



CELEBRATING A LOW CARBON THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a time of year that honors all that we are grateful for. It is a celebration of the bounty provided by the earth we live on and care for. It is a truly American holiday where people of all faith traditions can gather their loved ones and be thankful for all we have.

Part of being thankful is a recommitment to protecting all that makes our families healthy and our communities strong. As we gather at the table we can all think about how the foods we choose can nourish us and also help reduce our carbon footprint.

Almost one-fifth of greenhouse gas emissions comes from the food industry and our food choices.

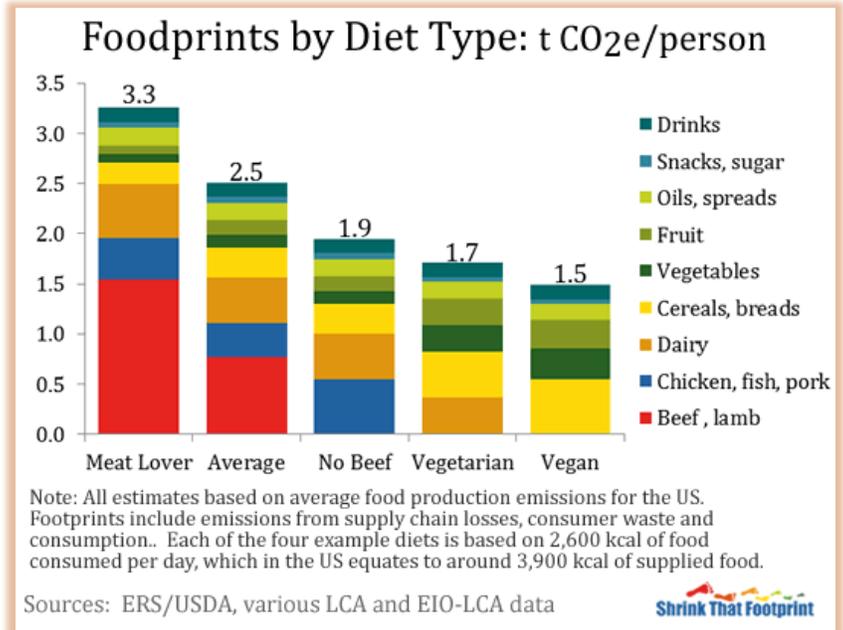
There are many things you can do this thanksgiving to lower your carbon footprint. In this guide, there are three suggested ways you can have a big impact on your carbon footprint this Thanksgiving: Changing the foods that you eat, choosing organic, and reducing your food waste.

The average weight of a turkey purchased at Thanksgiving is 15 pounds. That equals 74 kilos of greenhouse gasses created in the production and transport. That is the same as driving your car 170 miles.



A VEGETARIAN THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving's central food is often the turkey. What if this was the year you filled your table with a bounty of beans, greens and vegetables instead of meat? An average thanksgiving turkey weighs about 15 pounds which has the carbon footprint equal to 170 miles driven in your car. **According to Environmental Working Group, if everyone in the U.S. chose a vegetarian diet it would be the equivalent of taking 46 million cars off the road.**



