Our world — and every living creature in it — is under threat from plastic.

It's in the 🌊 as well as along our 🛣️, in our 🏞️, on the 🏝️, up the ⛰️, in lakes, rivers, and streams.

Plastic Wastes Have Covered Beaches

Figure 3: Plastic bags arrive at Juhu Beach, Mumbai, India. Source: The Guardian

Plastic Wastes Have Covered Cities

Figure 4: Animals graze on nutritious plastic rubbish in New Delhi, India. Source: The Guardian

Plastic Wastes Are Filling Landfills

Figure 5: Birds search for plastic delicacies at a landfill site in Aceh, Indonesia. Source: The Guardian

Plastic Wastes Are Polluting Developed Countries

Figure 6: A swan and a mallard duck play hide and seek among rubbish in the river Thames in Limehouse, London. Source: The Guardian

Plastic Wastes Are Polluting Developing Countries

Figure 7: Decorative plastic waste washed ashore on the coast near Shanghai. Source: The Guardian

One to two million tonnes of plastic enter our 🌊 yearly.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is estimated to cover an area extending to as much as 1,500,000 square kilometres.

😲 This is approximately 15% of China's total area.

The Formation of the Garbage Patch

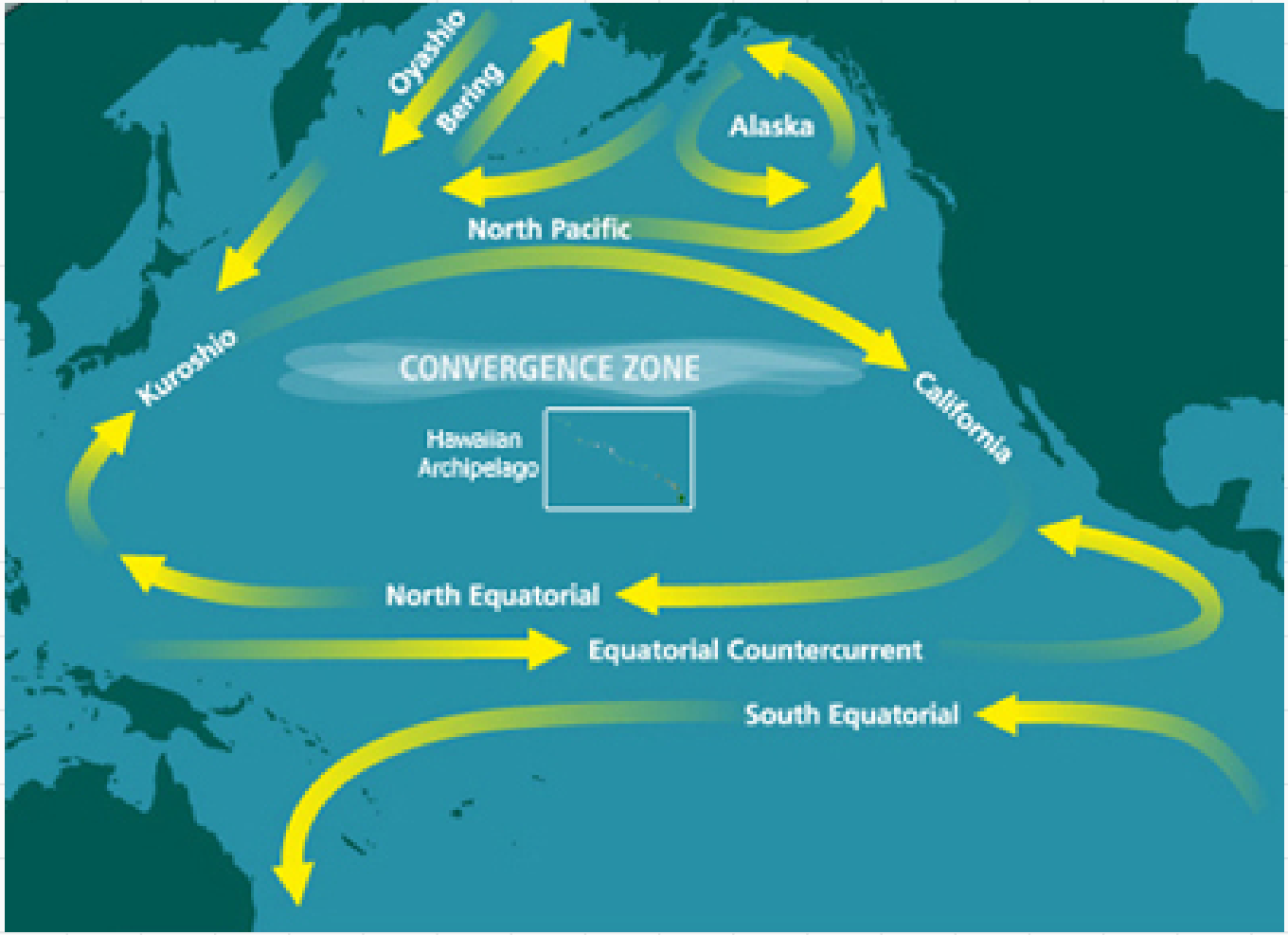

Figure 8: The Great Pacific Garbage Patch forms within the North Pacific Subtropical Convergence Zone, where ocean currents gather floating debris. Source: Wikipedia

Impact on Marine Life

