



# Student Eco Guide

TIPS AND TRICKS TO  
REDUCE YOUR  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AS  
A STUDENT

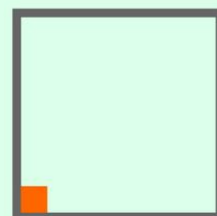
CUT YOUR  
CARBON  
FOOTPRINT



REDUCE  
YOUR  
WASTE



DISCOVER  
THE GREEN  
SIDE OF  
OXFORD



Oxford  
Climate  
Society

## Guide Introduction

Dear Oxford Freshers of 2018,

Coming out of an unprecedented summer, most of us will have thought about climate change at least once or twice over the past few months. As you read this, temperatures will likely (and hopefully) have cooled down, and who knows, maybe the British autumn rain has returned to make sure that no-one can escape the well-known freshers' flu. We shouldn't forget the past summer, though - firstly because of all the good memories you've hopefully made during it, but also due to the message it carried with it: Scientists from this very University have shown that its extreme heat and drought were made more than two times as likely by climate change, and that this is just a taste of what is to come, showing again how serious the issue of climate change is. And it affects all of us: No matter your political beliefs, where you're from or what you care about, we can - and need to - work together to solve this.

Climate change remains a key challenge for the future trajectory of our societies, and young people like us are at the heart of this. As one former US President has said – we are the first generation to experience its impacts, but also the last generation who can solve this. We at the Oxford Climate Society believe that this poses a principal challenge for all of us, and are committed to playing our part in creating a positive future.

The good news is: It's easy for you to be a part of the solution, too – there are many ways in which you can make an important difference during your time at Oxford and beyond while not giving up anything too important. This document collects some of these, and we hope that you, too, will find suggestions in here that you can apply to your life. Climate protection is a team effort, and we can only succeed if everyone weighs in – your positive choices make a difference!

If you have any questions or comments on the contents of this guide, please drop us a line at [oxfordclimatesociety@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordclimatesociety@gmail.com). And do come and say Hi to us at the Freshers' Fair – we're looking forward to hopefully seeing you there or at one of our events!

For now, I wish you a great start into your time at Oxford – and if you're reading this before term starts, then do enjoy the free time and believe the people telling you not to worry about preparatory reading, they are right!

With best wishes,

**Felix Heilmann (Balliol College)**  
President, Oxford Climate Society

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## What (Not) To Pack

### Do pack...

- **The things you need!** This may (almost certainly) sound obvious, but if you have a lot of the things you'll need and you can bring them to Oxford with you, there's no need to buy them when you get here. This includes e.g. extension leads, cutlery, mugs and glasses, etc. - also saving you some money once you arrive!
- **A reusable water bottle.** Tap water is of good drinking quality almost everywhere across Oxford, and there are designated refill stations across town, including in many libraries. Bringing your own bottle will save the oceans from a lot of plastic, and save you a lot of money.
- **A reusable coffee cup,** or buy a Keep Cup upon your arrival in Oxford. Virtually everyone has them, and they're invaluable when you need your caffeine shot in the Library (and believe us, there'll be a point where you'll need one). Just make sure to not forget them when you go out to buy a coffee (or tea) - also to profit from the discounts you'll get at many shops!
- **A reusable bag.** This might go without saying: Not using plastic bags (which are on average used for 12 minutes) but then end up polluting our oceans for centuries to come and instead bringing a reusable bag is one of the easiest ways for you to make a big difference at virtually no cost (in fact, it even saves you money)!
- **Recycled stationery items.** They're easily available and as good as non-recycled items but have a much, much smaller environmental footprint. The energy savings of using just seven sheets of recycled paper equal the energy you'd use to brew one litre of coffee! Many other products, such as hole punchers, are also available made from recycled materials.
- **A drying rack.** Most college rooms are big enough so that you can dry your clothes there, and it saves you from having to use the dryer, which is one of the most energy-sucking appliances.



