

Edible Cutlery

Every year, millions of tonnes of plastic is thrown away. Although some of this waste can be recycled, most goes to landfill, where it pollutes the environment and harms wildlife. In 2011, an Indian businessman came up with an innovative way to reduce his country's plastic waste...

Edible Cutlery: A Delicious Way to Reduce Plastic Waste

Tossing a plastic spoon or fork into the trash after using it once is not just acceptable; it is fashionable. Experts estimate that over 40 billion pieces of plastic cutlery end up in the garbage each year — and that's just in the US. The numbers are even worse in India where an astounding 120 billion pieces clog the landfills annually. But that may change soon thanks to Indian entrepreneur

5 Narayana Peesapaty whose start-up, Bakey's, transforms mundane cutlery into delicious treats!

The company's first product is a spoon. Made of sorghum*, rice, and wheat flour, it is vegan, has no preservatives and is both trans-fat and dairy free. The edible cutlery has a shelf life of up to three years when stored in a dry and cool place. The spoons also come in numerous sizes and therefore, can be used for both eating and serving food. Thanks to its primary ingredient,

10 sorghum, the utensil is quite resilient and able to withstand anything from hot soups to frozen desserts for about 15-20 minutes without disintegrating*.

With flavors like sugar, ginger-cinnamon, and cumin, the utensils are a culinary treat. However, even those that do not wish to consume the spoons will feel no remorse in tossing them out. That's because unlike plastic spoons that sit in landfills for eternity, Bakey's utensils decompose

15 within 5-6 days when exposed to the elements.

While these attributes should be enough to have everyone clamoring for the edible spoons, there is more. Peesapaty says that the reason for selecting sorghum instead of the more commonly used sugarcane and corn is that the climate-smart hardy grain requires fewer nutrients and water to cultivate. As a result, Bakey's spoons use far fewer resources than other biodegradable alternatives.

20 The entrepreneur says that as his product becomes popular, he hopes to encourage more farmers to switch to growing sorghum instead of rice which requires 60 times the amount of water! [...]

Peesapaty, who has sold over 1.5 million spoons since he established Bakey's in Hyderabad, India in 2011, has two main challenges he still needs to overcome. He needs to lower the production costs so that the edible spoons are as affordable as their plastic counterparts, and also establish

25 an international distribution system so that they can be available globally. The company also hopes to expand its offerings to additional cutlery items like forks and chopsticks. [...]

Though Bakey's may never be able to replace the use of plastic cutlery, it will make a difference — that's because every edible spoon the company sells means one less utensil in the landfill!

An abridged extract from www.dogonews.com

Glossary

sorghum — a cereal grain like wheat or corn

disintegrating — falling apart

1 Summarise the meaning of the third paragraph (lines 12-15).

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2 marks

2 Write down a word to describe Narayana Peesapaty's personality. Explain your choice.

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.....

2 marks

3 Tick the correct box in the table below to show whether each statement is a fact or an opinion.

	Fact	Opinion
Bakey's utensils decompose within 5-6 days when exposed to the elements.		
Tossing a plastic spoon into the trash is fashionable.		
The utensils are a culinary treat.		

2 marks

4 Look up the word 'bias' in a dictionary. Do you think this text is biased? Explain your answer.

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2 marks

5 Do you think edible cutlery will ever replace plastic cutlery? Explain your answer.

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2 marks

Total
out of 10