

# All About Palm Oil

## What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil is an oil made from the fruit of the palm tree. It is used in lots of different foods that we eat but growing palm trees damages the world's rainforests and affects all of the animals that live in them, too.

### Did You Know...?

- Palm oil is the most widely **consumed** vegetable oil on the planet!
- About half of all packaged products sold in a supermarket contain palm oil!
- These trees grow naturally in West Africa but are now mostly grown in Indonesia and Malaysia.

## Why Is It Useful?

Palm oil is a very useful ingredient in many different products. For example, it is used in margarine because it stays solid at room temperature, in chocolate because it makes it look shiny and in soap because it helps to moisturise our skin!

## What's the Problem with Palm Oil?

Palm trees grow best in a tropical climate so many farmers are clearing large areas of tropical rainforest in order to grow lots of trees together. Clearing rainforests is called **deforestation**. The problem is that these tropical rainforests are home to a diverse population of animals and plants. Many animals who live in the rainforests, such as orangutans, are already **endangered** and are now losing their natural habitat because of intensive palm oil farming.

## What Can We Do to Help?

If we want to help protect our rainforests, we can choose to do some or all of the following:

1. Buy products that do not contain any palm oil.
2. Only buy products which contain sustainable palm oil. This means that the palm oil was grown and made in a responsible way which does not harm animals or the rainforests.



3. Write to the manufacturers of our favourite foods to persuade them to use sustainable palm oil, if they do not already.

### Glossary

**consumed** – A food (or drink) which is eaten or used up.

**deforestation** – The action of clearing a wide area of trees.

**endangered** – An animal species which is in danger of extinction (dying out forever).



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# Questions

1. What is palm oil made from? Tick **one**.
  - lots of different foods
  - rainforests
  - palm leaves
  - the fruit of the palm tree
2. Why is palm oil used in margarine? Tick **one**.
  - It helps it to stay shiny.
  - It stays solid at room temperature.
  - It is a very useful ingredient.
  - It damages the world's rainforests.
3. Why are animals losing their natural habitat? Tick **one**.
  - because they are endangered
  - because of intensive palm oil farming
  - because many products contain palm oil
  - because palm trees grow naturally in West Africa
4. Which animals living in the rainforests are already endangered? Tick **two**.
  - orangutans
  - dogs
  - snakes
  - tigers
5. Where are palm trees mostly grown now?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Look at the section under the subtitle **What's the Problem with Palm Oil?** Find and copy a word which means that there are a wide range of all types of animals and plants.  
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7. Why should we help to protect the rainforests for the future?  
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