

We all need to buy stuff from time to time. But do we think about how our shopping affects people, animals and the environment? Here's how you can love fashion *and* the world we live in.

Ethical shopping

We all need to eat, drink and wear clothes, don't we? But what do we know about the products that we buy in shops, in supermarkets or online? Many people in Britain want to know more about the products they buy. They want to know how people, animals and our planet are treated when food, drinks and clothes are produced.

Fairtrade

The Fairtrade Foundation is an organisation based in the UK that helps farmers and workers in the poorer parts of the world to earn enough money to live comfortably. The organisation asks companies that grow products such as coffee or bananas to pay fair wages and to provide their workers with good conditions. The companies that follow these requirements then receive the Fairtrade certificate and can sell their products with the 'Fairtrade' mark to international consumers. About 5 million people benefit from Fairtrade in 58 countries. More than 90 different products including coffee, tea, bananas, chocolate, cocoa, juice, sugar and honey have the Fairtrade mark. There are over 4,500 Fairtrade certified products for sale in shops and supermarkets in the UK. Almost one in three bananas sold in the UK is Fairtrade!

Free range and organic

Free range farming means that farm animals spend time outside rather than being inside 24 hours a day. Meat, eggs or dairy products, such as milk or cheese, can be free range. Some experts say that this type of farming is preferable because it is less cruel and the animals are healthier. Many people also think that free range food tastes better and is more nutritious than conventionally farmed food. Organic food is produced using few or no chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Some people feel that organic food is safer or healthier than conventional food and that it tastes better. You can see organic fruit and vegetables on sale in most British supermarkets. Both free range and organic food can be more expensive than other types of food but despite this they are very popular in the UK. However, a recent report showed that demand for organic food has fallen slightly since the economic recession began in Britain.

Ethical clothing

Fashion is big global business. You can check the labels on your clothes to see which countries they are made in. Some clothing manufacturers have been accused of employing children and of allowing unsafe conditions in their factories. Following the collapse of a clothing factory in Bangladesh which killed a large number of workers, the British public have started to wake up to the question of where and how their clothes are produced. After this disaster a number of brands seen in the British shopping centres, including Primark, Marks and Spencer and H&M, have made a deal to give money each year to pay for factory inspections and to help make conditions safer for workers. People are becoming more and more interested in where their clothes are made, who they are made by, and in what conditions. They want their clothes to look good AND to be ethical. Most fashion manufacturers now have sections of their websites with information about their workers and their environmental policies.

Pre-loved clothes

Old clothes used to be called 'second-hand' or 'hand-me-downs'. Nowadays people also say 'vintage' or 'pre-loved'. Recycling by buying used clothes is popular in the UK, especially with young people. In Britain you can buy cheap used clothes from charity shops such as Oxfam. Well-known celebrities wear used clothes too. Celebrities like Kate Moss and Katy Perry are big fans of vintage clothes and are often seen wearing second-hand clothes and accessories. Another way to recycle is to adapt the clothes you already have. The BBC ran a clothes recycling competition aimed at teenagers. The competition was to redesign an old pair of jeans to create a new garment or accessory. The winners took part in a fashion masterclass and then showed their final designs on the catwalk in Paris.

With the help of organisations like Fairtrade, shoppers in the UK can make more choices about some of the products they buy. Clothes manufacturers are helping to make fashion a safer business and also to keep their customers informed.