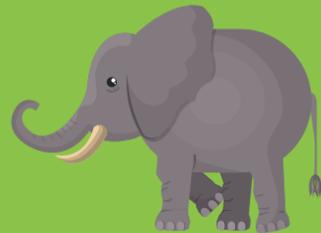


EMISSIONS

How to be an EcoFriendly Longhorn



As an American citizen, your average annual carbon footprint (i.e. the total amount of greenhouse gases that are released during the manufacturing, use, and disposal of the products/services you use) is likely around 16 tons, which is equivalent to 2.6 African elephants! In contrast, the global average annual carbon footprint is around 4 tons.

You can reduce that mammoth number by making some simple choices, wherever you live. Of course, the majority of greenhouse gases are produced by large companies and institutions; however, we can all do our part to model sustainable behavior and advocate for better greenhouse gas emissions regulation.

PRACTICE PLANT-BASED HABITS

According to the EPA, agriculture is the cause of 10% of greenhouse gases (or approximately 109 million African elephants) emitted in the United States per year. Reducing your meat intake, even one day a week, can significantly reduce your carbon footprint. University Housing and Dining has expanded its menu options to include even more delicious plant-based options.

If you live off-campus, try to buy food that comes from local farms, as large corporate or overseas agriculture contributes significantly more to greenhouse gas emissions.

DRIVE LESS. BUS, BIKE, AND WALK MORE

According to the EPA, transportation is the cause of almost 29% of the greenhouse gases (or approximately 317 million African elephants) emitted in the United States per year. Choosing sustainable options when it comes to transportation is a very effective way to reduce the negative impact you have on the environment. Broadly, you can reduce your emissions by driving less and relying more on public transportation, biking, and walking. See our [Transportation](#) guide for more specifics on how to travel more sustainably around Austin.

SHOP SUSTAINABLY

To lower the impact you make through personal consumption, opt for products that are long-lasting and ethically and sustainably produced. Utilize tools such as Good On You and B Corporation Certification labels to avoid [greenwashing](#) and identify the best products to purchase based on their environmental and social impact.

WHAT IS GREENWASHING?

According to Leyla Acaroglu, an environmentalist writer for *Medium*: "As an analogy, greenwashing is to corporations as tree hugging is to individuals who say they care about the environment, it's a symbolic reference that has little actual outcomes. And more so just confuses the issue attempting to be resolved".



EMISSIONS

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REDUCE YOUR USE OF ENERGY, WATER, AND OTHER RESOURCES

According to the EPA, energy is the cause of 25% of greenhouse gases (or approximately 275 million African elephants) emitted in the United States per year. Turning off power strips, setting your laptop to sleep, and unplugging unused electronics are easy actions to reduce energy and lower your carbon footprint. Water is a precious resource, especially in Texas. Using water with care is an important way to protect our natural systems. Overall, reducing your resource usage as much as feasibly possible is the best way to lessen your environmental impact. See our [Energy & Water](#) guide, as well as our [Consumption & Waste](#) guide, for more specifics on how to reduce your resource use.



BE AN ADVOCATE

You can make a direct impact on environmental policy by becoming civically engaged at the local, state, and federal levels. Learn about the elections happening that you can get involved with, and make your voice heard! Below are some good resources to learn more about local Austin elections.

THE AUSTIN COMMON

[The Austin Common](#) is a local news site that gives informative summaries on how you can make a positive impact on the world. They give brief, non-partisan overviews of important local news stories and elections, as well as lay out clear steps for you to take action.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS GUIDE

The League of Women Voters lists candidates in local elections and provides their answers to important, issue-specific questions in their non-partisan [Voters Guide](#). You can use their website to fill out your own mock ballot, which you can print out and take to the polls!



FIND OUT MORE ON REDUCING YOUR EMISSIONS WHILE AT UT AUSTIN:

[The UT Office of Sustainability's Emissions page](#)

[The New York Times' Guide: "How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint"](#)

[The EPA's Information on Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#)

[The Nature Conservancy's "Carbon Footprint Calculator"](#)