

How Bad it is to Fly.

Flying is about the worst thing most of us do as far as global warming is concerned. Worst in the sense that they produce *GHGs* (green house gases) at a higher rate than almost any other activity. It needs to be recognised that *GHGs* are already causing death and destruction, mostly in the undeveloped world, which has almost no responsibility for the problem. Further much/most flying is a selfish activity done purely for pleasure, so there is not the excuse of necessity.

Why Flying is so Bad.

1. Aircraft emit their *GHGs* at altitude and this makes the effect of them almost 3 times as bad as the same amount of CO_2 emitted at ground level.
2. Large amounts of energy is expended in getting aircraft off and onto the ground. In consequence although short haul flights do not get very high they also produce large emissions.

How Bad is Flying.

An easy way to understand the effect of flying is to quote it **per passenger** in equivalent miles per gallon and miles per litre for a car. If you think our figures are worse than those quoted by the air travel industry. You are right! The industry quotes only the unmodified CO_2 figures, naturally they look much better. The same is also true of the various offsetting organisations.

In approximate terms:-

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|---|--------------------|
| 1. A very short flight of say 100 miles
- e.g London to Bristol | 13 mpg or 2.86 mpl |
| 2. A medium haul flight say 800 miles
- e.g. London to Rome | 18 mpg or 4.0 mpl. |
| 3. A standard airline flight of 3000 miles
-e.g London to New York | 20 mpg or 4.4 mpl. |
| 4. The very best charter flight
- e.g. London to Vienna in packed modern plane | 25 mpg or 5.5 mpl. |

To put this another way 2 people flying to New York and back will produce about the same global warming effect as driving an average car for about 2 years of average motoring. This is about equivalent to 7.5 tons of CO_2 or 3.7 tons each.

Carbon Dioxide Footprints.

To put these numbers into another perspective consider carbon dioxide footprints.

- 1) The current UK average annual footprint per person is about 10 tons.
- 2) The government has already committed to cutting this to 2 tons per person by 2050.
- 3) But this target of 2 tons per person by 2050 is dangerously risky, and

inadequate making it very unlikely that the temperature will be kept below a 2°C rise, the governments' target. And making it likely that the temperature rise will be more than 3°C, with dire consequences.

A safer target would be 2 tons by 2030 and 0.6 tons by 2050. This will give us a reasonable chance of avoiding a 2°C rise, or at least of keeping close to 2°C.

- 4) The IPCC state that it is the emissions produced during the period up to about 2030 that are crucial in determining the eventual temperature rise.

Against these targets 2 people flying to Australia and back will produce the same global warming effect as driving the average car for 8 years of average motoring and will also be equivalent to 30 tons of CO₂ (15 tons each). I.e On its own 1½ times current average output each, 7½ times our proposed 2030 target, and 25 times our proposed 2050 target.

We hope this makes you think twice.

Take the train. Take the boat perhaps. Ask do I really need to go?

Support the campaign to persuade the government to ration flying.