### Don't pack...

- **The things you don't need.** Remember, you'll have to take every single item you bring out of your room at every vacation, and unlike at the beginning of this Michaelmas, you won't get help from older students. So make sure to be economic and not bring too much stuff that you won't need!
- **A fridge.** Likely not something you'd bring from home anyway - it's great to have the occasional cold drink, but is it worth running your own fridge for it? Maybe your College has a communal fridge you can use, or you could share a fridge with some of your friends, saving all of you money and energy!
- **A printer.** All colleges and most libraries allow you to print off your work, should you need it, right there, so there's no need to install an additional device in your room.

## Moving your things in and out of your room (and Oxford)

### **For UK students**

You'll face the slightly daunting prospect of having to move all your stuff out of your College room every vacation. And while your parents might be able to bring you and your belongings to Oxford this Michaelmas, this might not be an ideal solution for every time - not to speak of the traffic jams and carbon emissions caused by high car traffic levels. If you want to avoid the effort of packing everything into your car, you could either ask friends who own a private house in Oxford whether you can store your belongings at their place over the vacation, or use a storage service like LoveBox to store your belongings, or use a courier like unibaggage.com or sendmybag.com to send your things home, allowing you to comfortably take the coach or train home.

### **For international students**

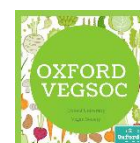
Congratulations! You'll be able to use your College's international storage room, and while carrying things up and down to the storage room might not always be pleasant, it's certainly easier than having to take them home every vacation. If you have large amounts of luggage that you nevertheless need to ship, especially when you first move to Oxford, you can use services such as unibaggage.com or sendmybag.com.

If you're from Ireland or mainland Europe, check out some of the non-flying options to get to the UK! Especially the high-speed Eurostar train, which runs from Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam to London, is a great solution if you want to ditch the plane. And, if you can, this is absolutely worth it: a return flight from Amsterdam to London alone uses up approximately 10 percent of your annual emission budget. The great thing is: from most West and Central European country you can easily reach London within a day using the train. Book via the Eurostar website, or your national railway company.

## Organisations to Get Involved with

There are a number of organisations in Oxford that work on everything from reducing waste to tackling emissions. So, no matter your capacity, here are a few you can help save the planet with:

- **Oxford Climate Society** - This society seeks to encourage Oxford students to tackle and be informed about climate change.
- **Oxford Sustainability** - A new society this year working to mobilise students towards developing sustainable solutions to environmental problems and providing a platform for knowledge sharing on ways to reduce environmental impacts.
- **Oxford Waste Society** - This society works to educate people on issues of resource waste and encourage students to live waste free.
- **Oxford Climate Justice Campaign** - This group leads the campaign to get Oxford University to divest its financial resources from fossil fuels and reinvest them in the environmentally friendly future.
- **The Green Trashing Campaign** - This campaign is run mainly in the final term of the year. It works to encourage students to celebrate their exams with biodegradable products and prevent pollution of Oxford's waterways.
- **Oxford Co-op** - A student organisation running a service which sells local, seasonal, organic food to students and Oxford citizens.
- **Veg Soc** - This organisation seeks to raise awareness of the environmental benefits of turning vegetarian/vegan.
- **Student Switch Off** - This intercollegiate competition seeks to encourage students to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours.
- **NUS Green Impact** - This NUS scheme seeks to reduce the environmental impact of colleges and departments.



This list is not exhaustive, so keep your eyes out for new opportunities and societies. Think Oxford is lacking an environmental campaign or group? Why not set it up? Oxford is great for creating new organisations and societies.

## Reduce your plastic waste

Plastic, by design, lasts a very long time. Although it is a relatively recent invention, all the plastic that has ever been made still exists, and a lot of it has ended up in the ocean. Not only is this harmful to the marine life which can get entangled in plastic bags or mistake plastic waste for food, but the degradation of ocean plastics is leading to oceans full of microplastics. Plastic in seafood could pose many unknown health risks, with one third of fish caught by the UK found to contain microplastics. Continuing at our current rate of plastic production and waste management (only about 9% is recycled), there will be 12bn tonnes of plastic waste in landfills and the natural environment by 2050, so it is vital that we do what we can now to reduce our plastic usage as much as possible.



