

FOOD HABITS THAT REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Low-carbon diet includes eating less industrially produced food, eating food grown locally and seasonally, eating less processed and packaged foods and reducing waste from food by proper portion size, recycling or composting.

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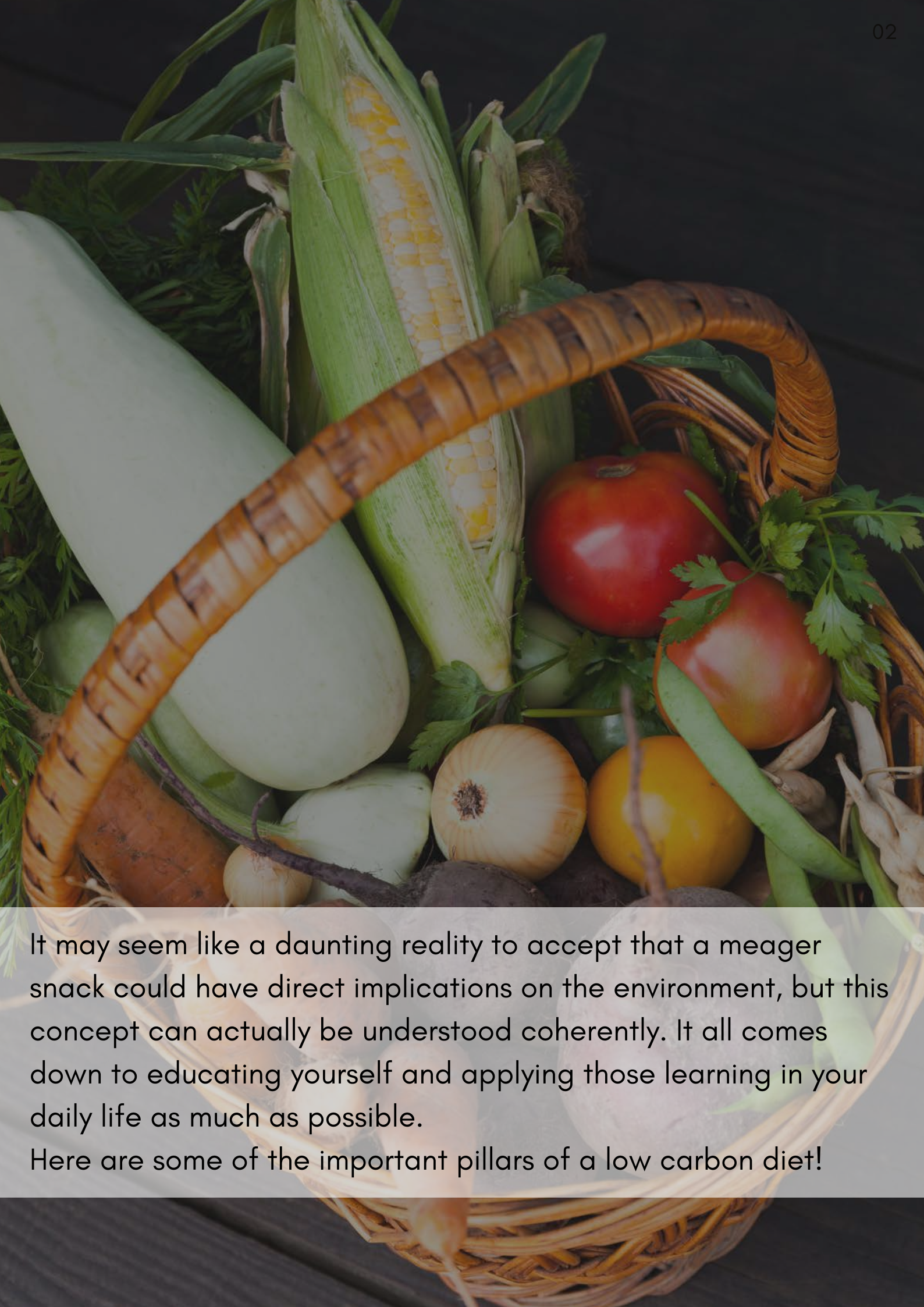
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WHY SHOULD WE CHOOSE A LOW CARBON DIET?

