

## Transition Scilly briefings

*Simplifying difficult issues*



TRANSITION  
S C I L L Y

# Food

Food is an essential part of life, affecting our wellbeing, society, landscape, climate and much more besides. We make ethical choices every day with the food we eat, so we need to be very conscious of the impacts of our food choices.

### There's no such thing as cheap food

“Cheap” is a word that symbolises our consumer-based society and our fixation on price at the expense of everything else. Food is a good reminder that there is no such thing as cheap, because what appears cheap at the checkout is simply masks ecological and/or social costs elsewhere.

The true cost of food is found not at the checkout, but in how that food production affects the landscape, whether it supports or diminishes wildlife, how people are treated in employment and the health of the nation.

[Find out more](#) →

[Eric Shlosser on the true costs of food  
Resurgence: Subsidised theft](#)

### Motivating factors

For most people price is at least one consideration in what food we buy. Many people are concerned about other issues too, such as Fairtrade, organic, taste and health. These issues don't have to be mutually exclusive and are often to be found rolled in to one. But understanding what the motives are behind your food purchases allows you to see the wider issues more clearly.

### Fairtrade

This is a social standard, guaranteeing better prices for producers in developing countries. Popular products include coffee, tea, bananas, chocolate and wine. Products must be certified: look out for the [Fairtrade Foundation](#) logo



### Fairtrade

**Pros:** Improves life for farmers, growers and workers  
**Cons:** no guarantee of environmental conditions or carbon emissions

[Find out more](#) →

[See how producers directly benefit from Fairtrade](#)

[www.transitionscilly.org.uk](http://www.transitionscilly.org.uk)

## Organic

**Pros:** good animal welfare, good for soil and wildlife, taste often noticeably better, food better quality  
**Cons:** doesn't necessarily mean local – check labels

## Organic

Organic food and farming has been the centre of attention for a few years, and not without good justification. Its high levels of animal welfare, concern for soil and wildlife and food quality are all reasons to buy organic. But bear in mind that because almost any food product can be organic, study carefully where it comes from – it's now international trade.



All organic food must be certified – look out for symbols such as Soil Association. It's the only legally-defined form of food production.

[Find out more](#) ➔

[10 reasons to eat organic](#)

## Wholefoods

Wholefoods are simply foods that have been processed in a minimal way. This includes dried pulses, nuts, seeds, grains and fruits; also all fresh foods - fruit, vegetables, meat, fish and dairy products. This is, of course, how food has always been presented in the kitchen; tins of soup and microwave meals are a very modern invention in the course of human history!

## Wholefoods

**Pros:** better for health, cheaper, makes you cook, lower carbon emissions than processed  
**Cons:** Takes time to prepare and a change of attitude

Using wholefoods does require some cooking and planning, but it has huge health, financial, social and environmental benefits.

[Find out more](#) ➔

[BBC Food: Cooks guide to food types](#)

## Local

Eating food that has been produced local to you reduces food miles, allows you to eat seasonally and gives you a relationship with the people who farmed, caught or grew it. It's also often cheaper than food from supermarkets because it has been transported far or highly packaged.

## Local

**Pros:** seasonal, lower carbon emissions, more personal, cheaper  
**Cons:** can be hard to access, no certification – ask questions

Local is a term much used about food but not often defined. To some people it means food from less than a mile away, to others it may imply food from a certain region. You do therefore have to be scrupulous about exactly where it is produced, and talk to producers where possible.

[Find out more](#) ➔

[Soil Association: local food](#)

[Slow Food: good, clean and fair](#)

[BBC Food: What's in season](#)