- **Use a Keepcup.** Many coffee shops will offer a discount to those who bring their own reusable cups, so this is also a great way to save a bit of money. Keepcups are the only cups you are allowed to use to take hot drinks into Oxford libraries, so they are a very worthy investment.
- **Switch to a biodegradable bamboo toothbrush.** This is a really easy change to make – bamboo toothbrushes are readily available on Amazon – and the switch can go a long way in reducing the billions of plastic toothbrushes thrown away every single year.
- **Carry a set of reusable cutlery.** Term times can be busy, and so sometimes the easiest option is to turn to Taylor's or Itsu (everything half price 30 mins before closing!) to buy a quick dinner, but make sure to have your own set of bamboo cutlery on you to avoid having to use single-use plastic cutlery.
- **Use reusable canvas bags for grocery shopping.** Canvas bags are also a great thing to always in your bag as you never know when you might end up stocking up on study snacks and it's always good to be prepared and not have to pay for a plastic bag!
- **Shop at the markets rather than the supermarket.** It's really hard to avoid plastic when shopping at a supermarket; almost everything you can buy will be pre-packaged. The Covered Market offers plastic free groceries but tends to be a bit pricey. However, the Wednesday market at Gloucester Green offers reasonably priced, plastic free groceries, so head down there on a Wednesday for an eco and budget friendly stock up.



## Reduce your food waste

If you don't eat in halls, you will probably be cooking for yourself and it's important to be aware of food waste not only for the environment, but also for budgeting! It is estimated that 10 million tonnes of food and drink are wasted each year in the UK, 60% of which could be avoided. By being aware and planning ahead, it is easy to reduce the amount of food and drink we waste.

- **Do a weekly food shop.** During a busy term, it is easy just to pick up food whenever we happen to be near a Tesco. However, this can result in forgetting what we already have in our fridge and buying too much food, inevitably resulting in waste. By doing a big weekly food shop it is easier to make sure we minimise waste, eat everything that has been hidden in the back of the fridge, and not have to throw away food we forgot was in there.
- **Plan your meals ahead of time.** Meal planning is not only great for reducing food waste, but can be really useful when deadlines are approaching and you suddenly realise that the only thing you have in the cupboard is cereal! By planning your meals or cooking in bulk, you can make sure you only buy what you need.
- **Use food waste bins.** Some colleges are now introducing food waste bins in kitchens, which is a great way to make sure that any food which does end being thrown away is disposed of safely and has minimal impact on the environment. If your college doesn't have food waste bins, get involved and get your JCR Environment rep to ask your college about implementing them!



## Reduce your clothing waste

Fast fashion has a terrible impact on the environment, as well as bringing up ethical issues with regards to working conditions and rates of pay in sweatshops. Although it's difficult to know how to help, we can reduce our own personal impact by being aware of our own consumption and the impact it has. The complicated procedure of making clothes produces an incredible amount of pollution, from the toxic fertilisers used to grow the cotton to the fossil fuels powering the transport which carries the clothes halfway across the world for us to buy. However, by following these tips we can reduce our own carbon footprints and begin influence a large-scale change.

