

THE ESSE REUSABLE BAGS GUIDE TO REUSABLE BAGS



www.essereusablebags.com

SHOPPING BAGS:

Shopping bags are similar in shape to a plastic grocery bag, though they vary in size and handle length.

Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Nylon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and durable • Lightweight material • Compacts easily • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Water resistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recyclable • Slow to break down • Made from a non-renewable resource • Needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food
PE polyester (Polyethylene)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recyclable (with the exception of bags with prodegradant additives) • High reuse • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Does not biodegrade (excepting bags with the additive), making it useful for landfill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter concerns for most of the bags because of their somewhat lightweight nature • Made from a non-renewable resource • Often feels “plastic-y” • Does not biodegrade
PET polyester (Polyethylene terephthalate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It looks and feels like a fabric bag but is made from plastic • Strong and durable • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Recyclable • High reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended for machine washing (hand wash only)

Other things to consider:

- How well is it constructed? Are the edges serged (a row of stitching along the cut edge of the fabric before it's sewed together)? Is the fabric sturdy? These will all impact how much you can carry in the bag without damage.

- How large is it? Is it a reasonable size for the items you'll need to put it in? For instance, you might want a much larger bag for a department store trip than to pick up a take-out dinner.
- Is it easy to carry? Longer handles mean it can hang over your shoulder; shorter handles will need to be carried in your hands.
- How will you keep it organized? Does it come with a pouch or bag to put it in? Is it attached, or something that you'll need to have a way to keep up with?
- Is it easy to remember? Will it fit into your purse or pocket, or does it come with a hook or tote to hang it in eyesight?

ANATOMY OF AN ESSE SHOPPING BAG:

Long handle -
fits over your
shoulder

Elastic band
- holds bag
closed when
folded

Folds to 1"x2" -
fits easily in
your tote, purse
or pocket



Soft PET material -
feels like fabric,
resists fading,
strong and
machine washable

Expandable sides -
holds up to 20
pounds, and larger
than a standard
plastic grocery

GROCERY BAGS:

Grocery bags are similar in size and shape to paper grocery bags.

Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Cotton and canvas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodegradable/natural plant fiber • Renewable resource • Strong and durable (bags are typically 8-12 ounces) • Soft fabric • Can be machine washed in cold water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy environmental footprint and global warming potential • Traditional (non-organic) cotton production accounts for 16% of the world's pesticide use • High water consumption crop • Bags are not moisture resistant, unless chemically treated • Heavy, bulky and expensive to ship • Not sterile and needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food
Hemp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely strong, durable, and rot resistant • Can grow in poor soils with little water • Most hemp reusable bags can be machine washed and dried • Hemp can be blended with other materials to make highly desirable, high end fabrics with a texture similar to linen • Hemp is typically blended with cotton, or recycled PET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently cannot be grown domestically (hemp products in the western world are imported) • Can be expensive • Can be grainy, though most is refined • Refined hemp uses more water to cultivate • Needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food
Jute or Burlap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural renewable resource • Biodegradable and compostable • Relatively cheap to purchase • Durable • Can be blended with other fabrics (like Jute made with Nonwoven) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scarcity of supply as used primarily to store crops • The bags are not very resistant to moisture unless chemically treated or laminated • Grainy texture

	Polypropylene)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not easily branded—print capability is clunky and limited—so fewer organizations choose this material for their bags • Needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodegradable • Made from a renewable resource • Recyclable • As a litter item they are less persistent in the environment • Good color printing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not durable—tears and loses strength when wet, so these bags curtail reusability • The bags are also anywhere from six to ten times heavier than lightweight plastic bags • Their heavier weight adds costs to municipal waste management • Their weight adds to transportation distribution costs and greenhouse gas emissions • Their greater volume also adds costs to inventory space
Polypropylene (nonwoven polyester)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very strong and durable • Easy to wipe clean • Wide variety of material color and printing options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made off shore • Not biodegradable or compostable • Made from a non-renewable resource • Needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food

Other things to consider:

- How well is it constructed? Are the edges serged (a row of stitching along the cut edge of the fabric before it's sewed together)? Is the fabric sturdy? Does it have reinforcing on the sides or bottom? These will all impact how much you can carry in the bag without damage.
- How will you keep it organized? Does it stay folded when not in use? Does it come with a tote or bag to put it in?
- Is it easy to remember? Will it fit into your purse or pocket, or does it come with a hook or tote to hang it in eyesight?

ANATOMY OF AN ESSE GROCERY BAG

Long handle -
fits over your
shoulder



Same size as a
paper grocery
bag, but the
handles won't
break!

Folds to an 8"
square and snaps
closed - easily
fits in your tote



Strong 600D
polyester and
luggage-grade
construction
means it can easily
hold 35 pounds

INSULATED BAGS:

Insulated bags can vary in shape and size. In general, they are a way to keep food cold on your way home from the grocery store. They also work well for lunch bags.

Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Outside: Nylon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and durable • Lightweight material • Compacts easily • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Water resistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recyclable • Slow to break down • Made from a non-renewable resource • Needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food
Outside: PE polyester (Polyethylene)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recyclable (with the exception of bags with prodegradant additives) • High reuse • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Does not biodegrade (excepting bags with the additive), making it useful for landfill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter concerns for most of the bags because of their somewhat lightweight nature • Made from a non-renewable resource • Often feels “plastic-y” • Does not biodegrade
Outside: PET polyester (Polyethylene terephthalate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It looks and feels like a fabric bag but is made from plastic • Strong and durable • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Recyclable • High reuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended for machine washing (hand wash only)
Inside: White lamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a layer of insulation; depth of insulation can vary • The white coating is waterproof and can be wiped clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

<p>Inside: Foil</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a layer of insulation; depth of insulation can vary • The foil is waterproof and can be wiped clean • Foil reflects heat and tends to extend the time items in the bag stay cold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Inside: Insulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The insulation layer is what keeps the cold items cold inside your bag. You generally can't see it; it will be covered by laminate or foil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Other things to consider:

- How well is it constructed? Does it feel sturdy? Does it have reinforcing on the sides or bottom? These will all impact how much you can carry in the bag without damage.
- How will you keep it organized? Does it stay folded when not in use? Does it come with a tote or bag to put it in?
- Is it easy to remember? Will it fit into your purse or pocket, or does it come with a hook or tote to hang it in eyesight?

ANATOMY OF AN ESSE INSULATED BAG

Insulated construction with reflective inside - keeps food cold for hours (depending on weather) →



Same size as a paper grocery bag, but the handles won't break!

Sturdy zipper keeps cold air in, warm air out



Luggage-grade construction means it can easily hold 35 pounds

Folds to an 8" square and snaps closed - easily fits in your tote



PRODUCE BAGS:

Produce bags are mesh sacks which replace the plastic produce bags available at the grocery store. They can help keep food fresh longer for items which rot in moisture – think tomatoes or squash. On the other hand, lettuce and herbs tend to dry out too much in an open bag, and are best stored in your refrigerator in a plastic bag lined with a paper towel. To avoid plastic, use reusable produce bags at the store but transfer your greens to a container or multi-use plastic bag at home.

Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Nylon mesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nylon is strong and durable • Lightweight material • Compacts easily • Easily dyed which creates interesting material color options • Water resistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recyclable • Slow to break down • Made from a non-renewable resource • Needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food
Cotton mesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodegradable/natural plant fiber • Renewable resource • Strong and durable (bags are typically 8-12 ounces) • Soft fabric • Can be machine washed in cold water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy environmental footprint and global warming potential • Traditional (non-organic) cotton production accounts for 16% of the world's pesticide use • High water consumption crop • Bags are not moisture resistant, unless chemically treated • Heavy, bulky and expensive to ship • Not sterile and needs to be washed regularly to prevent bacterial cross contamination of food

Other things to consider:

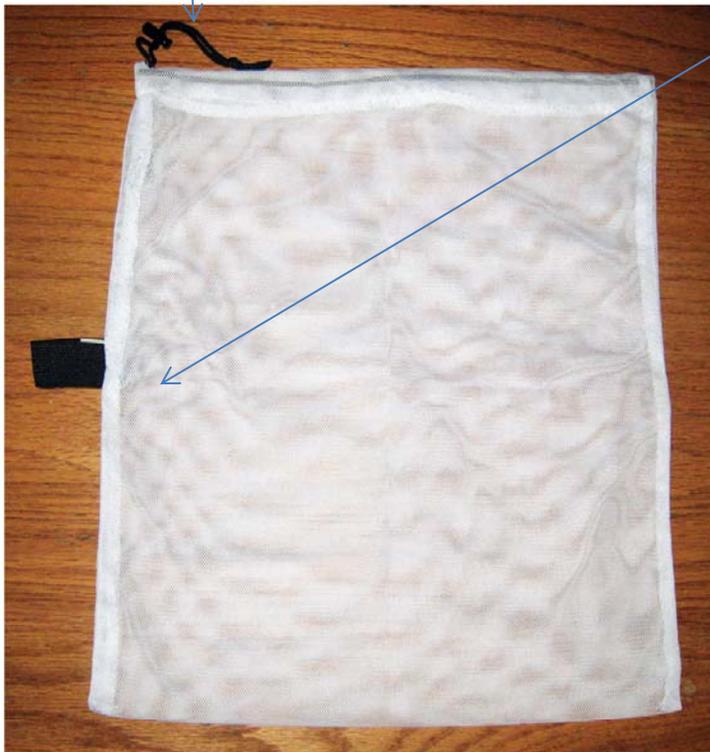
- How well is it constructed? Does it feel sturdy? Does it have reinforcing on the sides or bottom? These will all impact how much you can carry in the bag without damage.
- How does it close? Produce bags generally close with a drawstring, however not all have a closure on the drawstring to keep the bag closed until you are ready to remove the produce.

- Is the mesh scan-through? In other words, can the cashier use the scan gun at the cash register to read a label off your produce without opening the bag?
- How will you keep it organized? Does it stay folded when not in use? Does it come with a tote or bag to put it in?
- Is it easy to remember? Will it fit into your purse or pocket, or does it come with a hook or tote to hang it in eyesight?

ANATOMY OF AN ESSE PRODUCE BAG:

Closes with a drawstring with a ball stop closure

Elastic band - holds bag closed when folded



Folds to 1"x2" - fits easily in your tote, purse or pocket



Strong scan-through nylon



Generous 12"x15" size



ANATOMY OF AN ESSE TOTE:

Perfectly sized for your folded grocery and insulated bags



Strong webbed strap - keep it short to carry in your hand, or long to put over your shoulder



Lots of fun designs, or stick with solid black!

Strong 600D polyester with outside flat pockets for coupons or notes, and mesh pockets for shopping and produce bags