For the majority of the day, we find ourselves sitting on a chair, trying to attend a dull online class or a work meeting and ever so often we get distracted. Distracted by the myriad of snacks in our pantry and in that moment of weakness all we get is a handful of chips, a ton of air that we paid for and a plastic wrapper that won't leave for another hundred years. This mounts on for days on the earth, in your pantry and in your body. But you are what you eat right? Extending that concept further, we land on low carbon foods, where what you eat is not just confined to you. A low carbon diet focuses mainly on tweaking your diet with respect to its impact on the earth.



It may seem like a daunting reality to accept that a meager snack could have direct implications on the environment, but this concept can actually be understood coherently. It all comes down to educating yourself and applying those learning in your daily life as much as possible.

Here are some of the important pillars of a low carbon diet!



Not boring, just conscious!

There are numerous diets that promise a healthy and quick result in exchange with buying expensive produce and drastic dietary changes. But formulating a diet that's best for you and the environment should not be a painstaking task. The first tangible change would be to switch to a plant based diet. This does not necessarily mean adapting to vegetarianism or a vegan diet. Frozen meat amounts to extensive depletion of resources due meat farming, packaging and storage. Meat is not out of bounds, it is just being taken out of the spotlight. You can choose to swap out the majority of meat centric meals per week with more vegetable or lentil or nut based meals, that can equally substitute the nutrient and protein quotients.



There are a number of substitutes rich in protein available in India such as spinach, cashews, almonds, cauliflower, quinoa, broken wheat, chana dal, toovar dal, sprouted moong etc. Mushrooms and tofu are popular replacements of meat as they replace its texture and flavour intensity. A plant based diet can, hence, help reduce your carbon footprint and provide you with necessary nutrients, saving you from pernicious effects of meat consumption.

These steps can be used to replace store bought snacks packed in non-degradable materials with healthy and easy homemade snacks. This is a perfect way to watch what you eat, know every step of the way and make sure that you are generating less waste for the environment.



Sweet Potato Chips

One such snack that is easy to make and light on the earth are sweet potato chips. It includes a two-step process and you can use the entire vegetable, hence, generating zero waste. Toss sliced sweet potato in olive oil, chilli powder and salt or any seasoning according to your taste. Preheat the oven at 200°C. Line a tray with a silicon baking sheet and slightly oil it. Lay the tossed slices on the tray and bake for 10 mins on one side. Flip them and bake them for about 3-5 mins depending on the shape or thinness of your slices. The same can be done using potato, carrot and beetroot.



Don't buy your food an airline ticket!

We are constantly surrounded by amazing food pictures from all around the globe on the internet, magazines and newspapers. Supermarket chains promote the supply of exotic ingredients to cook a picture-perfect dish, but we really need to stop and evaluate the necessity of these ingredients. Do we really need exotic vegetables which have travelled hundreds of kilometers in a cold storage truck for that one dinner? Food brands market all sorts of processed ingredients as 'healthy' and 'low-fat' and it is difficult to not get tempted and give in. But cooking is not just about following a recipe which someone came up with in a different part of the world, with a bunch of ingredients available to them but to experiment and improvise with what we have. So, the next time you want to buy a 'low-fat' salad dressing just grind a few spoons full of curd, cilantro and salt, and you have a healthier, non-processed, home-made salad dressing in minutes.



Eat Seasonally!

If you find yourself standing in a vegetable market thinking of buying a bunch of blueberries or some colorful bell peppers just take a moment and think if you really need that ingredient in your pantry. We often come across the term eat seasonal but what does it actually constitute? It is a very simple concept which is focused on increasing the consumption of ingredients which are grown in a particular climate and region. So, if you are someone who does not buy frozen peas in summer then you are pretty much on the right track. Eating seasonally not just reduces your carbon footprint but also helps in supporting local farmers and makes you a valuable part of the ecosystem.



Try Old school!

If you ask your parents or grandparents about their cooking habits growing up, you will realize it was widely based on techniques which were sustainable. This might be due to minimal involvement of electronic appliances and these cooking habits were more sustainable than the ones we have today. There are a number of dishes that can be prepared without using gas stoves or ovens. This is one of the easiest ways to keep the carbon footprint of your kitchen in check by conserving energy. Although you can use some eco-friendly appliances, you can always give it a rest and try something new at the same time. Here are some easy and eco-friendly recipes that you can try!

