



KOOZA goes Compost!

In a continuing effort to GO GREEN, KOOZA has now started composting in the kitchen. The idea was originated by Annie Beaudette, our PAC in Tour Services and brought to life by Cynda Paris, our Kitchen Manager, also in Tour Services. KOOZA has always recycled aluminum, glass, plastic and paper, however composting is a needed and welcome addition to our regimen.



Why Compost?

Cynda: In the kitchen 90% of our waste is foodstuff, and why not put it back to the Earth instead of mixed in with the non-decomposable in a landfill. It goes to a better use when composted, such as garden fertilizer, producing organic soils to grow food again, and to sustain agriculture in communities. When organic materials are recycled into products of value, everyone benefits. (And it makes great worms for fishing!)

What types of items can you compost?

Cynda: There is a wider range of things that can be composted now, as opposed to 10 years ago. Only plastics, aluminum, glass and metal are NOT compostable, but we do recycle these items. Everything else used in the kitchen such as paper napkins or towels, paper take-out cups, and all food can be mixed together. Wax covered milk cartons and wax covered vegetable boxes are now allowed in the compost as well.

How has this affected your ordering for food and supplies in the kitchen?

Cynda: I've stopped supplying the little unnecessary things, such as plastic straws, stir sticks and plastic tops for the take out cups, along with individual serving items like white sugars and butters. I've also eliminated the use of garbage bags now, also an unnecessary cost and waste to a landfill. We don't carry these things in our own homes, so we can treat our community kitchen on tour like we would at home.



Where do you store the compost on tour?

Cynda: A company that specializes in composting gives us a 2 yard metal bin to dump our compost in and comes twice a week to empty it.

Where is the compost and recycling located in the kitchen?

All the bins are clearly marked CANS AND GLASS/ PLASTIC / AND ORGANICS. They sit right at the place where we give our dishes to the dishwashers.

Cynda: My biggest challenge with composting on tour is educating all our people about what it is, how we manage it and why. Breaking little habits of convenience items is the hardest part. Overall, it's being accepted with open arms and approval once people understand what we are trying to do. Time, patience and lots of communication will make this project successful.

Are you able to compost in every city?

Annie: Hartford is the first city where we are putting the project together. I really want the project to work and I am pretty confident that we can do it everywhere we go where the facilities exist.

Who do you contact in order to set up collection, is there a national website?

Annie: Cirque du Soleil contracted a broker for waste management (Oakleaf Waste Management). Every time KOOZA visits a new city, I contact them to let them know what will be our needs regarding the management of all our waste (trash, cardboard, plastic, etc.). At this moment, I am working with them on the compost project and in every city they will do their best to locate a company that can compost all our organics waste.

What are the savings?

Annie: It is hard for me to say at this moment since the project has just started and I can't really give you any figures. I am confident that there will be a lot of savings. Like Cynda just mentioned, 90% of the kitchen waste is foodstuff. Before, this went directly to the trash container which cost between \$215 up to \$700 to empty each time. With the food being composted, the trash container will be serviced less often and we will save on that for sure. We can have another article on the savings in a year from now!

Is it difficult to have the compost collected?

Annie: So far everything is going very smoothly; I have a good relationship with our broker and it makes my life easier. All the organic waste is thrown into a 2Y bin with wheels that can be easily rolled everywhere that it needs to go. Twice a week, the hauler comes with his truck, picks up the container, empties it and brings it back.

Interview & pictures by: Jennifer Dennison Assistant to the General Manager
Working together to GO GREEN: KOOZA

