



Food miles

Today the food we eat is travelling increasing distances 'from field to fork'. We refer to these distances as 'food miles'.

By working through our Fair trade resources on bananas, pineapples and oranges, we can see that these products have travelled to the UK by air and by sea.

Did you know flying produce by air uses nearly 40 times the amount of fuel as sea transport?

We should be aiming for as few miles as possible. Choosing foods with fewer food miles helps reduce pollution and protects our planet.

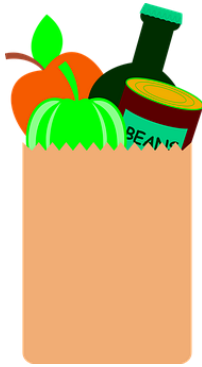
Exciting interactive exercise to explain food miles

To try to make children appreciate and understand how the foods we eat travel a great distance to get to our plate; try this simple exercise.

- Have a shopping bag full of a range of foods from around the world. These can be fruit, veg, spices, salad items, processed and canned goods.
- Try to have at least one product for each child in your class
- You can split the children into small groups or complete as a class exercise
- Print out a large world map, or have a map per group.
- Have access to the website <http://www.foodmiles.com> this will enable the children to calculate the miles the food in the shopping bag has travelled.
- Print off some country of origin & food miles calculator worksheets
- Whiteboard to share any thoughts

How to start

- Ask children which country they think most of the food they eat comes from?



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- Get the children to identify what product they have been given
- Ask each child to read the country of origin label to show where their product comes from
- Using the world map, find the country, write/ draw the product
- Write the country on a post-it and put on the whiteboard
- Additionally activity, you could find the flag for the country
- Each child completes their country of origin & food miles calculator worksheet
- Class discussion on the findings, make a graph showing the results

You can then go on to discuss the fact that many food have travelled thousands of miles.

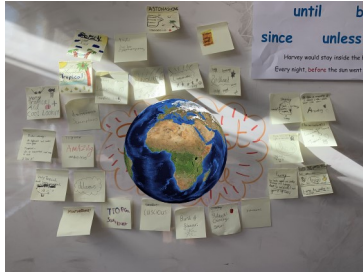
Ask the question?

Can any of the children think of the reasons why food has travelled so far?

- Discuss the reasons and put the answers on the whiteboard
- Some climates are suitable for certain crops such as bananas, tea and coffee
- Modern day refrigerated transport, preservatives and faster method of transport all mean that foods can survive longer
- The consumer of supermarket products, want to have access to all varieties of food all year round i.e. bananas

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Further activities:

- Brainstorm what could be done to reduce food miles on the whiteboard.

List could include:

- ⇒ Eating foods that are in season
- ⇒ Buying direct from local farmers
- ⇒ Buying from local markets, farm shops and local veg box schemes
- ⇒ Growing your own fruit and vegetables
- ⇒ Looking at local produce in supermarkets

When talking about food miles you might want to include the journey to and from the shop. If you travelled by car, bus or train, these all create carbon emissions and add to the food miles. Walking or cycling don't need to be counted and they are healthier too!

When the food is travelling, harmful gases like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and many more are being used thus creating pollution. Having to travel with the food makes the atmosphere change, as travelling drops many poisonous gases (which is dreadful for the environment). If the food is from the UK, they won't need to travel far.

Forests are being cut down, sometimes trees burned down to make fields for growing crops, transportation and development in countries abroad. This is called Deforestation. More than half of the world's forests are found in only five countries (the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America and China)