

Guinness and Other Brewers Get Greener Packaging | Earth911.com

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Green beer used to be a St. Patrick's Day gimmick, but a sustainability movement seems to be taking off in the beer packaging industry.

Diageo, the manufacturer of St. Patrick's Day favorite, Guinness, [announced](#) in April that they will eliminate plastic from their beer packaging. In the two months since the Guinness announcement, the brewer of Mexican beer Corona has introduced a new can that doesn't require plastic ring carriers.

Plastic-Free Guinness

This isn't the first time Guinness has tried something revolutionary. They were the first brewer to establish a scientific research lab, which led to the use of nitrogenation in beer. Now, beverage distributor Diageo has poured \$21 million into a plastic-free packaging program. Diageo also owns the Harp and Smithwicks breweries. It will eliminate plastic packaging from those brands as well.

Plastic currently accounts for only about five percent of Guinness' packaging. But by replacing plastic ring carriers and shrink wrap with 100 percent biodegradable or recyclable cardboard, the company will eliminate the equivalent of 40 million plastic bottles worth of waste annually.

Diageo's announcement promised to roll out the new sustainable beer packs in Ireland by August 2019 and expand to international markets by summer 2020. But some American consumers can already take advantage of the company's changing direction.

In May, Guinness' Baltimore-brewed limited release canned multipacks [switched to eco-friendly carriers](#). These carriers are made from compostable waste materials and are themselves fully compostable and biodegradable.

Plastic-Free Corona

If you're not a Guinness fan, take heart.

Long considered a beer for the beach, Corona was the first beer to be sold in a clear glass bottle. While that packaging innovation was designed to highlight the brew's clarity, more recent changes have the environment at heart. Through its partnership with [Parley](#)

[for the Oceans](#), Corona has adopted the [A.I.R. strategy](#) to avoid, intercept, and redesign to eliminate plastic pollution.

Corona's intercept campaigns include attempting to clean 2 million square meters of beach in 23 countries this summer. A promotion in several countries (including the U.S.) will trade three empty [PET \(#1 plastic\)](#) bottles for a bottle of Corona.

Last year, Grupo Modelo, a subsidiary of Anheuser-Busch InBev and the maker of Corona, ran a [pilot program](#) to replace plastic ring carriers with biodegradable ones.

Now, they have taken a [different approach](#) to reduce plastic from packaging. Instead of redesigning the secondary packaging, Grupo Modelo chose to redesign the cans themselves. New Corona Fit Packs screw together into stacks of up to 10 cans, eliminating the need for any packaging to hold them together. This is similar to the Carlsberg Group's new [Snap Pack](#), except that Carlsberg's cans will rely on an adhesive to join the cans.

See how the Fit Packs fit together in this promotional video:

In a move that could ultimately have more impact than just eliminating their own ring carriers, Grupo Modelo has promised to make its interlocking can designs open source. If they do, any canned beverage company will be able to reduce its impact on the environment without research costs.

Feature image courtesy of [DIAGEO](#)

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