

**REVIEWED**

Coffee (beverage)

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Using coffee pods can reduce your carbon footprint—here's what to know

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Reviewed

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There's nothing like a good cup o' joe in the morning, but did you know there are ways to make drinking your favorite pick-me-up more eco-friendly? With the United Nations finding that "urgent" actions are needed to fight human-caused climate change, many are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint. What better way to do that than by changing one of your biggest habits?

You needn't cut coffee out entirely. In fact, you can simply drink it in a different way. Drinking coffee in a more sustainable manner can be very convenient and require little effort on your part.

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What to know about coffee and climate change

Recent research from the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi shows that making coffee using single-serving coffee cups can emit less greenhouse gas than other brewing methods such as using a French press. The entire life cycle of coffee is considered in this study, from the production of the coffee to the packaging, to the waste it creates in the end. Producing 11 grams of Arabica coffee grounds emits 59 grams of CO₂e (greenhouse gases equivalent to CO₂) while only 27 grams of CO₂ are emitted by producing a coffee pod, even accounting for

said pod going to a landfill. Additionally, coffee pods allow consumers to optimize water usage, use lower levels of electricity and offer several recycling options.

If you're looking to lessen your carbon footprint by way of your coffee, we're here to walk you through how to make the switch to pods, as well as provide other ways to drink sustainably.

What is the difference between Nespresso and K-Cups?

Before you go running to grab the nearest coffee pod, it's important to understand the difference between the biggest brands Keurig's K-Cups and Nestle's Nespresso are the most common premier coffee pods. They both have their pros and cons when it comes to sustainability. K-Cups are supported by more third-party coffee maker machines than Nespresso and are cheaper per cup. They are also more easily recyclable, as they can just be placed in your bin.

While Nespresso pods tend to require recycling via the company's own channels, adding a level of complexity to the recycling process done by a consumer, this way ensures that they are properly recycled instead of wasted. The same can't be guaranteed for K-Cups. Finally, Nespresso pods are more versatile than K-Cups in their espresso-making functionality, a feature K-Cups do not offer.

Coffee products to help you reduce your carbon footprint

Nespresso VertuoPlus

If you're in need of a new single-serve coffee maker, it doesn't get much better than the Nespresso VertuoPlus. Of all the coffee makers we've tested, we found the VertuoPlus to be the best overall. It's compact, brews quickly and, unlike other coffee makers of its type, it can make espresso, too.

\$187 from Walmart

Instant Dual Pod Plus

Another single-serve coffee maker to check out is the Instant Dual Pod Plus, which is our favorite multi-pod. This machine supports both K-Cups and Nespresso, meaning you won't have to choose between the two. In regard to sustainability, the Dual Pod Plus also supports both reusable and biodegradable pods.

\$160 from Amazon

Single-serving coffee cups

You can't have a single-serve coffee machine without pods. There are a variety of K-Cups that you can buy from donut-flavored variety packs to chocolate packs, to this Starbucks light roast blend. Fans of Nespresso pods say that these cups focus on more quality than quantity, focusing on richer tastes such as these delectable, pastry-inspired flavors.

\$31 from Amazon

\$38 from Amazon

Reusable K-Cups

If you're looking to reduce your carbon footprint even further, consider using reusable K-Cups. This can reduce the amount of potential plastic waste you make. Perfect Pod's reusable K-Cups have thousands of rave reviews on Amazon, with buyers loving how cost-effective, easy to clean and easy to use they are.

\$10 from Amazon

Compostable coffee pods

Another great way to drink your coffee in a sustainable manner is by using compostable K-Cups, such as the ones sold by the San Francisco Bay store. These cups are commercially compostable and have over 69,000 five-star ratings. Reviewers love them for their taste, eco-friendly packaging and positive environmental impact.

\$34 from Amazon

Travel mug

For on-the-go coffee, consider making a cup at home and bringing it with you instead of buying it from a coffee shop in a single-use cup. With the best travel mug, the Zojirushi SM-KHE48, you can drink it on the road and keep it piping hot for hours. This mug has excellent temperature retention and a slim design that fits easily into bags and cupholders.

\$26 from Amazon

Coffee mug

A new mug is another great way to cut back on single-use plastics. The best we've tested is the Yeti Rambler as it features premium insulation and is dishwasher safe. Plus, its magnet makes opening and closing the lid easy.

\$30 from Amazon

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