



Healthy People, Healthy Planet

Thinking About Food Miles

This activity gives students the opportunity to think about just how far food has to travel to get to us and the impact this could have on the environment. It also opens discussion of ways to reduce food miles and carbon footprint.

You will need;

- World Map
- Food miles flags (available pages 3 - 4)
- Food miles total poster (page 5)

To prepare;

- The flags – 10 in total (available here) – can be mounted on poles (could use straws?) or can just be used as they are. They are designed so that they can be printed, folded and glued to produce a double-sided flag.

Ask the students if they have heard of food miles. Ask them what they think it could mean?

Food miles is the number of miles a food has travelled to get to us.

Using the foods below, as an example, place the food miles flags (pages 3- 4) on the map.

Orange from Florida	-	4189 miles
Banana from Kenya	-	4572 miles
Coconut from The Philippines	-	6685 miles
Kiwi-fruit from New Zealand	-	11,326 miles

To drive home just how far this food has travelled, show the total slide (page 5).

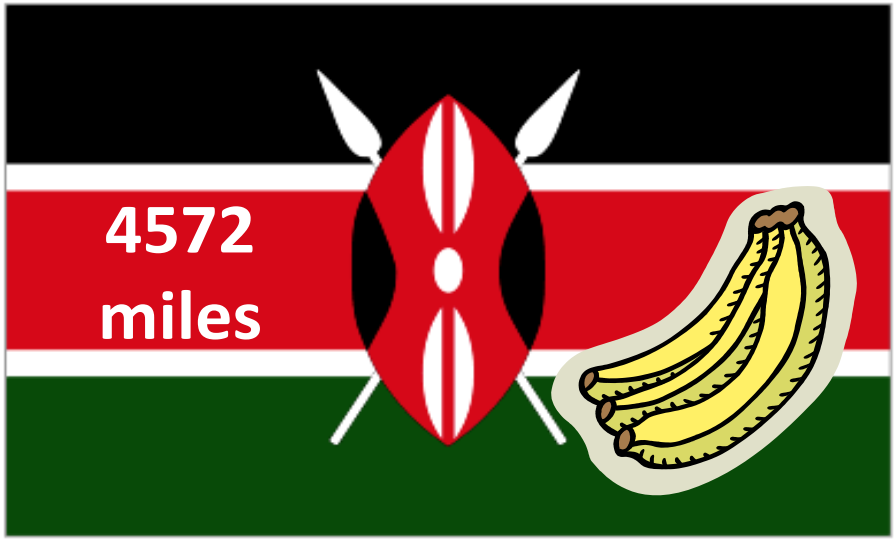
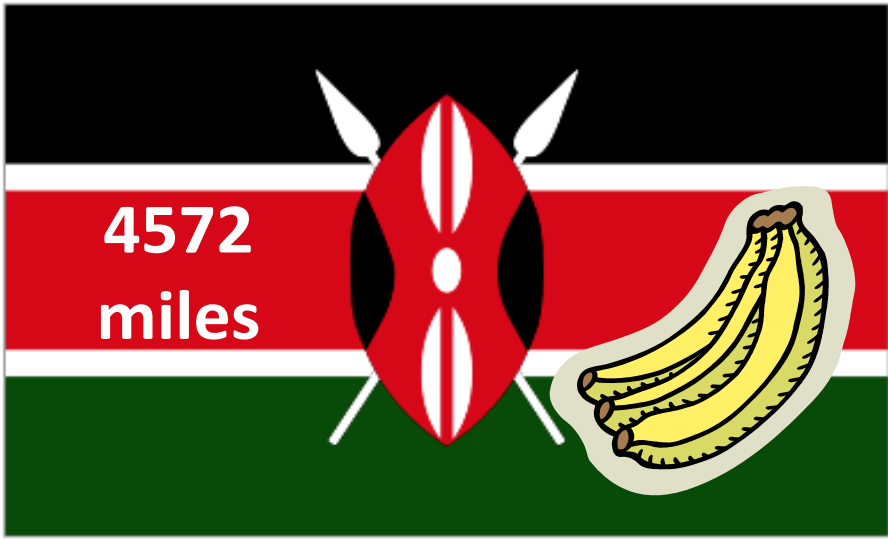
Total = 26,772 miles