Dry fruit Bar

Ingredients

- 1 cup dates (khajoor)
- 1 tbsp ghee
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- ½ cup dry grated coconut
- ¼ cup cashew
- ¼ cup almonds
- ¼ cup walnuts
- ¼ cup
- raisins
- ½ tsp
- cardamom powder
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup wheat flour



Prep:

1. Soak the dates in hot water for 30 mins.
2. Roast the wheat flour for 4-5 mins on low flame until it turns brown.



Instructions:

1. Heat up the ghee in a pan then toast the sesame seeds and dry fruits.
2. Add the grated coconut and let the mixture roast until it turns brown and crispy.
3. Grind the roasted dry fruit mix roughly using a mortal and pestle.
4. Grind the soaked dates and cook the paste for 3-4 mins until it thickens.
5. Mix the dry fruit mix and dates paste in a bowl. Add honey to it and mix thoroughly.
6. Add the roasted wheat flour to the bowl and mix again.
7. Pour the mixture into a square baking tray and let it refrigerate for an hour.
8. Cut it into pieces and store in an air tight container.

Makhana Chat

Ingredients


- 2 cups of makhana/fox nuts
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp chaat masala
- 2 tbsp green chutney
- 1 tbsp tamarind chutney
- 1 small onion
- 1 small tomato
- Coriander leaves for garnishing
- Salt per taste



Method:

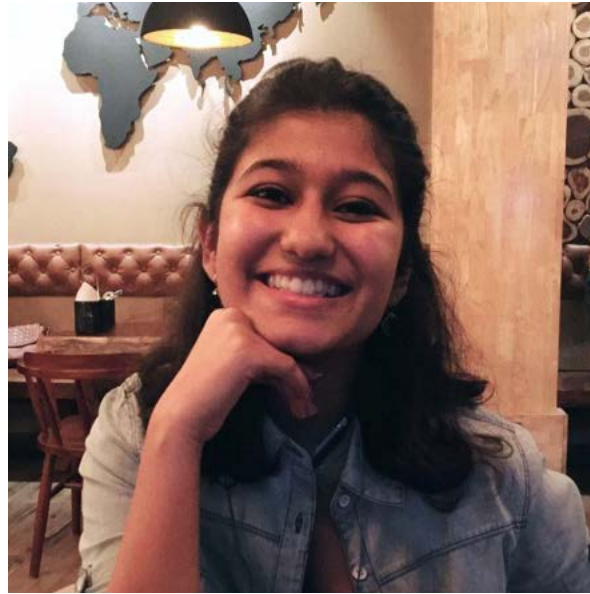
1. Chop the onion, tomato and coriander finely.
2. In a bowl mix the fox nuts with the chutneys. Add the chilli powder, chaat masala and salt and mix thoroughly.
3. Add the vegetables and mix well and you're done!

You can add some more ingredients of your choice for texture, such as sev or pomegranate. You can also add some curd into this chaat, but make sure you lightly roast the makhana with a little oil before you add the curd.



Low carbon food can be seen as a way of cooking with alterations rather than limitations. These alterations when made regularly, seamlessly weave into your daily life. This is what adds up to a healthy and positive way of caring for the environment.

Author's note



Nishitha Vivek

Nishitha is a food enthusiast with a flair for baking. She believes that food is an edible story that brings people together and aspires to do exactly that with her co- founded food blog, Knife & Spatula. Being an aspiring restaurateur, she aims to bring her life experiences and passion together on a plate, and live life one meal at a time.

Author's note



Mansi Swami

Mansi is a quintessential 20s woman who takes life by the horns. Although she always has one foot in the archaic world of sacred Rajasthani recipes, she moves with today's times and applies her creativity in digital platforms. IT Engineer by education, she has co-founded a food blog, Knife & Spatula and a t-shirt venture The May Circle. She lives by the motto of making the world a happier place than she found it.

Organo Et School

Organo Et School is the brainchild of team Organo. Organo was founded on the idea of environmentally conscious living and Organo Et School translates that idea into reality by educating and empowering schools, colleges, organizations and communities on the triple bottom line of sustainability. Organo et School aims at engaging individuals of today to stay connected with nature through workshops, live sessions and site visits.



Leading the change

We create an experiential learning environment for people to learn from.

Organo Et School educates people about the challenges of sustainable development and creates opportunities for them to use their creativity and knowledge to pioneer innovative solutions for themselves.

Learners develop a sense of place and belonging to their local community.

**NURTURING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS
WHERE INCLUSIVE HOLISTIC ECO-LIVING IS CELEBRATED**

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