



Zero Waste Spring Cleaning



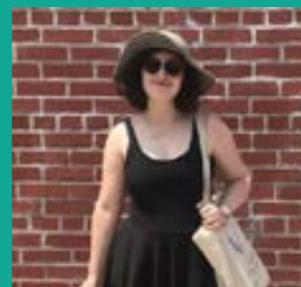


Emilia Cantero Dieguez, 29 years old, was born in Argentina and is currently based in Belgium, Brussels. She graduated with a master's degree in Marketing and International Business, she chose to invest her skills in a cause that really matters. She is the founder of the sustainable lifestyle blog Miuxua. She created this blog out of the belief in a world where our urban lifestyle doesn't have to compromise comfort. She loves to investigate the zero waste lifestyle, ethical fashion, organic cosmetics, and eco-travel!

Meghan is a modern hippie trying to go zero waste while living at her parent's house. Beginning her zero waste journey in early 2017, Meghan has made big strides to becoming zero waste, but is still making changes every day. Her blog, Not Trashy provides tips and tricks to becoming zero waste and living a more sustainable lifestyle. She also works for a financial technology start up in CT as a sales coordinator and spends her free time contributing to her blog and instagram, @nottrashy.zerowaste.



Laura is the blogger behind The Mindful Mom Blographer which is a guide for reducing mental clutter through mindfulness, minimalism, and zero waste living. She is also a mom, wife, nature photographer, proud Minnesotan, outdoor enthusiast, self-care advocate, food lover, mantra say-er, cat and dog owner, gardener, pay-it-forward lover, and so much more.

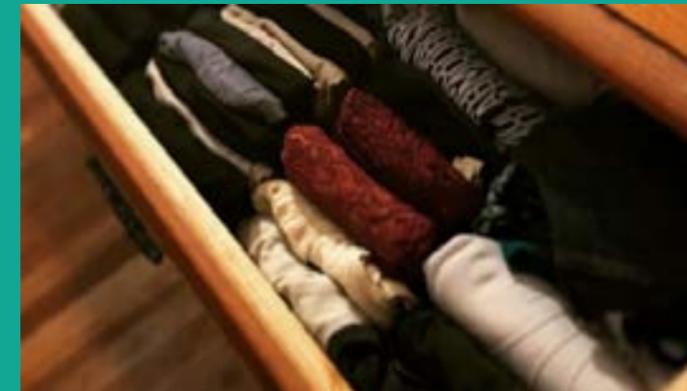


23-year old Sabs has lived a low impact, or "zero waste" lifestyle for the last two and a half years, and has been vegan for the same amount of time. She loves reading secondhand books, exploring her new home of Brooklyn and enjoys cooking yummy plant based foods. Follow her through her blog or on Instagram @sustainablesabs.

Hajar is an American Moroccan who currently lives in Scotland. She studied Marine biology in Malaysia and focused her research on saltwater crocodiles behavior. Her zero waste journey started when she was in Uni studying human impact and how destructing we are to this planet.



Heidi was born in Mexico but is a lifelong resident of California. She is a Business Development Manager in Silicon Valley just trying to live with intention. She is also a cat mom, crazy jar lady and lover of everything homemade. She began my zero waste journey a year ago, making so many mistakes but hoping to share and help support anyone else's pursuit of a greener lifestyle.



5 Waste Reducing Spring Cleaning Skills

Meghan from Not Trashy

Your Spring Cleaning won't be completely waste free, otherwise you would just be moving shit from one place to the other. Around this time of year humans get an urge to purge and feel the need to re-nest their living space.

This spring, let's vow not to purge and replace. This is not the point of Spring Cleaning. It is an opportunity to refresh your environment and remember the gratitude you have for the things you own. Below are a few skills to help you achieve maximum impact during Spring Cleaning.

1. DECLUTTERING

I will take some heat for my opinion, but I don't think you should keep anything in your house that has no value or purpose. This might mean making some trash but that is when proper disposal education comes in. I think it is waste of space to keep anything that you don't use or even like. Others might find more value in your "trash". Donate or give these items away.

My sock drawer once stood independent from my undergarments until I applied the Konmari Method. I've condensed both categories into one drawer and even had space leftover for washcloths and napkins.