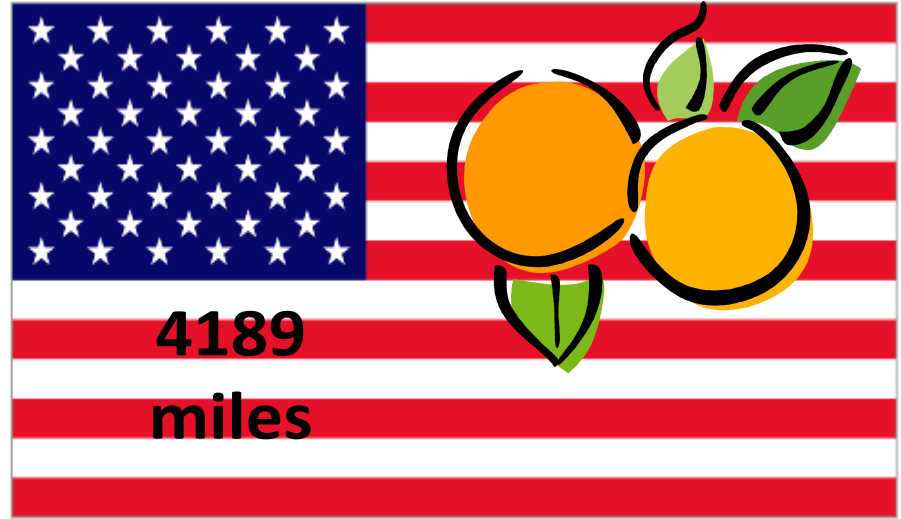
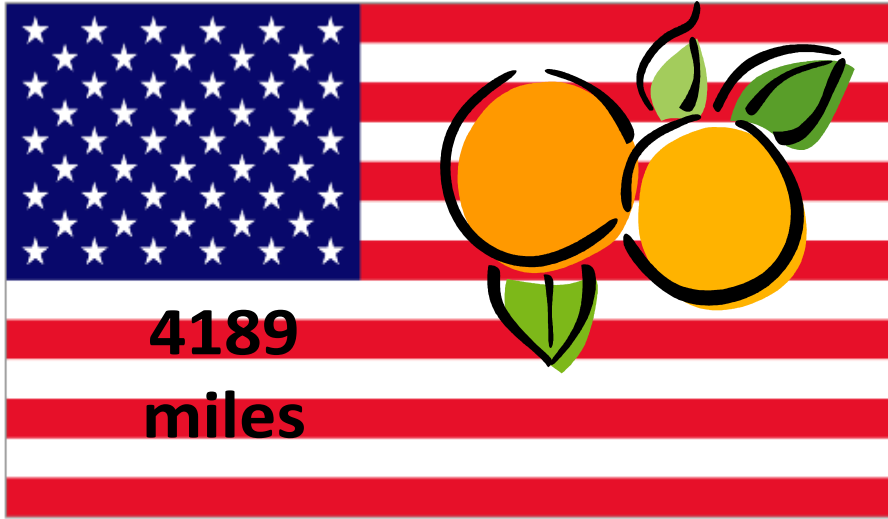
To give an idea of how to reduce food miles, use the example of making a fruit salad with the foods above. If the coconut and kiwi-fruit (which have travelled the furthest) were substituted with Scottish strawberries and raspberries, the fruit salad would be tastier and cheaper and the effect on the environment would be far less because more of the food was sourced locally.

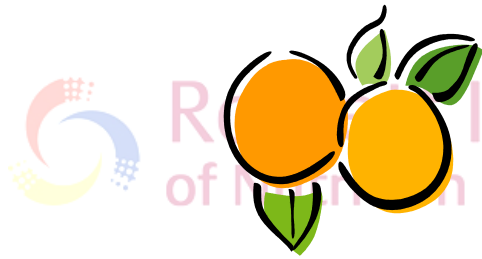
Obviously the idea is not to dissuade students from eating any foods that come from far away, it is just to make them consider choosing a local alternative if there is one available.



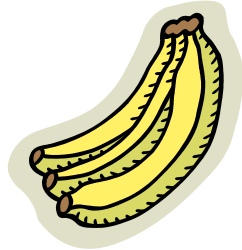
It is important at this point to mention that food miles are not the only point to consider when looking at damage to the environment. For example, if we were to grow tomatoes in the UK to meet our demand all year round, the heated greenhouses required would produce 2 - 3kg CO₂ per kg tomatoes whereas, tomatoes grown in Spain and transported to the UK produce only 240g CO₂ per kg tomatoes.







4189 miles



+ 4572 miles



+ 6685 miles



+ 11326 miles

Total

26772 miles
