



# MELAMINE DINNERWARE BUYING GUIDE

**HUBERT®**



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Probably the most casual and usually the least expensive choice, melamine dinnerware can be a great option for providing the look of ceramic in a significantly more durable form. But, how do you know melamine is the right choice for your food service operation? Use the contents of this Guide to empower your decision and set the stage for a great dining experience.

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## Meet Melamine: The Affordable Alternative to China

Strong and standing up to rigorous use in commercial settings, melamine is a top choice for food service operators. It's generally less expensive and much more durable than other dinnerware materials. Unlike china and porcelain, melamine plates and bowls will not shatter when they hit the ground.

While economical, consumer-grade melamine dinnerware is growing in popularity, we strongly recommend commercial grade, 100% melamine dinnerware for food service operators. These products will be thicker, heavier and designed to meet the demands of a commercial operation.

### Composition

Melamine is a hard plastic that has been proven safe for food use. Additionally, many brands offer NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) certified options in melamine dinnerware. NSF tests the material & design to ensure the product is safe and can be easily cleaned.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Lightweight	Microwave use is not recommended
Inexpensive	Discoloration
Dishwasher-safe	
Durable	
BPA-Free	

## 4 Factors for Choosing Your Melamine Dinnerware

### 1. Your menu

Imagine the way you want your most popular menu items to appear. Are you plating several menu items together? Are your dishes likely to appear in photographs and social media posts?

In most cases, white dinnerware will best complement the menu. Color can play an important role, however. In a cafeteria or institutional dining setting, bright colors can be used to call attention to dietary needs. Color can also stimulate the senses, elevate the mood or increase the perceived value of the food. If color dinnerware is not an option for your operation, consider using different shapes to create a unique experience.

Using a variety of shapes and sizes can also accommodate a menu that consists of several courses or side dishes.

### 2. Your table setting

How will your melamine dinnerware interact with other aspects of the table where guests will eat? Consider the space available at the table for each guest and how much room their plate, flatware, drinkware, condiments, centerpieces or napkin holders will need. This will help determine if a full size melamine dinner plate, a smaller plate, or even another option such as a basket, will provide the best experience.

### 3. Your crowd

Each type of operation—cafeteria, banquet hall, fine dining—will need a different quantity of various tableware pieces to accommodate typical traffic as well as replacements. In all likelihood, you'll need at least two or three plates for every seat in your dining room. While one plate is being used, another is being cleaned and another is on the shelf, ready for use. This ratio will keep your melamine dinnerware looking good for years. Reference our [Guide to Tabletop](#) for a detailed breakdown.

### 4. Your budget

You'll be hard pressed to find a dinnerware solution that beats melamine on price. But to maximize your investment, consider the following tips:

- Purchase extra pieces up front to take advantage of the best pricing and reduce costly replacement orders. Keep extra stock in its original packaging.
- Train your staff on washing and handling procedures. For example, make sure everyone knows that melamine should not be microwaved. This helps reduce replacement costs.
- Check the manufacturers warranty so you can be prepared to manage replacement costs if the dinnerware is damaged while in use.



## Melamine Care & Maintenance

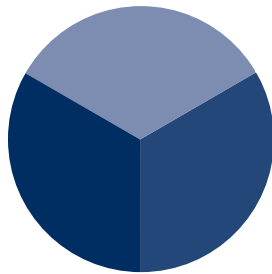
While it's virtually unbreakable, melamine is subject to other types of damage like stains, protein buildup and metal markings. To keep your melamine looking its best, and reduce replacement costs, we recommend the following actions.

### Preparing and Serving

- Avoid heating melamine dinnerware to 200 degrees F or more.
- Never put melamine in a microwave or under a heat lamp.
- Serrated knives will scratch melamine dinnerware, so provide a duller knife to guests.

### Warewashing and Storage

- Melamine can chip and scratch. Wipe excess food from melamine dishes using a cloth instead of scraping with flatware or tapping against a countertop or trash can.
- Food can stain melamine dinnerware. To prevent stains, rinse and presoak dishes as soon as they are cleared from the table.
- Never use chlorine-based cleaning solutions on melamine dinnerware.

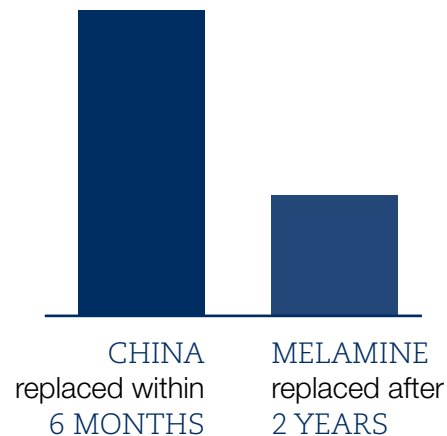


### maximize service life

A good rule of thumb is to make sure products aren't overused so you can maximize their service life. For your inventory, a typical process cycle should be 1/3 in use, 1/3 being cleaned, and 1/3 in rest.

### replacement rate

The average replacement rate for melamine dinnerware is 10-20% which is much lower than china dinnerware at 50-150%



## Affordable Tableware Combinations

Try these combinations of HUBERT® Brand melamine dinnerware, flatware and drinkware



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+



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Watermark Tumblers



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Windsor Flatware

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