I see zero waste as more than just trash control. This is also applicable to other parts of lifestyle. Eliminating waste of space, waste of time and waste of energy in your life can really enhance quality of life. Being able to identify and eliminate clutter will come in handy this Spring Cleaning season.

2. REPURPOSING

Believe it or not, having an eye for how to repurpose things can really be a useful skill and an integral part of going zero waste. While cleaning your space this spring, let your creative juices flow!

Put everything you plan to toss in a pile, even things that look like trash. That shoe box top may make its way to your drawer as a separator. The small glass jar may make it to your desk as a pen holder. Don't just start purging and tossing. Give it a second. Don't throw anything away until your Spring Cleaning is done.

Repurpose what you can. If you can't, donate or dispose properly.

3. REMOVING STICKERS:

I love me a good glass jar! But as much as I love to repurpose them, I despise the stickers on them. As soon as I can, those suckers are getting scrubbed off. But those stubborn ones really love to cling on! This fool proof method outlined below never lets me down.

Step 1: Fill your sink or bucket with hot water and a generous amount of dish soap. Make sure your jars are at room temperature or warm before dropping them in the hot water to avoid breaking the glass.

Step 2: Soak your glassware for about 20-30 minutes.

Step 3: Peel off loose labels and use some more dish soap to scrub off the rest with a brillo pad.

4. SEWING:

Many people take the opportunity during Spring Cleaning to purge their closet but some of those items may be salvageable. Knowing how to hand and/or machine sew can save your most loved items. I once mended a pair of cotton leggings 20+ times (I kid you not) until I finally retired them.

You can really extend the life of your beloved pieces if you mend them yourself. Get all you can out of your clothes until you have no choice but to donate.

5. MAKE YOUR OWN CLEANING PRODUCTS

No need to go out and replenish all your cleaning products. Modern consumers can many times fall victim to strategic marketing. The truth is, you don't need 20 different products to clean your home. You can likely make due with 3-4 ingredients and make your own. Not to mention that most conventional cleaners contain unregulated chemicals that are toxic to you and your family.

Start with vinegar, dish soap, and baking soda; supplement with essential oils, castile soap and elbow grease as needed. A simple google search will produce a plethora of natural recipes to choose from.

Spring Cleaning doesn't have to be a chore. It can be fun to explore new ways to refresh your space and try to reduce waste at the same time. Definitely challenging at first, though cleaning with natural products can be so rewarding. You know that you and your family will not be introduced to chemicals and that you created a safer environment. These skills are meant to help you overcome norms of the past. A little TLC never hurt anybody.

BUYING ZERO WASTE

Not sure where to buy the items I referenced package free? Here are some ideas.

Dishwashing liquid: There are many brands that offer refill stations. Search for your options locally. I refill my dishwashing liquid with Commongood.

Castile Soap: Many natural foods stores will have refill stations for Dr. Bronner's Castile Soaps, the Package Free shop also has a refill station.

Essential oils: These come in glass, likely with a plastic top. I suggest buying big bottles of your favorite oils.

Baking Soda and Washing Soda: Comes in cardboard. Please recycle :)

Steel wool: Check out this copper scrubber from Life Without Plastic.



How I Make My Body Zero Waste!

By Emilia from Miuxua

It is the start of spring, and what does that mean? It's spring cleaning time! I'm not talking about cleaning the house, our cleaning out your garage, although that's also necessary. I am talking about cleaning my body from the inside out. I was not aware about how much waste our bodies drag along, until I heard a podcast where someone said, "our bodies are earth's greatest landfills". Suddenly, I felt conviction for the waste my body was carrying. If you are wondering about how I take care of my body 'zero-waste style', stay with me.

First of all, when I say "body," I am referring to both my physical body and mind.

A delicious and fun way to make my physical body 'zero-waste' are detox smoothies. My favourite is called, "Just pick any green vegetable in your fridge and add orange, lemon and apple". Yes, I just invented this name. I normally add cucumber, spinach, and any other leafy green, one orange, half a lemon and one apple. This always has a good result. It cleanses the body and gives back necessary vitamins and minerals. Here you can read why these ingredients help with detoxing.

Besides the foods I eat or drink, there are also internal factors that have an effect on my body, like stress. I use several techniques to relieve stress like running, breathing exercises and techniques to put things into perspective.

We also have 'waste' in our minds. There are three kinds of waste I want to talk about.

