

ECO LIFESTYLE PROJECT

CASE STUDY: HOLIDAY FOOTPRINTS

BACKGROUND

Members of our Eco Residents group were discussing their plans for summer holidays and wondering what the environmental impact of them might be.

Two particular holidays were identified for comparison: a week in a hotel in Menorca, and a week in a caravan in Wales.

SOLUTION

The group discussed what each holiday entailed. We decided to calculate the carbon footprints based on travel, accommodation and food. A carbon footprint is a measure of how much greenhouse gas something creates - the bigger the number, the more pollution it's responsible for. We used Mike Berners-Lee's book *How Bad Are Bananas?* as reference. Both were calculated based on a family of four going for a week. Additional activities were not included.

Menorca

This included full board in a nice hotel, plus flights.

Carbon footprint: 3,600kg CO₂e

Wales

This included driving to the site and a portion of the embodied emissions in a static caravan based on how much use it was likely to get over its life.

Carbon footprint: 500kg CO₂e

The Menorca trip was found to be several times as polluting as the Wales trip.

A large part of the difference was the flight, which accounted for (INSERT NUMBERS HERE). Another major factor was that self-catering is generally more efficient than hotel catering, which tends to focus on apparent luxury and profit margins. Hotels often have either air con or heating running constantly, whereas in a caravan it will be directly controlled by the guests and therefore not wasted.

OUTCOME

Although it was already understood that a flight would be bad for the environment, the group members were quite shocked by the scale of the difference between the two holidays. None of the families fly regularly and all are likely to fly less often in future. There was new understanding reached that all of our choices have an impact.

BENEFICIARY QUOTES

"I'm shocked honestly. It's a big difference."