



Young Climate Warriors Challenge/Topic – 21st June 2024. Palm Oil – Biscuits.

Have you ever read the list of ingredients on the side of a packet of biscuits? Have you ever noticed if they have palm oil in them? Can you find any packets of biscuits at home and have a look? When you start looking, it is staggering how often it's used! **But what exactly is palm oil?** Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil that comes from the fruit of oil palm trees – 85% of our global supply comes from Malaysia and Indonesia. Palm oil has many different properties and so can be used in all sorts of things – from biofuel to cosmetics and cleaning products, from biscuits and bread to ice cream and frozen pizzas.

As Young Climate Warriors, why are we even thinking about biscuit ingredients? Well, the reason is that large areas of biodiverse rainforest are being deforested to make way for palm oil plantations. The destruction of the rainforests, often cleared by fire, is releasing millions of tonnes of carbon emissions into the atmosphere and threatening the habitats of orangutans, pygmy elephants and rhinos. Rainforests are precious carbon sinks – they help us reduce the carbon in our atmosphere by absorbing it through photosynthesis and then trapping it in trunks, branches, roots and leaves. Peatland swamps are also being drained and converted to palm oil plantations, releasing their stored carbon and contributing to climate change.

Your challenge this week is to make some homemade biscuits, cookies or shortbread – replace that tea-time 'palm oil' biscuit. Here are a couple of simple recipes that you might like to use: [Scottish Shortbread](#), [Choc Chip Cookies](#), [Nankhatai pistachio biscuits](#)

So should we all stop using products containing palm oil? This is a tricky question. Avoiding palm oil could encourage companies to use other vegetable oils that require more land to grow and more deforestation. Palm oil trees produce 4-10 times more oil per acre than soybean, coconut, rapeseed or sunflower oil crops, and there are millions of small-scale farmers in developing countries who depend on producing palm oil for their livelihoods. For these reasons, boycotting palm oil is not always the answer – can you choose products that

use sustainable palm oil certified instead? Look for the RSPO  (the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) logo. Certified palm oil protects the environment and local communities. Find out more about palm oil here – [CBBC Newsround clip](#), [WWF interactive page](#) and [WWF video clip](#).

Don't forget to **HIT THE RED BUTTON** when you have completed this challenge – and enjoy your homemade biscuits!

