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RESTAURANT LETS CUSTOMERS PAY WITH TRASH

 NONPROFIT & SOCIAL CAUSE

The temporary BIOMAT restaurant in Austria has enabled diners to exchange their biodegradable waste for a meal.

Composting is a good way to make use of organic material that otherwise might end up in landfill and there are plenty of opportunities for consumers to benefit from collecting their food waste, such as New York City's [Hello Compost](#) scheme, which provides fresh food to low income families in return for their compostable goods. Operating on a similar basis, the temporary **BIOMAT** restaurant in Austria has enabled diners to exchange their biodegradable waste for a meal.

Part of [Vienna Design Week 2013](#), which took place in September, the eatery was a collaboration between the renewable resources company BIOMAT and the [Vera Wiedermann Design Studio](#). Diners were invited to bring bags of compostable goods that were weighed and assigned an energy value. The restaurant then took the waste and handed customers a voucher equivalent to the value of their garbage. They could then use the coupon to pay towards part, or all, of their meal. The sacks of rubbish were then sent to a local urban farm to be broken down into biogas that can be used for cooking.

Although only in operation for the duration of the week-long festival, the BIOMAT concept points towards a sustainable cycle of reuse that other restaurants could emulate, turning their own food waste into a resource to power their kitchens. Could this idea be turned into a more long-term solution?

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