The first kind is mostly received by the news media. Fear sells, so most of the news items are bad news. Of all the amazing things that are happening right now, why do we only get to read in the newspaper about all the things going wrong? That's why I don't often read the news anymore. There are other, better sources to understand what's happening, like traveling and talking to locals, or joining local events and reading the local community newsletter.

The second kind is people who mostly complain or spread negative vibes. It's normal to have a bad day, and I will always listen and try to help. But if every day is bad, it's important to help focus on the positive side of life and to avoid getting dragged along in the negativity. I'm a strong believer of "Always look on the bright side of life"

The third kind of waste in our minds is our own judgement. Our judgement is our biggest challenge to overcome. It is the little voice in our heads saying "You are not good enough, "You're not smart, you don't matter," or other millions of variants depending on the situation. Our judgement has an important job to do, to make sure we make sense of life. It tends to resist whatever it judges as a "problem" or something "unsafe" like going out of our comfort zone, which causes negative emotions and stress. I see this as 'waste' that doesn't help me to get to my goals. What I do to combat this? Meditation. It truly helps me to identify when my judgement is dominating my mind and to take back control. I don't always succeed, but practice makes experience.

So, a quick recap of what I do to make my body spring-time and zero-waste ready: drinking detox smoothies, running, breathing exercises, focusing on good news, surrounding myself with positive people and regular meditation. Happy springtime!

Zero Waste Spring Cleaning

By Laura from the Mindful Mom Blogapher



Ah, spring. A time of renewal and the overwhelming sense to clean. I can't be the only one who loves to open the windows on a warm spring day, and start cleaning away the remains of winter. Decluttering, going through closets, deep cleaning floors and kitchens and bathrooms and...

If you're on a journey towards zero waste, there are things you can do to ensure your spring cleaning ritual falls in line with your zero waste mindset. Whether you're just starting out or have been doing it for years, these zero waste spring cleaning tips are applicable for everyone!

NON-TOXIC ZERO WASTE CLEANER

When my family and I started looking for ways to reduce our waste, we quickly found that one way to do so was by reexamining our cleaners. Many conventional cleaners contain harsh chemicals that aren't good for the earth or for us. I won't go into specifics in this post, but if you're interested, there are lots of great resources out there on the topic. Another thing about conventional cleaners is that many come in containers that aren't recyclable or reusable.

So what is a zero-waster to do?

After doing some research, we found that a vinegar and water mixture can be a great all purpose cleaner for all surfaces (we even use it on our hardwood floors!). Once we started using this mixture, we haven't looked back. It works great, is economical, healthier, and environmentally friendly.

Here is our favorite recipe:
DIY Citrus All Purpose Cleaner

-Peels from 3-5 oranges, lemons, and/or limes

-White Vinegar

-Reusable bowl or container with a lid

-Water

-Reusable spray bottle

Collect citrus peels from 3-5 oranges, lemons, and/or limes and put them into a reusable bowl or container. Pour the white vinegar into the container and over the citrus peels until the citrus peels are covered. Put the lid onto the container, and store for 2 weeks. During this time, the vinegar will break away at the citrus peels, leaving you with a concentrated vinegar/citrus mixture.

After two weeks, remove the peels from the container.

After the peels have been removed, add in water. I usually eyeball adding 3-4x more than the vinegar/citrus mix-

mixture (for example, if I have approximately 1 cup of vinegar/citrus mixture, I will add 3-4 cups of water).

Pour the water/vinegar/citrus mixture into the spray bottle.

Clean away!

REUSABLE WIPES

Now that I've shared my favorite non-toxic zero waste cleaner recipe, I wanted to go one step further with an additional tip for furthering your zero waste cleaning journey.

When I say, 'reusable wipes,' I'm not talking about baby wipes or family cloth wipes, though there isn't anything wrong with those, but I am talking about wipes you would use in place of paper towels. A substitute for swiffer wet mop wipes, what you would use for dusting, or for general, everyday cleaning.

My family was one that, once upon a time, used all disposable products for our cleaning. It has probably been one of the largest changes we've made in our path towards zero waste. At first it felt intimidating, but as we slowly made changes, it ended up being an easy switch, and I can't imagine ever going back.