Figure 9: The accumulated debris negatively affects photosynthesis, killing algae and plankton, disrupting the entire marine ecosystem. Source: National Geographic

Plastic does not biodegrade but degrades into microplastics (< 5mm) — tiny particles that persist in the environment.

Thus, most of plastic ever made still exists in some form, likely to remain for thousands of years.

Microplastics Are Everywhere

Microplastics Are in Oceans

Figure 10: Microplastics in a sample of water collected off the coast of Hawaii. Source: National Geographic

Microplastics Are on Mountains

Figure 11: Microplastics were found in all the snow samples collected from 11 locations on Everest, ranging from 5300 metres to 8440 metres high. Source: The Guardian

Microplastics Are in the Air

Figure 12: Researchers at the Pic du Midi Observatory (2877m) found airborne microplastics in samples every week between June and October 2017. Source: The Guardian

Microplastics Are in Humans

Figure 13: A 2021 study found microplastics in human blood in 80% of tested people.
Source: The Guardian

Is Recycling the Solution to Plastic Pollution?

The Three Arrows Symbol

Figure 14: Universal Recycling Symbol

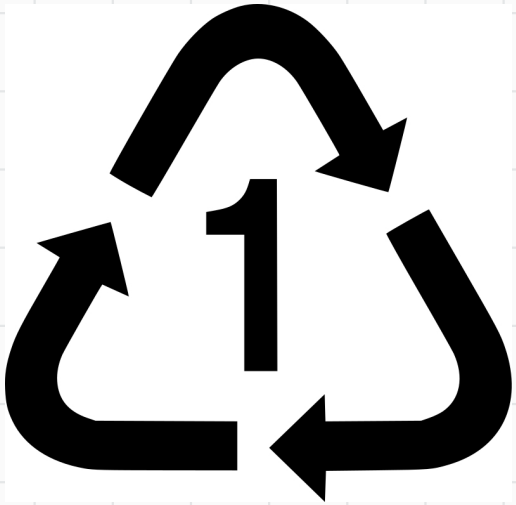

Figure 15: 🤔 What is this?

The Three Arrows Symbol

Figure 14: Universal Recycling Symbol

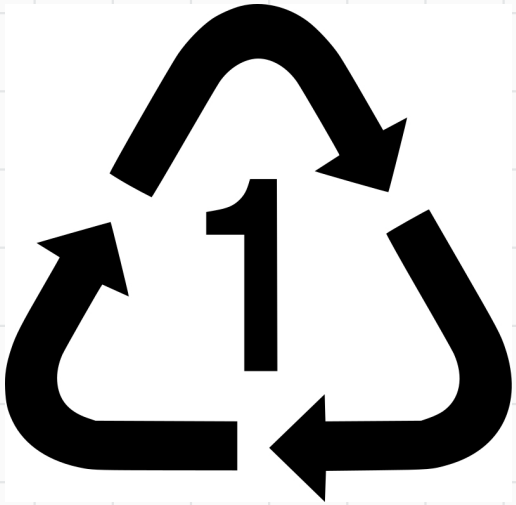

Figure 15: 🤔 What is this?

