

FOOD – Tips for saving energy ‘every little helps’

- Comparisons are difficult given all the variables so remember these are only tips not facts.
- Use a smart meter to check your own energy use.

Deciding what to eat: -

More plant based - <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20220429-the-climate-benefits-of-veganism-and-vegetarianism> This discusses an experiment comparing a vegan diet, a vegetarian diet and an omnivore diet over two weeks with some interesting results. *It is estimated that a vegan diet produces 9.9kg of CO2 a week compared to 16.9 for a vegetarian diet and 48.9 for an omnivore diet.*

Less dairy – cheese is more carbon intensive than pork, poultry or farmed fish with hard cheese emitting more CO2 than soft cheese.

Seasonal fruit and veg.

Fewer processed items – important for vegans to remember!

Avoid exotic items such as pomegranate molasses that you will only use once

Check what's in the fridge and store cupboard

Write a weekly menu

Write a shopping list

Buying food

Grow your own!!

Shop locally

Shop at the Country Market on Thursdays

Buy loose fruit and vegetables

Only buy what you need

Avoid special offers that won't keep

Check country of origin – think of food miles

Storing food

Buy an energy efficient fridge/freezer. The Energy Saving Trust calculates that on average freezing and cooling our food accounts for around 13% of our energy use.

Close door of fridge/freezer quickly. Don't stand there with the door open deciding what to eat.

Organise shelves so items are easy to find.

Defrost regularly if appliance not frost free.

Keep freezer full but allowing air to circulate.

Cool food before you put it in the fridge or freezer.

Defrost frozen items in the fridge overnight as this helps cool the fridge. Nb this takes longer than a microwave or leaving the food out to defrost.

Cooking food

Appliances are used for different foods and cook at different speeds so it is impossible to make meaningful comparisons. The Energy savings Trust estimates that heating water and cooking accounts for 4% of the average household energy usage.

As a guideline electricity is more expensive than gas but more efficient.

Turn appliances off at the mains when not in use.

Use a microwave – for reheating food etc. To bake a potato in a microwave takes 10 minutes and costs 3p whereas this costs 27p in an electric oven.

Use a slow cooker – this uses about the same energy as a light bulb. But avoid using uncooked kidney beans!!

Use an air fryer – for chips, fried chicken

Use a pressure cooker – especially good for beans and pulses

Use a 3-tier steamer – good for vegetables & fish

Hobs – induction hobs are the most efficient, gas the least.

Cooking in an oven is the least efficient

Boiling water in an electric kettle is more efficient than on a hob but more expensive

Only use as much water as you need

Cut meat and vegetables into small pieces

Batch cook extra portions to eat later

Always cover pots and pans

Glass and ceramic pots retain more heat than metal pans

Pasta and rice will both cook if brought to the boil and then the heat turned off.! I tried with whole wheat pasta on a gas hob and it cooked perfectly. Brown basmati rice wasn't quite cooked.

Use the appropriate size pan

Clean your oven as a dirty oven takes longer to heat up and cooks less evenly

Avoiding waste

The average household in the UK threw away the equivalent of 8 meals a week in 2018.

Use your own judgement on sell by dates

Only buy what you need

Avoid buying exotic ingredients you only use once

Be imaginative with leftovers

Give surplus produce to a neighbour or friend

Bottle or pickle any surplus fruit or vegetables

Start your own compost bin