Here are some of the swaps we have made:

-Reusable bamboo towels: We purchased a roll of bamboo reusable towels which we have come to LOVE. With a 2-and-a-half-year-old running around, spills and messes are a daily occurrence, and they have held up great! You can find reusable towels in your favorite zero waste shops or on Amazon.

-Stained/damaged clothing: Clothes break down after years of wear. We all know this. In the past, I would throw these clothes away. But now, we have gotten really creative in how we use them! Old, holey shirts have become rags, towels, dusters, and pads for mopping (just attach with some velcro or a rubber band). The possibilities are endless, and I have been surprised by how well they work for everyday, multi-purpose cleaning.

-DIY Mopping Pad: If you or someone you know is super handy with crochet or knitting needles, ask them if they could whip you up a custom mopping pad! My wonderful mother-in-law has been following our zero waste journey, and gifted us one of our own. I love it.

I have found that the trick to making swaps is to go slow, and start thinking about alternatives once your on-hand products run out. That way, you're not trying to make all the decisions at once and risk feeling overwhelmed. This has been KEY for getting us to make a decision that works best for our family, and sticking with it.

Happy Cleaning!



What a Zero Waster's Week of Trash Looks Like By Sabrina from SustainableSabs

As someone who's been living a zero waste (or low impact, as I like to say) lifestyle for the past 2 and a half years, I've gotten pretty used to the new sustainable habits formed while living this way. For those of you who have no idea how someone lives without producing trash, it can be pretty daunting. I wanted to explain what types of trash I do produce, and how easy it is to avoid making 99% of the trash Americans make every single day.

Trash Diary

Day 1:

7:30 - Wake up, make coffee and get dressed. I'm not making breakfast this morning because I'm meeting a co-worker at a vegan cafe nearby! I bring everything I'll need for the day: mason jar with water, my lunch, and cloth napkin, as well as my book for the train ride to work.

8:40 - My co-worker arrives and I'm so ready to eat! I order an "egg" salad made with tofu, pickled beets and greens on a pumpnickel everything bagel. I made sure to ask for it "for here" to make it trash free. It was delicious!

1:00 - Lunchtime! I brought some vegan cheese spread with bread. To make the vegan cheese, I combine sunflower seed pulp (leftover from making homemade sunflower seed milk) and add soy sauce, nutritional yeast and lemon juice. I also eat some curried dal leftover from last night's dinner. I used my To-Goware utensils, a real plate and a cloth napkin, and brought everything in jars so no waste here.

4:30 - I get to head home early today! When I get back I cook dinner: sweet potatoes with sautéed mushrooms and onion. I notice that I am running out of nutritional yeast and soy sauce, and make a note to buy some more at the co-op this weekend. I am very fortunate to have a co-op nearby that has refillable options for those things!

Pieces of trash made today: 0

DAY 2

7:00 - I slept in a bit today but still headed off to the gym. Ate apple oatmeal for breakfast (with bulk oats and farmers market apples) and heated up some leftover coffee from my French press. It's cold and rainy so I make sure to bring a cotton cloth to blow my nose instead of single use tissues. It comes in handy!

12:30 - Time for lunch! I brought my own lunch again: bread with sunflower seed cheese, topped with chickpeas and a side of chia pudding. To that, I added two sugar packets since I ran out of sugar at home and we have a TON at my office. I will compost the packets since they are paper.

6:30 - Met up with a friend at Urban Vegan Kitchen and ate some AMAZING food, like vegan mac and cheese, fried plantains with rice and jackfruit, and chocolate cake for dessert. They brought the plantain peel with the dish so I put it in my jar to bring home for compost. The only trash produced was a paper napkin, which I tucked into my coat pocket for future use. We took a short walk after that to enjoy the nice evening, and I went home via the subway.

Pieces of trash made today: 1

DAY 3

7:30 - Woke up and went to the gym! When I got home I made breakfast and coffee with bulk grounds in my secondhand French press. Then I gathered all of my bags and headed to the farmer's market.

11:30 - It was gorgeous weather so I decided to walk! It took about an hour but it was such nice weather outside that it passed quickly. I dropped off my compost in one of the bins and started shopping. First stop: the apple farmer. I put the apples in my bag, and headed on down to some other stalls where I bought potatoes, beets, bread, and a daikon radish. No receipts so no trash was made here, then I hopped on the bus home.