The ASTM International Resin Identification Coding System, commonly abbreviated as RIC, is a set of symbols appearing on plastic products to identify the plastic resin used.

It was developed by the Society of the Plastics Industry in 1988.

Due to its similarity to the recycling symbol, RIC symbols are often mistaken for recycling symbols.

PET

Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) is commonly used in soda bottles, mineral water bottles, and various food packaging.

Figure 16: PET Products

Figure 17: PET Identification Code

Can PETE/PET be Recycled?

👍 PET is the most recycled type of plastic.

😟 Even so, the recycling rate for PET is still very low.

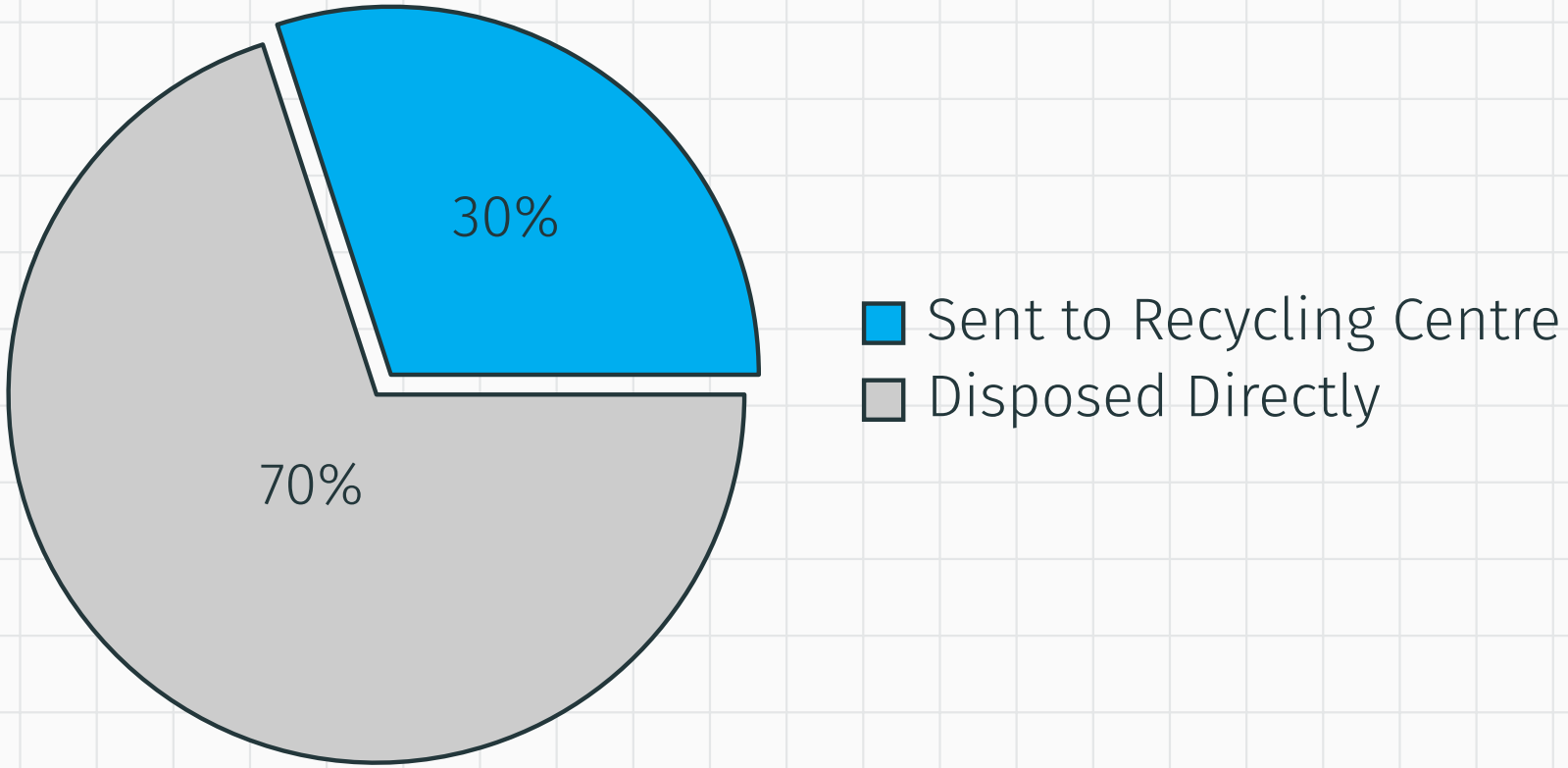

Figure 18: PET Recycling Rate in the US

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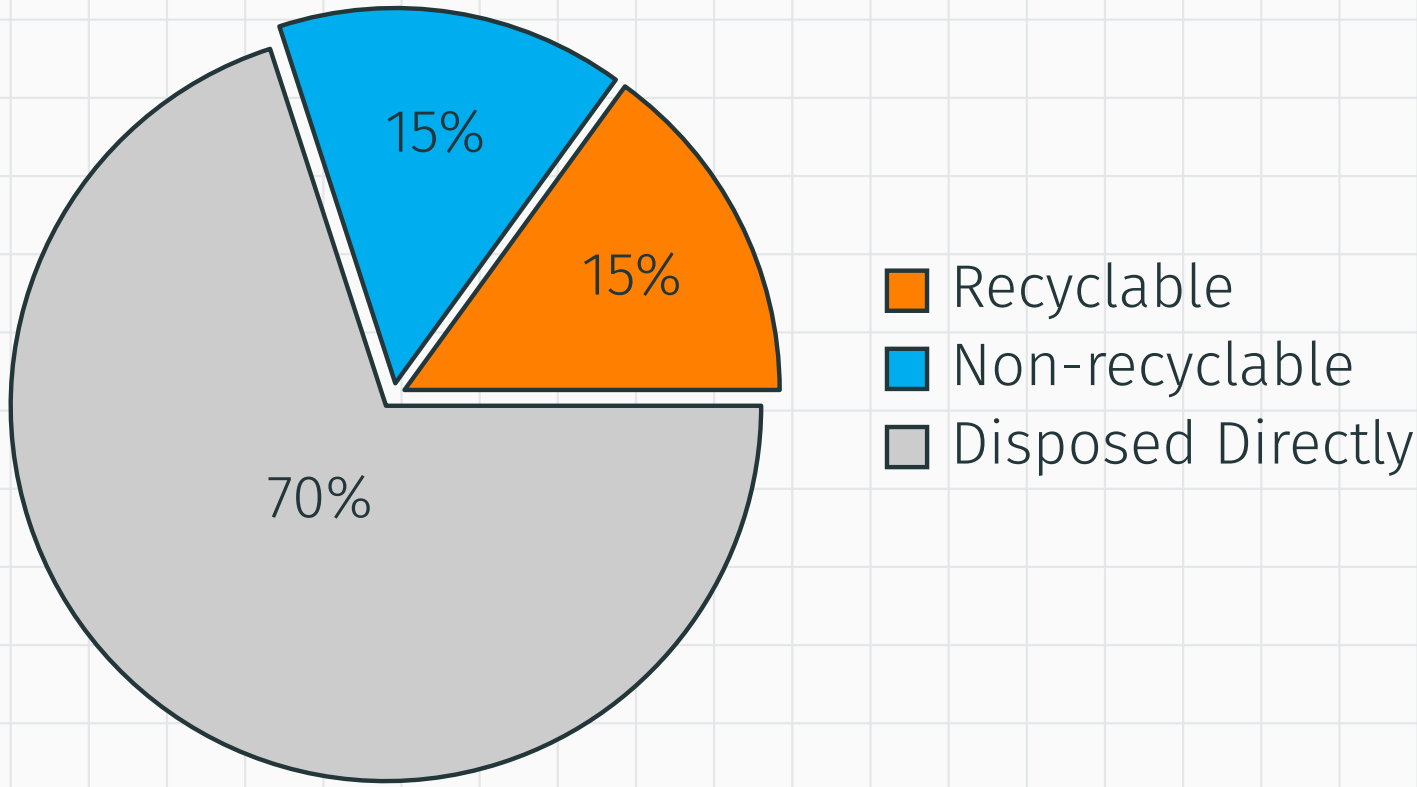

