



JAN 29

Ways to reduce your food miles

In Australia we are incredibly fortunate to have the availability and choice of food items that we do, but being an expansive country and a continent of our own means our food can travel large distances to reach us.

Food miles are a metric used to calculate the distance food is transported from the grower to the consumer, then the distance the waste foods are transported from you to landfill. This calculation also takes into account the energy used to store, preserve and package food so that it arrives to you fresh. It's a lot to take into account when all you are trying to do is pick the best apple or orange from the basket but its value is an important factor used to assess the total environmental impact of food production and consumption.

The benefit of this knowledge is of course the ability to create energy savings through reduced transportation, but it also means that we consumers get fresher, better tasting food plus it is likely that through lowering food miles more financial resources will stay within our local and rural communities.

To save you doing the maths we have come up with seven simple ways to reduce your food miles.

1. Shop local - first and foremost, the simplest way to reduce your food miles is to buy those that are grown closest to you. Make a day of it and visit your local farmers market on the weekend or shop at your local produce store, who is more likely to source stock from smaller, more local growers.

If these aren't an option for you, when shopping at the supermarket check the label or packaging and buy Australian grown products.

2. Eat what is in season – logistically, in season food has less of a distance to travel equating to less food miles. It is also picked closer to its ripening age so is fresher and tastier plus being in season means its availability is in abundance so should also be cheaper to buy.

Comparatively, food that is sold out of the local season has to travel large distances in order to reach our plates, often internationally.

3. Get a veggie box delivered to your door – there are some fantastic organisations in Australia who have partnered with local farmers to prepare and deliver freshly picked, in season produce to people within their local region. It's a great initiative to reduce food miles, whilst supporting local growers and eat delicious, fresh food. Better yet you don't have to travel anywhere to get it.

4. Grow your own – the ultimate way to reduce your food miles is to grow your own. Whether it's a veggie patch in the backyard, a balcony garden or even a community allotment. In doing so you will be growing and eating in season produce and saving money on your groceries, whilst receiving the self-satisfaction of eating the fruits of your labour.

5. Composting – food miles do not only refer to how far your food travels to reach you, but it also takes into account how far your food waste travels away from you. One way to eliminate these miles is to compost your food scraps. It's simple! Store a small container in the kitchen specifically for composting. Once full, empty the scraps into a compost bin outside. Alternatively, there are all in one kitchen systems available on the market. Your compost bin will create a wonderful nutrient rich soil that is ideal for fertilising your garden. Even better on your veggie garden.

6. Ditch the plastic – reduce the amount of waste that needs to be taken to landfill by reducing or eliminating plastic. Remember your reusable shopping bags when you next do the groceries and invest in some good quality reusable food covers and bags to use instead of cling wrap and zip lock bags.

7. Make food from scratch – life gets busy for some whilst others are not confident in the kitchen, so we understand that under these circumstances convenience-based foods mean we eat. However, these types of food products have quite a significant amount of food miles. Primarily pre-packaged in plastic wrap, each ingredient is transported into a central location from their growing regions to be prepared before they are transported once again to the consumer. So, where possible why not try to prepare your meals from scratch? This way you have more control over each ingredient, plus they'll be fresher and tastier.



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