



## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS



RESTAURANT  
TOOL KIT

Diners are seeking plant-based options for reasons ranging from weight and health management to saving money to eating more sustainably. Restaurants that embrace this shift towards plant-based eating can benefit from increased foot traffic, lower ingredient costs, and a point of differentiation from their competitors.

**"Plant-based dining is 2018's trend of the year!"**

- International restaurant consultants Baum + Whiteman

### INCREASED FOOT TRAFFIC

Many restaurants are reporting that adding plant-based offerings attracts new customers. Pret A Manger saw double-digit sales increases of its vegetarian items in 2016 which led to the 2017 launch of 20 new plant-based dishes. Umami Burger started carrying the Impossible Burger in 2017 and has found it to be the #1 driver of new sales chainwide – now accounting for one-third of all burger sales.



CAPITALIZE ON THE SHIFT TO PLANT-BASED EATING!

[goodfoodscorecard.org](http://goodfoodscorecard.org)

### Appealing to Millennials

Millennials are far more likely than other generations to eat meat alternatives in a restaurant.<sup>1</sup> Given that the Millennial generation accounts for 25% of the U.S. population and is projected to spend \$1.4 trillion annually by 2020, this is an important segment to consider. According to the USDA, among all generations, Millennials devote the smallest share of food expenditures to grains, white meat, and red meat.<sup>2</sup>

### The Flexitarian Consumer

The burgeoning growth in plant-based eating is being driven by flexitarians – those actively consuming less

<sup>1</sup> *The Protein Report: Meat Alternatives U.S.*, Mintel (2017).

<sup>2</sup> A. Kuhns and M. Saksena, *Millennials Devote Larger Shares of Their Grocery Spending to Prepared Foods, Pasta, and Sugar and Sweets Than Other Generations*, USDA Economic Research Service (2017).



beef, chicken, pork, and dairy – not by vegan or vegetarian consumers. Less than 5% of the population identify as vegan and vegetarian and it hasn't shifted much over the years, whereas flexitarian eating patterns are now widely adopted, particularly among Millennials. As a restaurant operator, it's not necessary to completely remove meat from your menu; instead, add more plant-based options and also make vegetables more prominent in entrées that do contain meat.

**LOWER INGREDIENT COSTS**

Protein-rich plant-based foods like legumes and grains offer several benefits including lower costs, a longer shelf-life than animal products, and less price volatility. While some plant-based meat, seafood, and dairy products are priced at a premium, consumers are seeking them out and seem willing to pay for products that are better for their health and the environment.

**POINT OF DIFFERENTIATION**

Restaurants face competition for dining dollars due to over-development, penny pinching by consumers,

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and competition from supermarkets and meal kit companies. Adding plant-based entrées can provide an important point of differentiation by adding interest to your menu, allowing for innovation, and aligning your brand with customer values around health and environmental sustainability.

As plant-based entrées continue to grab press headlines and social media shares, restaurants should capitalize on this interest by offering more protein-rich, plant-based menu items.



 Download all the resources in the Restaurant Toolkit to better understand consumer motivations in shifting toward plant-based eating, the reasons why this represents an opportunity for your restaurant, ideas on adding plant-based entrées to your menu, and best practices in marketing these dishes.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**



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