

# Yolo Earth Day Pledge Challenge 2023



## Eat Thoughtfully Guide Updated July 6, 2023

Eating thoughtfully means being aware of the environmental and other impacts of food choices and aligning those choices with your values.

Plant-based eating means eating less meat and more whole, plant-based foods. Plant-based is not the same as vegetarian or vegan. Putting plants like legumes, beans, soy, and garden veggies at the heart of your plate means lower greenhouse gas emissions and better health.

### WHY EAT THOUGHTFULLY?

Some of the benefits of plant-based eating include lower emissions, improved health, better stewardship of water resources, protection of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, and reduced deforestation and land degradation.

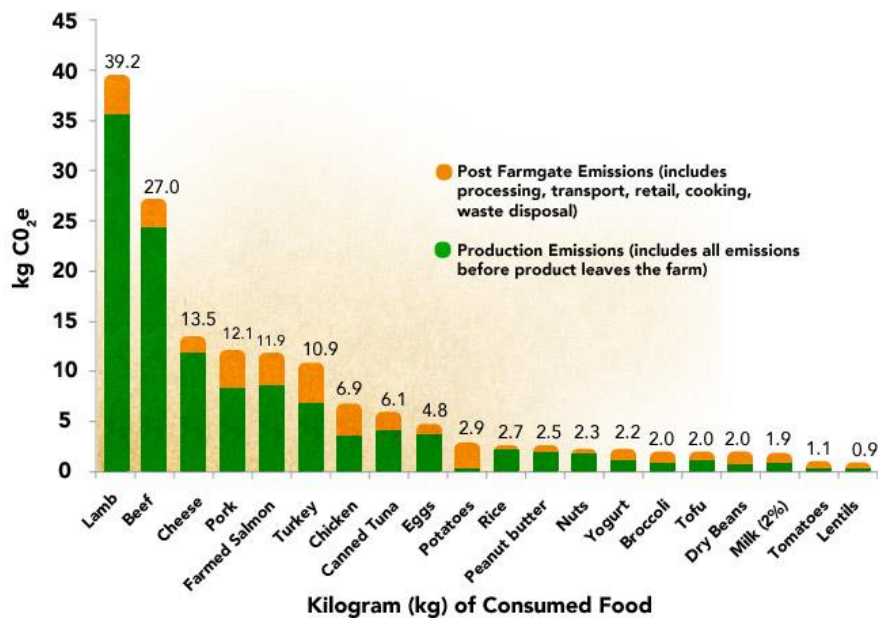
*"Not only is there a broad expansion of the research database supporting the myriad benefits of plant-based diets, but also health care practitioners are seeing awe-inspiring results with their patients across multiple unique subspecialties" [Kaiser] Permanente Journal.*

Deforestation is a leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions. Rainforests are cleared or burned at an alarming rate to make room for cattle pasturage especially in South America, Asia, and Australia. According to the USDA, much of the meat product consumed in the US is imported, often of least quality. According to Our World in Data, cattle and pigs make up 47% of total global mammal biomass; humans come in at 34%, and wild mammals constitute only 4% of mammal biomass, and that includes whales! There's more livestock on this planet than humans, and there are about 7 billion of us!

Seafood has its own severe impacts to biodiversity and ocean health.

Palm oil also has emissions impacts! Rainforests mainly in Southeast Asia are burned to make room for palm tree plantations. Replacing rainforest with palm trees threatens different 321 species.

Food waste is a widespread problem in the US. In 2021, the USEPA estimated that over a third of food produced here is never eaten. Most of it ends up in landfills, where it is either incinerated or left to decompose, releasing carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere. Food waste has several additional environmental consequences, including wasted water and unnecessary use of pesticides and herbicides.

