



Caring for Creation Cookery Book

St Vincent's Chaplaincy
Algarve, Portugal

THE CARING FOR CREATION DIET



We are all now aware of the importance of caring for God's Creation, our beautiful Planet Earth. Many of us have taken steps to improve our Carbon Footprint, but others remain puzzled, and are unsure as to what they can do to help, or at least what are the options which might be acceptable/affordable for them.

Because let's be clear, caring successfully will involve all of us in some expense, some loss and a reduction in some personal freedom for the cause. But isn't that just what Christianity is all about? It's not about doing exactly what we want, it's about giving up selfishness, something of ourselves, for the good of others.

Matthew 16 v 24 ***"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."***

One thing we all do is eat! And our eating habits have an amazing effect on our carbon footprint. Many of us understand that a vegan diet is good for the planet but can't bring ourselves to embrace it with restrictions in selection that we have never experienced, and that we aren't prepared to sign up to. And anyway, there are genuine difficulties which might occur such as vitamin B12 deficiencies, without wishing to go into a tortuous argument on the subject. However, overall, Vegan diets have a positive health impact, see [this healthline article](#).

But what is clear (see chart page 3) is that eating red meat and dairy foods from ruminant animals – cows, sheep, goats, has a huge and undesirable effect which we need to balance. Stopping, or at least severely reducing our consumption of these foods, will have an incredibly positive benefit on our planet and on human life on it. 1 John 3 v.11 tells us, ***"For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another."***

Bishop Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich in his speech at last week's Synod, called for reviving the ancient Christian tradition of "meat-free Fridays" which would help worshippers tackle climate change.

He said *"Eating vegetarian or fish-based meals on Fridays would help the Church of England on its quest to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030."*

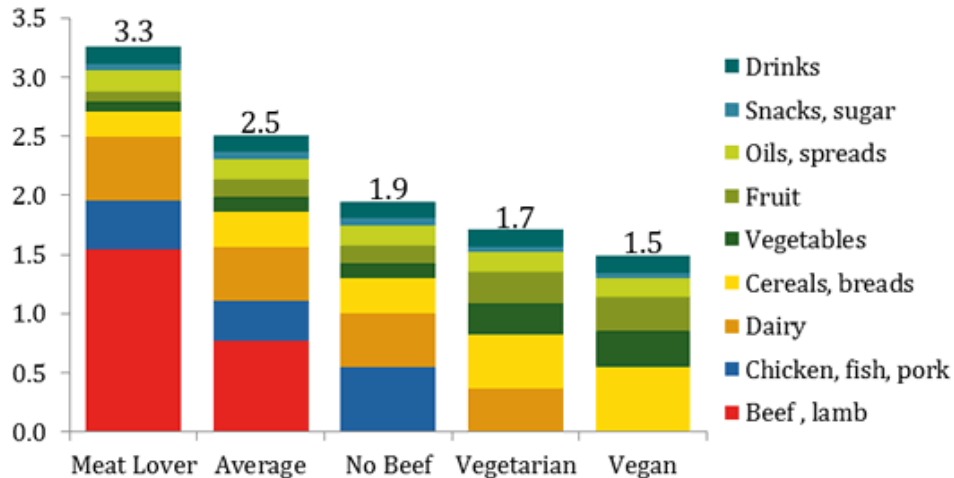


An abbot and his monks enjoying a meal of fish (Alamy)

If all the Church of England's 854,000 regular worshippers cut out meat every Friday for a year, they could save more than 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, research suggests, equivalent to about 60,000 return flights from London to New York.

If all those nationwide who identify as Anglican —about eight million people, according to the latest British Social Attitudes Survey — observed the practice it could save 380,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year."

Foodprints by Diet Type: t CO₂e/person



Note: All estimates based on average food production emissions for the US. Footprints include emissions from supply chain losses, consumer waste and consumption. Each of the four example diets is based on 2,600 kcal of food consumed per day, which in the US equates to around 3,900 kcal of supplied food.

Sources: ERS/USDA, various LCA and EIO-LCA data



As followers of Jesus, we should always look to him for an example, and if we do, we will see that diet-wise, Jesus had a healthy and low carbon footprint. What did Jesus eat? He ate local food only: no strawberries came in from Peru; no lamb from New Zealand; no beef from Argentina or Japan; no tuna from the Pacific. Bread was the staple, it was coarse and gritty, made from local barley. It was hard and the grit wore down your teeth. It was best dunked in water, soup, or wine.