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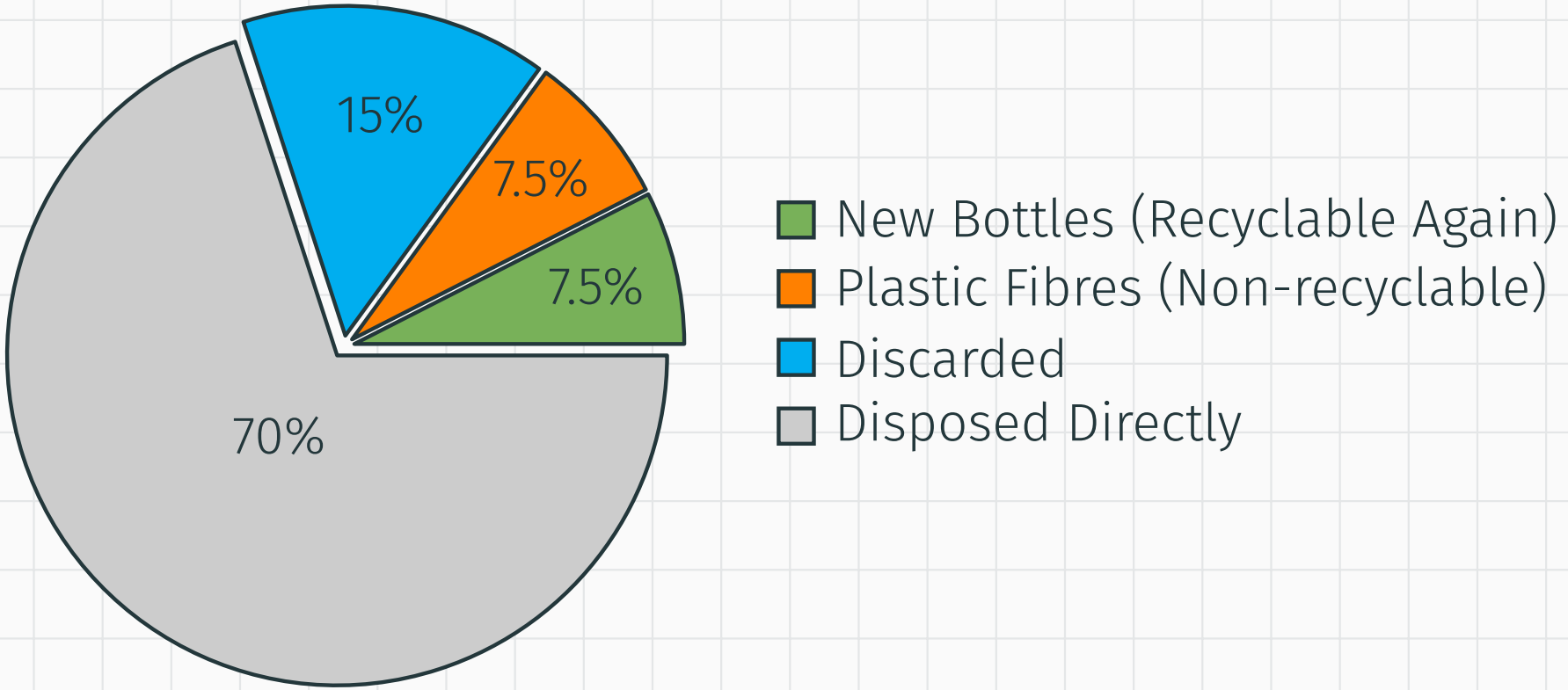

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Other Types of Plastic

In the US, over the past 30 years, the overall plastic recycling rate has never exceeded 10