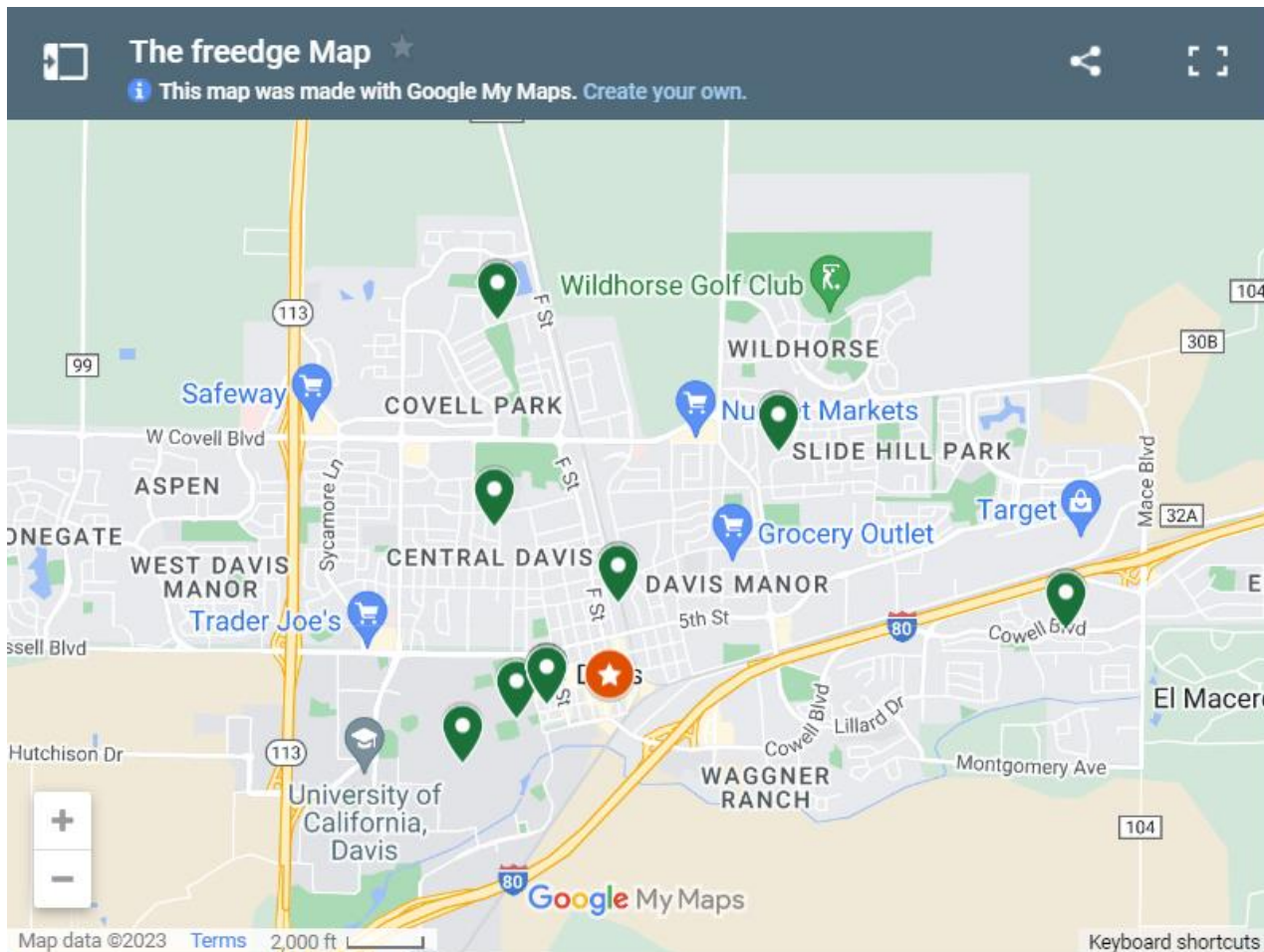


## TRY AN EASY ONE

Watch a documentary about plant-based eating from our series or choose one of your own, there are probably thousands at this point!

