

## Calculate Your Ecological Footprint

### 13 Simple Questions to Quickly Calculate Your Use of Nature

Questionnaire ©1999 Redefining Progress  
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Instructions: This is a very basic questionnaire to calculate a quick and relatively accurate ecological footprint for an individual living in the US. For a more detailed analysis of individual ecological footprints or to learn more about the Ecological Footprint methodology and applications, please contact Redefining Progress at <http://www.rprogress.org>.

Enter your answers into the Ecological Footprint Calculator to calculate your ecological footprint. The Ecological Footprint Calculator was developed by the Center for a Sustainable Future as part of the Education for a Sustainable Future project. Visit <http://csf.concord.org/esf/> to download the Ecological Footprint Calculator software.

#### FOOD

##### Q1. Animal-based Products

Animal-based products (beef, chicken, pork, fish, eggs, dairy, etc.) provide 43 percent of the calories of the average American diet.

**How often do you eat animal-based products (incl. meat, eggs, dairy, and fish)?**

- Never (Vegan)
- Infrequently (a few times a week OR ovo-lacto vegetarian)
- Occasionally (once a day OR dairy-heavy ovo-lacto vegetarian)
- Frequently (at least some traces in every meal)
- A large part of every meal

##### Q2. Food Amounts

The average American eats approximately 3000 kilo-calories (kcal) every day (see calorie counter below). This diet is approximately equivalent to:

- \* eating cereal, toast, juice, and coffee for breakfast,
- \* a sandwich, yogurt, fruit, and a beverage for lunch,
- \* an afternoon snack, and
- \* a dinner with main course, side, and beverage, and a snack or dessert in the evening.

Given this general description of the average American diet, and the fact that individual caloric intake will depend on age, physical activity, body type, and other factors,

**How would you describe your average daily food intake?**

- much less than average (2400 or less kcal per day)
- somewhat less than average (2400 to 2800 kcal per day)
- average (2800-3200 kcal per day)
- somewhat more than average (3200-3600 kcal per day)
- much more than average (3600 or more kcal per day)

### Q3. Food Waste

In the United States, an average of 26% of food purchased is thrown out rather than eaten (due to spoilage as leftovers, table waste, etc.)

**How much of your purchased food is thrown out rather than eaten?**

- a. None
- b. About 5 percent is wasted
- c. About 10 percent is wasted
- d. About one quarter is wasted
- e. About one third is wasted
- f. About half is wasted

### Q4. Locally Grown Food

A significant portion of the energy cost of food production is spent on transporting food from harvest to market, and for processing, packaging, and storage. Growing food yourself or purchasing locally grown, in-season, unprocessed food can greatly reduce the need to expend energy in food production. Because it is often difficult to know where the food we buy has been produced, shopping at farmers' markets or buying directly from farmers is the best way to ensure that you are purchasing locally grown food, and to minimize your food footprint.

**How much of the food that you eat is locally grown, unprocessed and in-season?**

- a. Most food I buy is packaged and from far away.
- b. About a quarter
- c. About half
- d. About three quarters
- e. Most food I purchase is locally grown, unprocessed, and in season

## TRANSPORTATION

### Q5. Miles Driven per Year

The average American drives about 8,500 miles per year, or about 17,000 miles per car. Since not all Americans own cars, most automobile-owning Americans will drive more than 8,500 miles. Given these averages and your driving habits,

**How much do you travel by car each year, on average? (either as driver or passenger)**

- a. 15000 miles or more (300+ miles per week)
- b. 12000-15000 miles (250 miles per week)
- c. 9000-12000 miles (200 miles per week)
- d. 8000-9000 miles (170 miles per week)
- e. 5000-8000 miles (125 miles per week)
- f. 2000-5000 (75 miles per week)
- g. 2000 or less (40 miles per week or less)

Q6. Ride Sharing

**On average, how often do you drive with someone else (either your car or theirs)?**

- a. Almost never
- b. About 10% of the time
- c. About a quarter of the time
- d. About half the time
- e. About three quarters of the time
- f. Almost all the time

Q7. Fuel Efficiency

**How many miles per gallon does your car get?**

- a. More than 50 miles per gallon
- b. 35-50 miles per gallon
- c. 25-35 miles per gallon
- d. 15-25 miles per gallon
- e. Fewer than 15 miles per gallon

Q8. Public Transportation

**How many miles do you travel on public transportation (bus, rail) each week?**

- a. More than 200 miles per week (30+ miles per day)
- b. 100-200 miles per week (20 miles per day)
- c. 25-100 miles per week (10 miles per day)
- d. 15-25 miles per week (3 miles per day)
- e. Fewer than 15 miles per week (fewer than 2 miles per day)

Q9. Air Travel

The average American spends 4.8 hours flying on commercial airlines. This is approximately equivalent to one roundtrip flight between Washington D.C. and Chicago each year.

**How many hours each year do you spend flying?**

- a. 400 hours (approx one coast-to-coast US roundtrip each week)
- b. 100 hours (approx. one coast-to-coast US roundtrip every month)
- c. 50 hours (approx. one coast-to-coast US roundtrip every two months)
- d. 25 hours (approx. two or three coast-to-coast US roundtrips per year)
- e. 10 hours (approx. one coast-to-coast roundtrip per year)
- f. 5 hours (approx. one NYC-Chicago roundtrip per year)
- g. 2 hours
- h. Less than 2 hours
- i. Never fly

## HOUSING

**Q10. How many people live in your home?**

Answer:

**Q11 House Size.** The average single family house in the United States is around 2100 sq. ft. in area (total area, including multiple floors if applicable).

**How big is your home?**

- a. 10000 sq ft or more
- b. 5000-10000 sq ft
- c. 2500-5000 sq ft
- d. 1500-2500 sq ft
- e. 1000-1500 sq ft
- f. 500-1000 sq ft
- g. 500 sq ft or less

**Q12 Does your home purchase electricity from a "green" electricity provider (e.g., solar, wind, micro-hydro)?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**Q13 Do you use energy efficient appliances and lightbulbs?**

- a. always
- b. most of the time
- c. half the time
- d. some of the time
- e. never