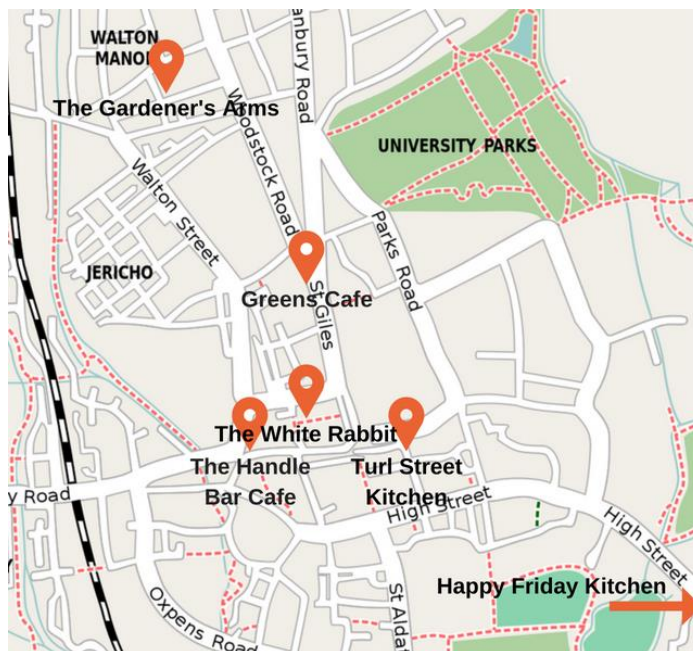
- **Buy from charity shops.** Buying second hand is, again, beneficial for our bank accounts as well as our planet! Follow the link below for a list of vintage, second-hand and charity shops around Oxford – you'll be spoilt for choice!  
<https://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/oxford/guide/shopping/charity-vintage>.
- **Support local, ethical brands.** Indigo, a shop on Cowley Road, supports sustainable business and only sells items which they feel are ethical and sustainable. They offer clothes, gifts and homeware so check them out if you're in need of an ethical shopping spree!
- **Use student swap boards.** By borrowing rather than buying, we can protect the Earth's resources, cut down our carbon footprint and save money (which can be particularly useful when it comes to the summer balls!)
  - o The Nu Wardrobe is an Irish company which promotes sustainable fashion by sharing clothes Find the Nu Oxford Community on Facebook to find out more.
  - o OX4 Clothes Swap puts on regular clothes swap events in East Oxford. Find them on Facebook to find out about their events.



## Veggie/Vegan spots to eat in Oxford

Oxford is great for the veggie/vegan community, almost as good as reducing animal consumption is for the planet. Here are the examples of some of a few spots in and around the city where you can get your plant-based fix:

- **The Gardener's Arms** - This pub has an entirely veggie and vegan menu, a lovely beer garden and a selection of local drinks. Located in Jericho, a short cycle from the town centre.
- **Happy Friday Kitchen** - This restaurant serves an entirely vegan menu, including fried seitan and vegan nachos. Located in Cowley, also available as takeaway.
- **White Rabbit** - This Oxford pub is famous for its pizzas, many of which can be made with vegan cheese. Near Gloucester Green, right in the centre of town.
- **Turl Street Kitchen** - This restaurant's menu is all seasonal food, with great veggie and vegan options. Located on Turl Street, in the city centre.
- **The Handle Bar Cafe** - This bike themed restaurant has some great plant-based foods. Located just off Cornmarket Street, near the Oxford Union.
- **Greens Cafe** – This café has a selection of veggie and vegan sandwiches and cakes. Located a short walk up St Giles'.



Oxford has a great many places to eat, these are just a few examples, why not explore and find your own favourite?

## Other Useful Resources

- Check out the Oxford Climate Society blog for posts written by our Media and Research Team aiming to educate, inform and engage people on all topics relating to climate change: <https://www.oxfordclimatesociety.com/blog>.
- Worth My Earth is a blog dedicated to sustainable eating and living and has a lot of useful information and tips! <http://www.worthmyearth.com/>
- This article outlines the ethical and environmental issues relating to fast fashion, and what is being done to change it: [http://www.thestudentguide.com/lifestyle/article/eco\\_fashion](http://www.thestudentguide.com/lifestyle/article/eco_fashion).

This guide was created by Felix Heilmann (Balliol College; President - Oxford Climate Society), Harry Holmes (St Catz College; former committee member - Oxford Climate Society and founder of The Green Trashing Campaign) and Lucy Fellingham (Oriol College; Media and Creative Officer - Oxford Climate Society). We hope that you enjoy this guide, find it useful, and look forward to putting the tips and tricks mentioned here into practice on your arrival in Oxford! If you have any comments or questions about the guide, or want to get involved with Oxford Climate Society, please contact us at [oxfordclimatesociety@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordclimatesociety@gmail.com).