2:00 - I was super hungry so I made some pasta with last week's leftover veg: half a portobello mushroom and a bit of green cabbage that I sautéed. I finished it off with some balsamic vinegar from a new jar a coworker had bought me. The top was sealed so I'll have to throw that bit in the garbage.

3:30 - Time to head to the bulk store. I brought a bunch of jars and produce bags and picked up some things for the next few weeks: tamari, olive oil, pasta, kidney beans, barley, nutritional yeast, red pepper flakes, maple syrup, peanuts and oats. I also got some dish soap but didn't have an extra jar so I bought one of the Common Good jars and filled it with their bulk soap; but I made a huge mess! Fortunately I had a handkerchief and last night's paper napkin in my pocket, but I still asked for a paper towel to wipe up. However I composted it all when I got home (the hankie is 100% cotton). The only trash produced from this trip were a few avocado produce stickers, but they were final sale avocados so I saved them from landfill!

10:30 - I am going out dancing with some friends! I order my first drink in a glass but my second drink is in a metal can. I figure I'll recycle it when I get home but I end up losing track of it during the night and am not sure if the bar recycles (I assume they would as Brooklyn is a fairly eco-friendly area). I also am offered some gum and take it in my non-sober state. The paper wrap will get composted.. and I ended up swallowing the gum whoops!

Pieces of trash made today: 3

DAY 4

9:00 - I wake up a tiny bit hungover and make some zero waste coffee with some sunflower seed milk (recipe in the notes of this picture.) For breakfast, I have some avocado with sourdough and top with chickpeas. Later, I head to the gym for a midday workout!

2:00 - I get dressed and make sure to wear something work appropriate as I'll be staying at a friend's place tonight in Manhattan. We are watching the Oscars together and her apartment is much closer to the viewing party than mine! I put on a skirt my roommate gave me with a secondhand cashmere top and some new tights my mom bought for me for my birthday. The tights are mostly wrapped in plastic but the little paper cutouts are recyclable.

4 - I'm making some apple crisp to bring to the viewing party! I peel some of my imperfect apples and add bulk ingredients like maple syrup, lemon juice, spices and arrowroot starch. For the crumble topping I add oats, flour, more maple syrup, coconut oil and vegan butter (my roommate has asked that I help her finish it!). I end up throwing away a produce sticker from the lemon I purchased.

8 - At the viewing party I used reusables to serve myself! No trash made here.

Pieces of trash made today: 3

DAY 5

7:30 - I wake up in Manhattan this morning and had the chance to walk to work! On the way I stopped at a coffee shop and drank a cup "for here". No receipt so this was a trash free endeavor.

12:30 - Lunch was oatmeal that I had packed last night along with another imperfect apple. I used two sugar packets from the kitchen which will be composted.

4:00 - Today was a very slow work day (unfortunately) but I split up the slow afternoon by munching on some chickpeas with a balsamic dressing.

5:30 - Finally out of work! I went straight home and made some barley with beets and a dressing made with bulk olive oil and some homemade ginger vinegar (sliced ginger set in white vinegar for a few days). Delicious!

Pieces of trash made today: 0

DAY 6

6:10 - Another early wake up! I head to the gym with my reusable water bottle and get a good sweat going. If you're interested in seeing my workouts, click [here](#).

7:30 - Another easy breakfast of oatmeal with sautéed apples. I make coffee in my used steel French press with bulk coffee, to which I add homemade sunflower seed mylk. Yum!

11:30 - Feeling a bit hungry before lunch so I munch on some peanuts I brought from home.

2:45 - I eat leftover beet/barley with dressing. Slice up an apple and eat that throughout the afternoon.

6:30 - I get home and decide to make some soup! I add onion, ginger and miso paste to a pot, along with diced sweet potato and water (usually I'd add broth but I haven't made any recently!). After cooking for a bit, I add soy sauce and flat pasta in lieu of noodles and cook for 10 minutes more. The soup was delicious! I also added the sunflower seed pulp I have leftover from making milk last week.

Pieces of trash made today: 0

DAY 7

6:20 - It's the last day of my trash diary! I wake up early and do my usual routine: gym, breakfast of oatmeal, and get ready for work. We were supposed to have a pretty bad nor'easter today but the weather isn't too bad so far.