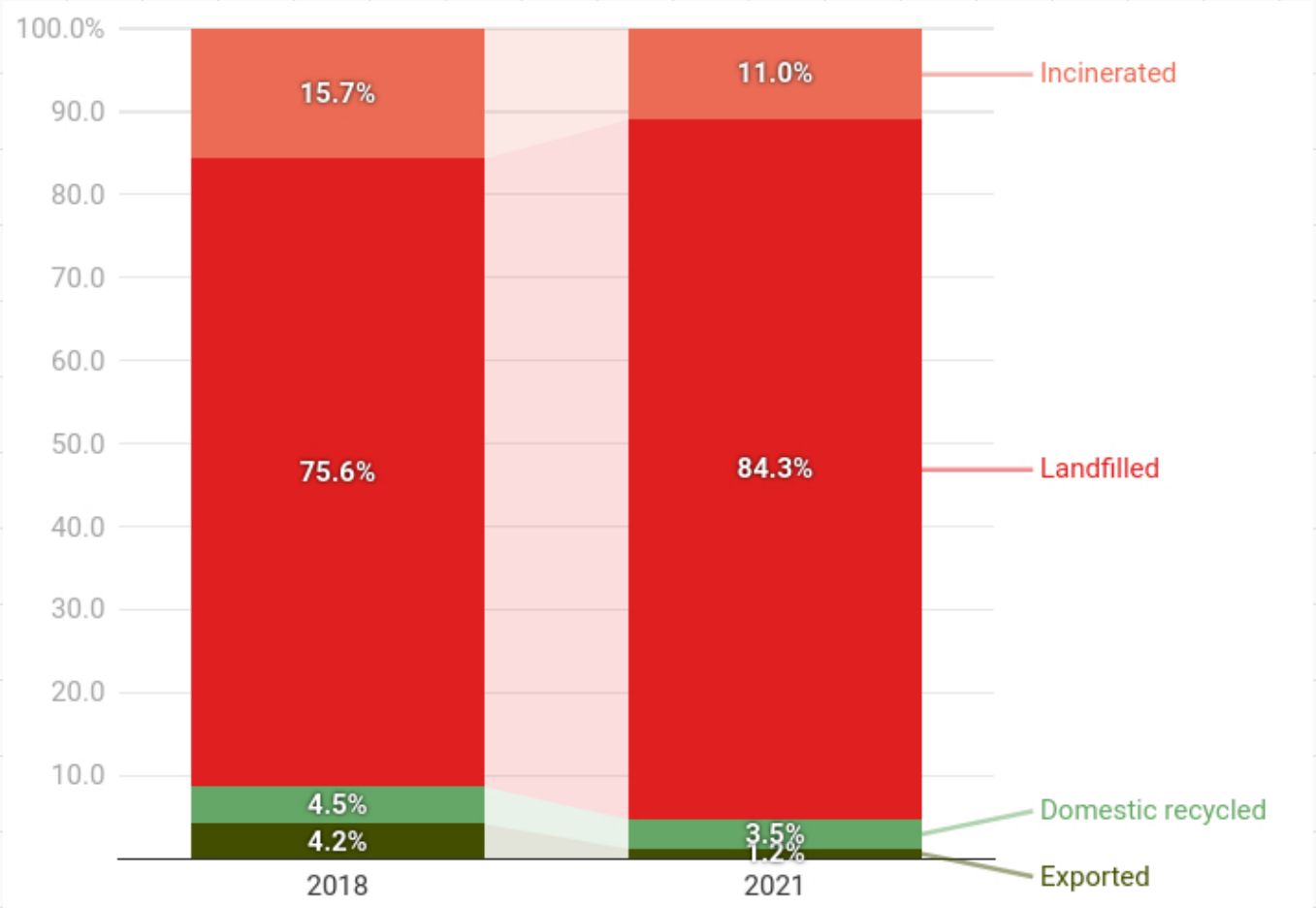

Figure 19: Plastic Recycling Rates in the US.Source: Time Magazine

What Can We Do to Reduce Plastic Pollution?

Do We Have Choices?

If you look at any supermarket, you will find very few products without plastic packaging.

😟 As consumers, do we really have choices?

Figure 20: 😑 The only vegetable I could find without plastic packaging

The Seven Major Plastic Polluters

Among the common plastic waste on beaches, seven types are from our consumption:

- Bottle caps
- Single-use plastic bottles
- Straws and cutlery
- Snack wrappers
- Cotton swabs
- Bags
- Wet wipes

🙂 Reducing the use of these products is not difficult.

