

WHAT I EAT DOESN'T IMPACT THE CLIMATE

FOOD SYSTEMS AND FOOD WASTE

The food we eat has a big impact on climate change. Activities such as the farming and harvesting of plants, the raising of animals, as well as the processing, packaging and transporting of food around the world, are all part of this system. If you eat food, you are part of this system too!

The biggest cause of climate change is greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from human activity, mainly carbon dioxide. The way we produce, consume and dispose of food accounts for around 30% of the GHGs driving climate change. This means even the smallest changes to our food choices can make a huge difference to our planet.

Did you know...?



Producing and eating one cheeseburger per week for a year creates a carbon footprint equivalent to taking a flight from London to Rome!



It takes 1,200 litres of 'virtual water' to make one pizza. The term 'virtual water' is the amount of 'hidden' water that lies behind all foodstuffs we eat - even if you can't see it!



Chocolate was once thought to be worth more than gold. In ancient Central America, the cocoa bean was highly valued and traded instead of money!

When we talk about the carbon impact of our food, the conversation should start with where the raw ingredients are produced. Even convenience food, like a frozen pizza, comes from the fields! Wheat is harvested to make flour for the base, tomatoes are grown to make the sauce, and cows are reared to produce milk for the cheese. **All of these ingredients require lots of energy and resources to help them reach your plate as well as water to grow the crops, energy to work the machinery, and fuel to transport the food to its next location** - sometimes on the other side of the world!

And don't forget, we need to grow food to feed the animals too; that's one of the reasons why meat and dairy products have such a big impact on climate change.



And the other reason? Some animals like cows, use special bacteria to help them digest grass.

This digestion process makes the animals belch out methane - a GHG far more powerful than carbon dioxide.

One of the most impactful things we can do to help fight climate change, is to rethink our food choices. We could reduce the amount of meat and dairy we consume and buy local and seasonal produce. We could even start to grow our own fruit and vegetables!

CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS



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CARBON FOOTPRINTS

- What did you have for your evening meal yesterday?
- What parts of the world did the ingredients come from?
- Can you add up the food miles?
- What could you change about this meal to reduce its carbon footprint next time you eat it?

Because we have invested so many resources in the production, packaging and transporting of food, we really shouldn't be wasting any of it. That's why the way we shop for, store, and cook our food is really important. Below are just some of the ways you can make the most of your food:

Shop savvy:
plan your meals ahead and write a list before you go shopping

Store smart:
keep opened foods in the fridge or in airtight containers or use bag clips

Love your leftovers:
Use leftovers from one meal to start another the next day, or freeze

Befriend your freezer: freeze food you won't use before it perishes or reaches its use-by

If we must dispose of food waste – and sometimes it is unavoidable, such as banana skins, peelings, tea bags etc - we must avoid putting it in our general waste bins. **When food waste ends up in landfill, it rots, producing methane.**

In East Devon, food waste can be put in your blue food caddy, ready for kerbside collection every week. That food waste is then used to create green energy to power people's homes. And whether or not you grow your own food at home, composting is another environmentally friendly way of disposing of food scraps.

UK households throw away **6.5 million tonnes** of food every year - 4.5 million of which is edible – and that would fill **38 million wheelie bins.**

FUN FACTS!

Salt, sugar and honey will never ever go bad; archaeologists have found pots of honey from thousands of years ago that still looked fresh!



The most commonly wasted food in the UK is potatoes. Each day we waste 5.8 million whole potatoes – that's enough to give every person in the South West of England a potato of their own, every day!

WASTING FOOD FEEDS CLIMATE CHANGE

What was the last food item you put in the bin?
Why did it need to be thrown away?
What could you have done differently to prevent it from being wasted?

Useful Information

