

Plant-Based Foods and Consumer Trends

“As we steer our grocery carts down the aisles of our supermarkets, the choices we make will help decide the future.”

—Jonathan Foley¹ ([source](#))

Avoiding climate change and protecting vital natural resources for future generations require we all eat less meat and dairy. This is especially true for Americans, who on average eat three times more meat per capita than the rest of the world.² ([source](#)) Yet, change is afoot.

Consumer Food Choice is Shifting

“No longer relegated to a humble side dish or natural food stores, plant protein options are in abundance, sought out and enjoyed by consumers regardless of diet.”³ ([source](#))

In 2015, 26% of consumers said they ate less animal meat in the past 12 months.⁴ ([source](#))

The global plant-based meat market is projected to reach \$5 billion by 2020.⁵ ([source](#))

Plant-based protein could represent one-third of overall protein by 2054.⁶ ([source](#))

Consumption of meatless alternatives is particularly high among households with children.⁷ ([source](#))

87% of Americans eat plant protein, with nearly two-thirds (62%) doing so once a week or more often.³ ([source](#))

Almost a third of Millennials (30%)—who make up a quarter of the U.S. population—indicate they consume a meat alternative product (other than eggs) every day, with 50% consuming these at least a few times a week.⁷ ([source](#))

More than one third (35%) of Americans are eating protein more from sources other than red meat.⁸ ([source](#))

More than one quarter of consumers say they eat protein alternatives at restaurants.⁸ ([source](#))

A Helping Hand

Among those who consume meat alternatives, more than two thirds (66%) say they would eat more protein alternatives if they knew how best to prepare them.⁸ ([source](#))



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The Taste Factor

72% of Americans agree that plants can be a complete source of protein and 54% agree that recipes made with plant protein are just as, if not more, delicious than recipes based with animal protein.³ ([source](#))

83% of Americans are open to making meatless dishes, particularly if they have a similar taste or texture to meat-centric dishes.⁹ ([source](#))

Majority of Americans (65%) believe that plant protein can be just as hearty and satisfying as animal protein.³ ([source](#))

Health Matters

Nearly half (46%) of those who buy vegetables are actively trying to eat more, and more than a third say they are eating more this year than last year, motivated largely by the nutritional benefits of vegetables and an interest in a plant-based diet.⁷ ([source](#))

35% of all consumers see a link between exclusively plant-based eating and health.⁴ ([source](#))

30% of meat alternative consumers eat the products because they are watching their cholesterol; 29% are worried about their consumption of saturated fat; and 28% are trying to lose weight.⁷ ([source](#))

74% of meat alternative consumers agree it is worth it to pay more for products that they think are good for their health.⁷ ([source](#))

Younger Generations Making Different Food Choices

Millennials (60%) and Generation X (55%) are more likely than baby boomers (46%) to agree that they worry about potentially harmful ingredients in the food they buy.⁹ ([source](#))

Millennials are more likely to reduce the amount of animal protein they consume than Generation X or Baby Boomers.³ ([source](#))

Millennials are significantly more likely to cite food and environmental sustainability concerns as their top consumption driver.³ ([source](#))

Millennials are also more than twice as likely as Baby Boomers to cite environmental benefits and animal rights as their motivation for incorporating plant protein into their diets.³ ([source](#))



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Appendix

- ¹ Foley J. Feeding 9 Billion | National Geographic [Internet]. National Geographic Magazine. [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/feeding-9-billion/>
- ² OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2014 [Internet]. OECD Publishing; 2014 [cited 2017 Oct 6]. (OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook). Available from: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2014_agr_outlook-2014-en
- ³ Lightlife. A Meaty Story: Lightlife Uncovers Why More Americans Are Turning To Plant Protein And Redefining [Internet]. Cision PR Newswire . 2017 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/a-meaty-story-lightlife-uncovers-why-more-americans-are-turning-to-plant-protein-and-redefining-how-we-think-about-protein-sources-300427640.html>
- ⁴ Crawford E. Vegan is going mainstream, trend data suggests [Internet]. Food Navigator-USA.com. 2015 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Markets/Vegan-is-going-mainstream-trend-data-suggests#.VQhVdfcW134>
- ⁵ marketsandmarkets.com. Meat Substitutes Market by Type, Source, Region - 2022 | MarketsandMarkets [Internet]. 2016 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/meat-substitutes-market-979.html>
- ⁶ State of the Market Report. WhooPea: Plant Sources Are Changing the Protein Landscape [Internet]. luxresearch. 2014 [cited 2017 Oct 6]. Available from: <http://members.luxresearchinc.com/research/report/16091>
- ⁷ Roberts B. The Protein Report: Meat Alternatives - US - January 2017 - Market Research Report [Internet]. 2017 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: http://reports.mintel.com/display/793029/?__cc=1
- ⁸ Mintel: Americans like meat-free days [Internet]. ingredientsnetwork.com. 2017 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.ingredientsnetwork.com/mintel-americans-like-meatfree-days-news044963.html>
- ⁹ California Walnut Board. New Study Reveals Americans Are Open to Following Plant-Based Diets [Internet]. Cision PR Newswire. 2017 [cited 2017 Sep 12]. Available from: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-study-reveals-americans-are-open-to-following-plant-based-diets-300465802.html>