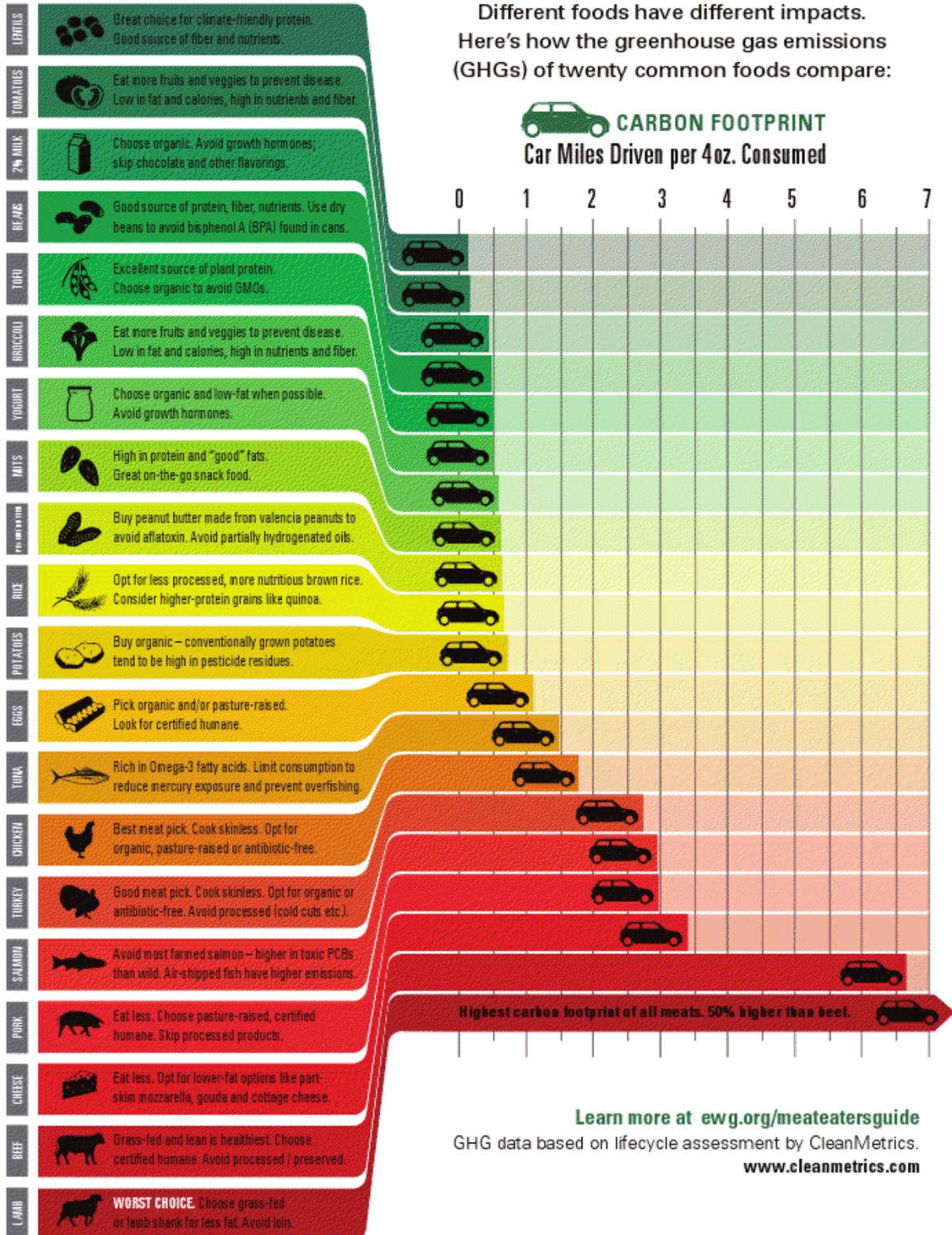
At least 20% of our personal carbon footprint comes from the food we eat every day. Every one of us can have a big impact by eating food that has a lower carbon footprint. Beef, pork, lamb and cheese have high carbon footprints. According to the United Nations animal products require 4 to 40 times the calories to produce than they provide in nutrition when eaten, mainly due to the crops they consume.

While for many Americans the idea of not having a turkey at Thanksgiving is unheard of, it is possible to reduce the overall use of meat in the meal as a whole. Consider making all your side dishes vegetarian. The internet is full of amazing vegetarian side dishes that are so delicious no one in your family will miss the extra meat. There are also many brands of vegan meats that can be added to dishes that give you the texture and flavor you enjoy.

EAT SMART. YOUR FOOD CHOICES AFFECT THE CLIMATE.