Figure 21: Common Culprits of Beach Pollution

Simple Things We Can Do

Figure 22: 😎 Use reusable metal or plastic straws

Simple Things We Can Do

Figure 22: 😎 Avoid using disposable cups (and get discounts when you bring your own cup)

Simple Things We Can Do

Figure 22: 😎 If you can't avoid using produce bags, reuse them as trash bags

Simple Things We Can Do

Figure 22: 😎 Use a nice reusable shopping bag

Simple Things We Can Do

Figure 22: 😎 Use a reusable water bottle (no more buying bottled water)

Simple Things We Can Do

Figure 22: 😎 Use shampoo bars instead of shampoo bottles

Simple Things We Can Do

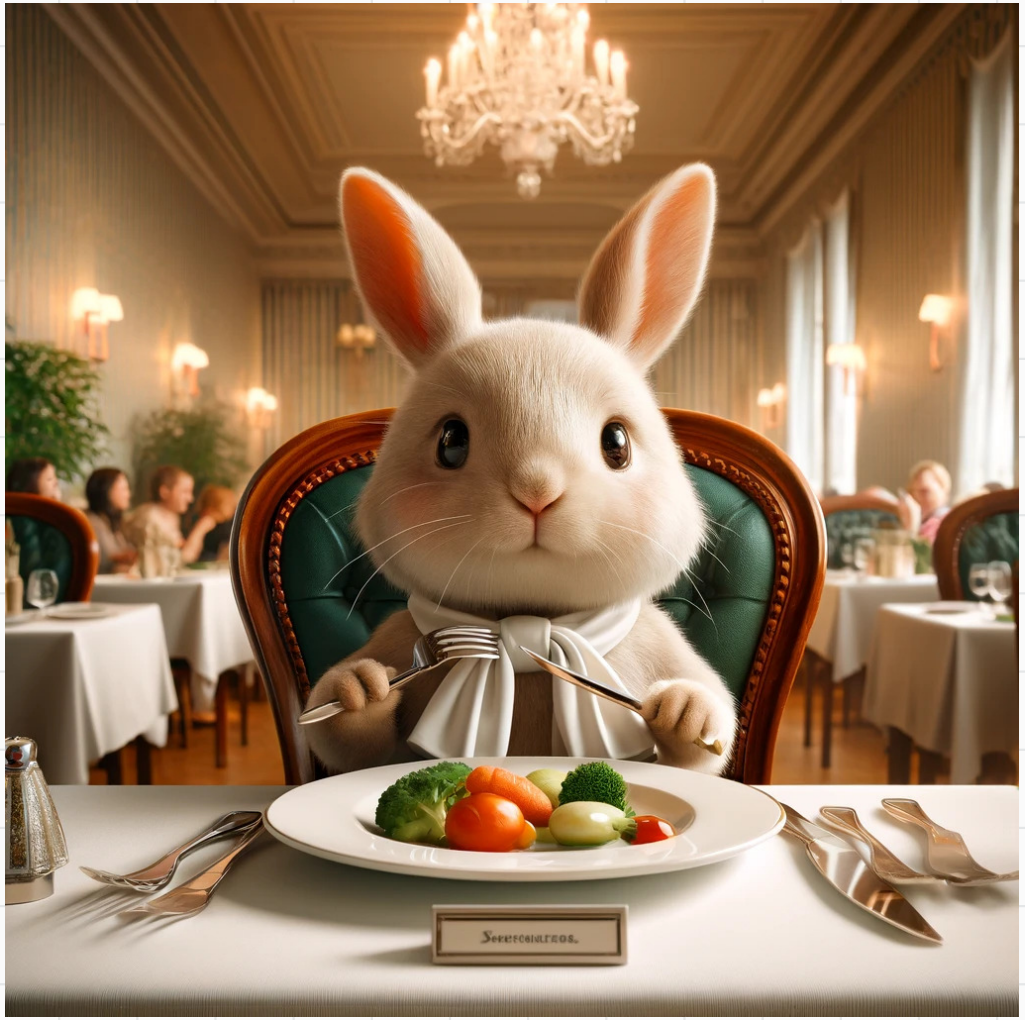

Figure 22: 😎 Dine in at restaurants instead of ordering takeout

😉 Using one less piece of plastic means one less piece of trash for millennium.