

# Coffee Talk with Mateus



**Please tell us about yourself, who are you and what do you do?** My name is Mateus Viana and I'm a product design student based in Niterói, Rio de Janeiro. I study at the Fluminense Federal University and most of my projects are focused on environmental and social areas. I worked as an intern in a botanic lab at my university, which influenced me a lot to create products made from plants and natural fibers, such as Solo Packaging.

**How did your journey towards sustainability begin and how did you come up with the initial idea?** I was born and raised near nature and the sea. My father used to plant trees with me – he taught me how to take care of them and how important they are to our lives. I also surf and have a special relationship with the sea. The idea for Solo Packaging began when Ana Clara researched the material and created a fictional project for a class. I was watching the presentation and got excited about the idea of mixing design with botany. Then, I researched a little deeper, carried out some tests, and realized that this idea could be a really innovative project. Ana and I realised that we would need an expert in prototyping and machinery, so we invited Yago to help and support the team.

**What are the biggest challenges you face?** We have two huge challenges: 1. Build a company from the scratch as students. 2. There aren't any Brazilian companies working with our material to use as a reference, so we also need to raise a new industry in our country with our own technology.

**What is a possible future for your initiative? Where do you want to be within five years?** We're really excited about the future! Now we are working on our MVP and setting up partnerships with supermarkets. In five years, we expect to have factories in two different regions in Brazil and sell our products all over the country. Not only packaging but also plates, trays, and cutlery.

**If you have three free wishes, what would you wish for?** My first wish would definitely be that people across the world appreciate the environment more than money. My second wish would be to find an expert to help build our technology and company. The third one would be to grow my project enough to help my country from a social, economical, and environmental perspective.

**What do you think we all can do to solve the plastic pollution problem in general?** In my opinion, plastic pollution is a huge problem already rooted in society. To

Insights about the project  
**“Solo Packaging”**  
by Mateus de Freitas Viana, Brazil



change something like that, we need a societal change. To make this possible, every single person must do their part. We need to consider plastic products that are need-less, such as plastic bags, plastic straws, and all kinds of disposable plastic products, and ban them. We need to replace them with eco-friendly products or even durable products, such as reusable bags or bamboo straws. This would be a start. This is a cultural issue and will take years to solve, but I believe we are on the way!



*Dry palm leaves maintain the food temperature, don't absorb liquid in short term, and have no smell or taste.*