Different foods have different impacts. Here's how the greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) of twenty common foods compare:

 **CARBON FOOTPRINT**
Car Miles Driven per 4oz. Consumed



Learn more at ewg.org/meateatersguide
GHG data based on lifecycle assessment by CleanMetrics.
www.cleanmetrics.com



REDUCE FOOD WASTE

In a time of thanksgiving abundance, it is easy to waste food. Whether we over shop for the meal or never get around to finishing our leftovers many Americans end up having food go bad after thanksgiving.

In the United States around 30% of food is wasted at home. Food waste that goes to the landfill breaks down anaerobically and produces methane; methane is 21 times more potent than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas.

Ways to reduce food waste during your Thanksgiving meal

- Take a good look at your refrigerator or pantry before you go to the grocery store. Use up ingredients you may already have in your refrigerator before buying more.
- If you are using ingredients you already have on hand, remember that expiration dates on labels don't always relate to food safety. They often are the food producer's suggestions for peak quality. If food smells, looks and tastes okay, it probably is.
- In the hustle of cooking a large meal it is easy to forget things you have in the oven. Make sure you set timers so that your dishes do not burn. It is never fun to have to throw out a dish due to over cooking.
- Freeze vegetable and meat scraps to make homemade stock or broth at a later date. If you can't make use of scraps, compost them.
- Turn your leftovers into new and different dishes. Often you can create dishes to freeze for later making a quick easy weeknight meal a few weeks down the line.
- Make sure people only put on their plate what they are actually going to eat. Make it easy for people to get seconds so they do not feel like they have to overload their plates. Have a prize for every person who has a clean plate by the end of the meal.

**AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS THROW OUT A
THIRD
OF THE FOOD THAT THEY BUY!**



GO ORGANIC

Supporting organic produce is good for our personal health and the health of our planet. Most people who choose organic do so because they wish to reduce the amount of synthetic chemicals they are feeding to their family. Worldwide, 6 billion pounds of pesticides are applied to food crops every year. Going organic makes agriculture healthier, not just for you, but for everyone downstream from where crops are grown.

Climate change has a direct effect on agriculture. According to a report from the FAO, organic agriculture not only enables ecosystems to better adjust to the effects of climate change but also offers a major potential to reduce the emissions of agricultural greenhouse gases.

You can take action and ask your legislators to support organic farming. Organic food sales account for more than 5 percent of total U.S. food sales, less than 1 percent of U.S. farmland is dedicated to organic agriculture. *The Homegrown Organic Act of 2017 (H.R. 3637)* would help farmers who want to switch to organic. The US has a huge demand for organics however current federal policies do not give farmers the resources they need to switch to organic farming. Producing more organics will not only help protect our environment, it will make healthy, homegrown, nutritious foods more accessible for more Americans.

REASONS TO EAT ORGANIC FOODS

- You reduce the amount of chemicals you eat
- Organic foods have more nutrients
- You will avoid hormones, antibiotics and drugs in animal products
- It helps preserve our ecosystems
- It reduces pollution and protects water and soil
- It just tastes better

EWG'S "DIRTY DOZEN"

THE TOP 12 CROPS THAT ARE MOST HEAVILY TREATED WITH PESTICIDES.

Strawberries

Spinach

Nectarines

Apples

Peaches

Pears

Cherries

Grapes

Celery

Tomatoes

Sweet bell peppers

Potatoes



Dear member of Congress,

We, the undersigned, urge you to support *The Homegrown Organic Act of 2017 (H.R. 3637)*

Organic agriculture preserves biodiversity, improves soil health, can significantly boost farmer incomes and saves energy – all the while saving American farmland from getting buried under tons of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. But *less than 1 percent* of our farmland is dedicated to growing organic crops.

If we helped more farmers and ranchers transition to organic, we’d not only protect the environment – we’d also make organic food grown in the U.S. more accessible for everyone, while at the same time expanding market opportunities for U.S. farmers and ranchers.

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Please return to Interfaith Power & Light. Fax: 415-561-4892 or Mail: 369 Pine Street, Suite 700, San Francisco, CA 94104

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