

# Where does food come from?



Before the Second World War 75% of food (55 million tons) was imported into Britain each year. During the war years farming output increased by two-thirds to help meet food shortages. Today 95% of the fruit we eat in the UK is imported. This exercise looks at the environmental impact on importing food today.

- All pupils will: Name one or more tropical country
- Most pupils will: Use a thermometer and rain gauge to describe the climate and why some foods can't be grown in Britain
- A few pupils will: Analyse ways of reducing the carbon foot print

Pupil Activity	Learning outcome	Teacher input
Use an atlas to list 5 countries in tropical areas.	Atlas skills. Think about what the weather would be like on or near the equator.	Give class a map of the world or atlas to find the region between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn - the tropics.
Draw a graph to record temperature and rain fall over a week at school. This activity can be done over time to show variations in the seasons.	Measuring and recording. Understanding that the UK has a temperate climate without the hot and humid extremes of the tropics.	Model the graph with temperature in °C and rain fall in mm on the X axis and day of the week on Y. You will also need to put out several used plastic pots to collect any rain.
Use the table below to calculate the carbon foot print of your packed lunch.	Recognise the choice we face when shopping and consider ways that would be better to the environment.	Hand out atlases to locate where food was produced and a copy of the table below to calculate the CO <sup>2</sup> emissions.

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Food miles (or food kilometres) are the distance that food travels from where it is grown (producer) to your house (consumer). In the UK, our food travels an amazing 30 billion kilometres each year, by boat, air and lorries and cars. This is responsible for releasing nearly 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. Choosing locally grown foods can massively reduce emissions.

Food Item	Mode of Transport	No of Km	CO <sup>2</sup> tonnes per Km	Total CO <sup>2</sup> Emissions
	Walking/ cycling		0	
	Rail		56	
	Bus/tube		250	
	Small car (1.4)		89	
	Truck		102	
	Air		570	
	Container ship		17	

These figures were taken from an environmental concern web site. Different sites will calculate differently. Figures will change depending on the distance, fuel efficiency and weight of load.