

# Palm Oil

## What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil that comes from the fruit of oil palm trees.

## What Products Contain Palm Oil?

Palm oil is found in a huge number of packaged supermarket products, from bread, cakes, doughnuts and chocolate, to deodorant, shampoo and cosmetics e.g.



## Why do we use Palm Oil?

Palm oil is an incredibly efficient crop as it produces more oil per land area than any other equivalent vegetable oil crop. It also doesn't require as many fertilisers or pesticides as other common alternatives. It is odourless, colourless, and resistant to oxidation giving foods containing it a longer shelf life.

## Is Palm Oil good for the environment?

Palm oil production is considered to be a major driver of deforestation of the world's most bio-diverse forests. A global average of 8kg of palm oil is consumed by each individual per year and in order to produce palm oil, it is said that the equivalent of 300 football fields of rainforests are cleared every hour. It is wiping out the habitat of endangered species such as Orangutan, pygmy elephants and Sumatran rhino.

However, to get the same amount of alternative oils you would need between 4 and 10 times more land and there are millions of smallholder farmers who depend on producing palm oil for their livelihoods. Boycotting palm oil is therefore not the solution.

## What can be done?

Palm oil can be produced more sustainably. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil or RSPO was formed in 2004 in response to increasing concerns about the impacts palm oil was having on the environment and on society. The RSPO is a voluntary global membership organisation that unites stakeholders from the palm oil industry to develop and implement global standards for the production and procurement of sustainable palm oil.

## What can I do?

**Check the label:** Try to buy food marked with a sustainable palm oil logo



**Download a free app:** There are various apps available for your mobile phone which will tell you if the product you are about to buy contains palm oil and whether it is sustainably produced e.g.

Palm oil Scanner

CodeCheck: Food & Beauty Product Scanner

Giki