1. **Eating Our Way to Extinction (2021)** Full film FREE (YouTube)
2. **The Invisible Vegan (2019)** Full film for purchase on [independent filmmakers](#) Vimeo site (\$3.99)
3. **What the Health (2017)** Full film available on Netflix and Youtube

# STRATEGIZE TO MINIMIZE FOOD WASTE



There's a lot we can do to prevent food waste:

- Check the fridge before you shop to avoid buying more than you need
- Collect recipes for overripe fruits and veggies (banana bread, jams, soups, veggie frittatas or stir fries, etc.)
- Freeze meats and food you're not likely to eat before it spoils
- Freeze meals in glass containers for future fast and easy dinners
- Donate to freedges around Davis (visit [www.freedge.org](http://www.freedge.org) for a map)
- Track items that you tend to get overbought in your household
- Set up a food-sharing system with neighbors: share excess supply and borrow when in need
- [Compost](#) when all else fails! Free [food scrap pails](#) from City of Davis
- Volunteer with [Community Harvest of Davis](#), the [Davis Night Market](#), or [Woodland Community Harvest](#) to extend your commitment!

You can save money, water, and our shared environment while saving food.

## AVOID PALM OIL STARTING WITH LABELS

Palm oil is found in makeups, shampoos, soaps, candles, and about half of all commercial products. You can help decrease demand for palm oil by avoiding these products in your personal life.

Unfortunately, there are over 300 different terms companies may use to reference palm oil. Look for product ingredients containing the word fragments "palm," "stear," "glyc" or "lauryl." Common derivatives of palm oil include vitamin A palmitate (in many milks), vitamin E, glycerol, and glycerin. Occasionally, natural flavors and citric acid can indicate palm oil.

Search the [Skin Deep database](#) to search for products that list palm oil and the names of 20 ingredients that include palm oil.

### More reading

<https://climate.nasa.gov/ask-nasa-climate/1144/palm-oil-a-climate-change-culprit/>

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346680422\\_The\\_environmental\\_impacts\\_of\\_palm\\_oil\\_in\\_context/link/5fd0d94ca6fdcc697bf00462/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346680422_The_environmental_impacts_of_palm_oil_in_context/link/5fd0d94ca6fdcc697bf00462/download)

## PLANT-BASED EATING: START SMALL

New eating habits take time, but the positive impacts can live with you for the rest of your life. Start by thinking about what you eat and why you eat it.

- Do you feel good after meals?
- Do you enjoy meals or are they rushed affairs?
- Do you know where your food comes from?
- Were the animals raised humanely?
- What's the nutritional value of the food you eat?
- Are you eating a lot of filler food or food packed with nutrients?



Are you at risk for any health conditions that might be exacerbated by poor diet?

**Eat at restaurants in Davis that offer plant-based options!** Restaurants include Musette, Three Ladies Café, Zim Cuisine, Burger Patch, Yeti, Preethi, Bones Craft Kitchen, Peet's Coffee, Ding How, Ike's Love and Sandwiches, Kathmandu, Casablanca, Blaze Pizza, Woodstock's Pizza, and Chipotle. Taquerias usually serve bean burritos with guacamole and salsa.

Join the **Yolo Vegan Chef Challenge** when it rolls around again. [Learn more](#)

## Don't Sweat the Protein

Don't worry about getting enough protein! Most Americans consume way more protein than they need. Tree nuts and legumes, including navy beans, English peas, edamame, peanuts, and split peas, are great sources of protein, but not everyone knows that vegetables and whole grains provide protein, too.

Small quantities of meat might be fine. However, processed meats like bacon, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausage can contain unhealthy fats and chemicals. If you do eat red meat on occasion, it's best to eat small amounts of lean cuts.

**Reduce dairy intake.** Try reducing dairy intake by replacing dairy milk with plant-based milk. For milkshakes, substitute soy, almond, or oat milk. You can also prepare overnight oats or hot chocolate with plant-based milk. If you love cheese, try reducing the amount of cheese you use in recipes.

## PLANT-BASED EATING: GET SERIOUS

Some of the more challenging actions in the pledge involve plant-based eating. The first two below anyone can do, but the second two take a deeper commitment. Because reducing the amount of greenhouse gas intensive meats you eat makes a big difference, the first two are still significant!