12:00 - Lunch is more beets with barley. To give it more flavor I added some tomato jam that we have in the office and some pepper. Like the sugar, the pepper came in a single use paper packet but I'll compost it. On my break I decide to do some crossword puzzles from the NYtimes. My office gets the newspaper every day and I make sure that they always get recycled.

5 - Got to leave a bit early today from the snow storm! I run home and immediately do some laundry with some Simplyco laundry powder (I've had it for over a year but don't plan on buying it again) and some lemon essential oil. After, I whip up some dinner: sautéed beet with balsamic and onion atop bulk pasta. I also boil another beet and some potatoes to prepare for my lunch tomorrow.

7:30 - I run downstairs to pick up my laundry and hang it out to dry all over my room. I never use the dryer so I save energy and money. Head to bed early around 9:30 after a quiet evening.

Pieces of trash made today: 0

If you'd like to see more of what my trash-free life looks like, you can follow my blog at sustainablesabs.tumblr.com and my Instagram [@sustainablesabs](https://www.instagram.com/sustainablesabs).



FOOD FOR THE SOUL

By Hajar Moujib

Am I the only one who thinks this winter lasted for decades?! I am so ready for the joy and freshness that spring brings.

Let's get cracking with a Mediterranean-inspired brunch and beverage. Try to purchase the ingredients plastic-free to keep your tummy and planet happy!

Loaded hummus toast

Ingredients:

2 slices of toast- Any kind of bread would do

1 chopped tomato

1 handful of chopped cucumber

1 handful of pitted and halved olives

2 tbsp of lemon juice

Salt

Pepper

Hummus- (Make your own. It tastes way better)

Method:

Place your toasts on a plate and spread a generous layer of hummus.

In a bowl, mix the rest of the ingredients.

Place the mixture on top of the toast.

Garnish with cilantro.

Mint & lemon tea

Ingredients: 1 handful of fresh mint

2 slices of lemon

Sweetener- honey/ maple syrup/ coconut sugar

Boiling water

Method:

Place all the ingredients in your favorite mug.

Pour boiling water on top and stir.

Enjoy and zen out!

Check out all of these recipes in action in my What I Eat In A Day Video! Click on the photo below to link to the YouTube Video! While your over there, please subscribe and like the video to see more What I Eat In A Day Videos!



Donating Good Vibes Only By Heidi from @ZeroWasteChica



In the past, spring cleaning meant that I could purge anything that is not “in style” and buy all new things for the summer and fall. While I continue to purge items that I no longer NEED (because reusables will always be in style) I am much more mindful of how I do this. Rather than drop it all off at Goodwill or other big chain thrift stores, where it goes through a long process before ending up in the actual store, textile recycling, or eventually landfill regardless – I pick and choose the items and their new homes. I have tried to make a list of possibilities for your items in hopes it makes your purging more mindful this spring! Please make sure items are washed and in good condition, kept in a way that you would still consider using.

Bandages: we donated our surplus of band-aids and first aid items to a local homeless shelter, other great ideas include: churches, nursing homes, daycare centers, community centers and local schools

Blankets: consider donating to homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters, local churches collect these for their patrons that are struggling and animal shelters are always appreciative of these donations.

Books: We donated ours to our local library and the neighbor’s free mini library in front of their home but afterwards we discovered amazing programs like Operation Gratitude, Books for Soldiers and Operation Paperback which sends books to soldiers. Programs like Books Through Bars and Books to Prisoners send donated books to incarcerated individuals (most prison programs require that they only be paperback.) Daycare centers and local schools are a great place to consider. Some animal shelters also implement Reading programs between children and shelter dogs in hopes of getting them ready for adoption. Lastly, there are secondhand book stores that welcome donations often for store credit exchange

Clothing: This can be broken down into several categories –

>Professional women’s attire? Consider “Dress for Success” which empowers women across the globe in their interviews and careers.

>Fun party dress or old prom dress? Many high schools have programs that donate gently used prom dresses to girls who cannot afford them.

>Children’s clothing? Domestic violence shelters have implemented programs where you can donate your kid’s clothes (and items!) to these families in need.

>There are also specific programs that have brick and mortar shops selling donated items for a great cause like Habitat for Humanity, SPCA, local animal shelters (we have a few!) and many cancer research programs

>If you are looking to make a bit back, some stores like Plato’s Closet and Buffalo Exchange will buy your used clothing for store credi.

