



Your Contribution to the California Drought - NYTimes.com  
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The average American consumes more than 300 gallons of California water each week by eating food that was produced there.



A bunch of California grapes requires 24 gallons of water to produce.

## Your Contribution to the California Drought

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California farmers produce more than a third of the nation's vegetables and two-thirds of its fruits and nuts. To do that, they use nearly 80 percent of all the water consumed in the state. It is the most stubborn part of the crisis: To fundamentally alter how much water the state uses, all Americans may have to give something up.

The portions of foods shown here are grown in California and represent what average Americans, including non-Californians, eat in a week. We made an estimate of the amount of water it takes to grow each portion to give you a sense of your contribution to the California drought.

The estimates include the amount of water used to make derivative products. For example, grape consumption includes not just fresh grapes, but also wine, jam and juice.

## WATER GUZZLERS



THE AVERAGE AMERICAN EATS A SLIVER OF CALIFORNIA AVOCADO EACH WEEK.

It takes 4.1 gallons of water to produce.



TWO OUNCES OF RICE

15.1 gallons



16 ALMONDS

15.2 gallons



TWO OLIVES

1.4 gallons



A THIN MELON SLICE

1.1 gallons



A BOWL OF PROCESSED TOMATOES

9.1 gallons



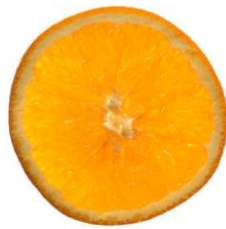
A THIRD OF AN EGG

**6 gallons**



FOUR BROCCOLI FLORETS

**2.2 gallons**



AN ORANGE SLICE

**6.2 gallons**



A THIRD OF A HEAD OF LETTUCE

4.1 gallons



TWO PEACH SLICES

3.3 gallons



$\frac{1}{3}$  OUNCE OF TURKEY

4.1 gallons



TWO SLICES OF BREAD

6.4 gallons



THREE MANDARINS

42.5 gallons



Four glasses of milk require 221 gallons of water to produce.

Americans consume the most water by eating meat and dairy products, primarily because a lot of water is needed to grow the crops to feed the animals. Not all of this water comes from California; about half is imported in the form of crops, like corn, from the Midwest.



1.75 ounces of beef require 86 gallons of water to produce.

## GROWN MOSTLY IN CALIFORNIA



THE AVERAGE AMERICAN EATS THREE BABY CARROTS FROM CALIFORNIA EACH WEEK.

It takes 0.7 gallons of water to produce.



THREE GARLIC CLOVES

0.51 gallons



THREE CELERY STICKS

0.52 gallons



AN ARTICHOKE LEAF

0.12 gallons



A SLIVER OF A DATE

0.29 gallons





SIX PISTACHIOS

2.1 gallons



A SMALL PIECE OF FIG

0.71 gallons



A THIN KIWI SLICE

0.15 gallons



A SMALL LEMON SLICE

2.9 gallons



A SMALL PLUM SLICE

1 gallon



TWO STRAWBERRIES

0.51 gallons



Three and a half walnuts require seven gallons of water to produce.

A rise in prices may be inevitable if a persistent drought forces California farmers to slash production. “Consumers would have a choice of either substituting the higher-priced product for something else, look for products where imports increased to alleviate some of the shortage, go without, or look for those products that can be grown easily in other states,” said Craig A. Chase, a program manager at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

## LEAST WATER CONSUMPTION

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN EATS A TIP OF CALIFORNIA ASPARAGUS EACH WEEK.

It takes 0.22 gallons of water to produce.



AN APPLE SLICE

0.39 gallons



FOUR PEPPERS

0.66 gallons



A CABBAGE LEAF

0.39 gallons



A CAULIFLOWER FLORET

0.49 gallons



SEVEN DRIED BEANS

0.91 gallons



A TINY GRAPEFRUIT WEDGE

0.34 gallons



AN ONION SLICE

0.75 gallons



A TINY PEAR WEDGE

**0.51 gallons**



A POTATO SLICE

**0.62 gallons**



A HALF RASPBERRY

**0.08 gallons**



A SWEET POTATO SLICE

0.44 gallons



A TOMATO SLICE

0.53 gallons



ONE BLUEBERRY

0.04 gallons



Nine spinach leaves require about eight glasses of water to produce.

## ABOUT THE DATA

The amount of California food available to Americans was estimated using export data from the [Agricultural Issues Center](#) at the University of California, Davis. The figures were adjusted with U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates of how much food is lost or spoiled before it is sold to customers.

The amount of water consumed to produce fruits, vegetables and nuts was calculated by the [Pacific Institute](#). Their estimates are drawn from local climate data and plant physiology data reported by the California Department of Water Resources and crop yields reported by the U.S.D.A. Estimates for milk, beef, turkey and eggs are from the [Water Footprint Network](#).

All estimates here include surface and groundwater consumed during production, called blue water, and rainwater consumed, called green water. They do not include gray water, or water necessary to dilute the effluent from a farm or factory to levels acceptable by local governing standards.