- Eat a meatless meal 3 times per week
- Set up a monthly plant-based meal or potluck with friends or family
- Give up or significantly reduce high impact foods like beef, pork, lamb, or dairy
- Switch to a vegetarian or plant-based diet

**Start with the plants.** Select the vegetables you want to include in your meal first and fill at least a quarter of your plate with them. Pour healthful sauces over steamed broccoli and cauliflower and encourage the kids to let you know about their favorites. Try to include vegetables in every meal. Snack on baked

sweet potato slices, carrots, or sugar snap peas. Vegetable juices and smoothies are fun to whip up.

**Create a pattern.** Aim for a day of the week to go meatless and stick to it, like Mondays or Fridays. If you currently eat meat five days a week, try reducing that to three days.

**Rethink the role of meat.** Skip the meat entirely when the other items capture your interest. When you do prepare meat, make it a side dish instead of the main course.

**Call in the substitutes.** Sliced, sautéed mushrooms and seared tofu are nice replacements for ground meat in meatloaf, tacos, chili, and pasta sauce. Add layers of cooked greens or butternut squash to lasagna.

**Getting warmer.** The USDA recommends about 50 grams of protein per day for adults, and you can easily fulfill this with plants!

Parents already know that lots of meatless meals kids love also come with tons of protein: veggie stir-fry with noodles and peanut or tahini sauce, almond butter sandwiches, whole grain cereals with milk (try soy or almond milk), and burritos filled with beans and rice.

Other protein quantities might surprise you!

- Barley contains about 23 grams of protein per cup
- Lentils and quinoa clock in at about 18 grams per cup
- Buckwheat (soba) noodles 6 grams per cup
- Beans range from 12 to 20 grams per cup
- Nuts about 16 to 24 grams per cup

**Search for recipes.** There's a huge variety of plant-based recipes out there. You can watch YouTube videos or search the web. Purchasing a plant-based cookbook is a plus! Peruse some online recipe sites below:

- [Clean Food Dirty Girl](#)
- [Happy Cow](#) find vegan/vegetarian restaurants when traveling
- [Monkey and Me Kitchen Adventures](#)
- [Post Punk Kitchen – Isa Chandra Moskowitz](#)
- [The Vegan 8](#)
- [Oh, She Glows](#)
- [Straight Up Food](#)
- [VegWeb.com](#) veg\*n recipes, chat, community

- [Those Vegan Chefs](#) two former Davis residents, some really creative ideas and tricks of the trade, terrific videos
- [Minimalist Baker](#) interesting, fun, easy to follow recipes, baked goods turn out excellent if you follow the recipes exactly
- [Detoxinista](#) real food made fast and easy (try [Almond Flour Cookies](#))
- [Plant Based on a Budget](#) affordable, delicious, simple ingredients
- [Simple Veganista](#) a range of simple meals and desserts

**Try plant-based meats for cravings.** If you crave the taste or texture of meat, explore the plant-based meat section the next time you find yourself at the grocery store. You can also try ordering plant-based at fast food places: Burger King Impossible Whopper, McDonalds PLT, and Carl's Jr. Beyond Famous Star. TGI Friday's, Red Robin, The Cheesecake Factory, and the Hard Rock Café all carry a plant-based burger. However, be advised that these products are not necessarily healthful, they are just intended to have lower greenhouse gas emissions.

**Spread the word.** Get your family and friends to follow along with your journey of eating plant based. Share your favorite plant-based recipes with others. Host a plant-based potluck.

## More Resources

- [NutritionFacts.org](#) – Dr. Michael Greger – author of "How Not To Die"
- Guide to Eat Green  
<https://takethejump.org/s/Guide-to-Eat-Green.pdf>
- Cool Davis Plant Based Eating web page  
<https://www.cooldavis.org/cool-solutions/plant-based-eating/>



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 #YoloEarthDayPledge2023 @cooldaviscity  
 Email [coolsolution@cooldavis.org](mailto:coolsolution@cooldavis.org)  
 for more info  
 Sign up here thru July 31, 2023:  
<http://www.cooldavis.org/pledge>