There were local fruits and vegetables. The fruit could be lovely, figs, dates, pomegranate, grapes, peaches, olives. All were only eaten in season, all fresh. Often people ate soups and stews, mainly vegetarian, usually with lentils and beans. Clearly in Galilee and Capernaum there was fish. Jesus was given a meal of fish after his resurrection, and we have the two miracles of the loaves and fishes. Maybe lamb for special occasions, Passover, but the poor people (of which Jesus was one) could not afford beef, only perhaps a little if lucky. Pork wasn't allowed, maybe there was rabbit, fowl or goat on occasions. A little dairy. These was very little waste – they simply couldn't afford it. Few people who are starving waste anything. Like Jesus, many of us should be eating more of all these now than we are at present.

Julian Allwood is Professor of Engineering and the Environment, and Director of the Use Less Group, University of Cambridge. He held a live-stream event in conjunction with the Church Times at Ely Cathedral on 20 September 2022, at which he pointed out “...that by 2050, we must phase out all ruminants (lamb, beef, dairy), because they all cause emissions regardless of how they are powered or fed.” He went on to explain the need for restraint for the sake of our grandchildren. Whilst it might seem difficult to cut out dairy, there are about 40 million Americans and 9 million Brits who are Lactose intolerant, and must avoid dairy, so there is a huge industry around this, and many substitute products are available which can be substituted with only a little effort. Read more at [Pros and Cons of dairy-free diets](#) .

*...all Christians should look to follow the Caring for Creation Diet: **C**hristian, **C**aring, **C**reation, (for our) **C**hildren. A diet to save our planet.*

So, I would argue that all Christians should look to follow the Caring for Creation Diet: **C**hristian, **C**aring, **C**reation, (for our) **C**hildren. A diet to save our planet. Even some of the great chefs like [Marco Pierre White](#) are reducing meat in their top restaurants and finding suitable, planet-friendly alternatives.

Limiting ruminant meat or dairy products, perhaps only one or two portions each a week, would shrink our personal footprint down from what it is at present to very close to that of a vegan (see middle column of foodprints, which still contains dairy) Eat local food, in season. Nothing that is imported, frozen, and very little that is processed (and that is good for one’s own health and longevity, let alone one’s own purse). Go to the local producers, local markets. Ask the fishermen for fresh catch, think about having your own chickens. If you occasionally do have waste, feed it to your animals or compost and recycle it.



Veggie Chilli (recipe page 6)

St Vincent's Chaplaincy is planning a "Cookbook" of our favourite meals that fulfill these criteria. We will make this available "on-line" and if it is popular, we can produce a book. We'd love to have other Chaplaincies, Churches and Christians share their favourite recipes with us for publication. All those used will be

acknowledged, and if you'd like a photo of yourself or your Church, please supply one with the recipe, and send to tricia.d.wells@gmail.com . No beef, dairy, lamb, goat recipes please. Local foods, lots of fish, eggs, chicken. Perhaps some pork. And many vegan and vegetarian recipes that you think will inspire people to enjoy this healthy way of life for our planet.

This season of Lent we could all make a commitment on our food choices.

A bit of denial would help our waistlines, our heart, and our faith. As well as being an important contribution to saving our planet.

So have a look at these links to advise on substitute recipes in the meantime. [Live, eat and learn to reduce your carbon footprint](#). And not forgetting [dairy free desserts](#) .

And remember to send us your choice!



References

[Reducing our Carbon footprint through healthy eating](#)

[The net-zero transition and sustainable land use, World Economic Forum](#)

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VEGETARIAN CHILLI

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 2 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed or finely grated
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- *2 tsp chilli powder
- 2 tsp sweet smoked paprika
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 400g can red kidney beans, drained
- 400g can black beans, drained
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
- 400ml vegetable stock
- grated vegetarian cheddar and plant-based cream, to serve

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a low-medium heat and fry the carrots, celery, onions and mixed herbs for 10-12 mins, stirring occasionally until the veg is soft but not golden. You may need to add a splash of water if the veg starts to catch.
2. Stir in the garlic and both peppers, and cook for a further 5 mins until the peppers begin to soften. Sprinkle in the chilli powder and paprika, turn up the heat to medium, then stir and cook for 1 min. Mix in the tomato purée and cook for a further 1 min, then pour in all of the beans, the tomatoes and stock.
3. Stir well, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook for 25-35 mins until the beans are tender and the sauce has thickened. Serve with rice, grated cheddar and soured cream, if you like.

* Chilli powders vary in strength so start with ½ teaspoon and add more to taste