



WHY CONSUMERS ARE SHIFTING TO PLANT-BASED EATING



Consumers say they choose to eat more plant-based foods due to a variety of reasons including improving their overall health, weight management, a desire to eat “clean,” and to eat more sustainably. These self-reported motivators are most likely reinforced by the media attention that plant-based celebrities and athletes garner as well as the movies that have been released over the past few years calling attention to the health and planetary concerns of a diet that includes meat.

HEALTH

The main reason consumers say they reduce their meat consumption is to be healthy and feel well physically. It’s well-known that meat consumption is directly linked to the rise of obesity and to an increased risk for several types of cancer, stroke, cardiovascular disease, lung disease and diabetes. According to the CDC, nearly 1 in 3 Americans has high cholesterol, which puts them at risk for several of those diseases.¹ Because plant-based foods contain no cholesterol, consumers with health concerns are highly motivated to eat more of them.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

In a 2017 national survey by market research firm Nielsen, a whopping 62% of U.S. consumers listed weight management as one of the benefits of plant-based eating.² For the seventh consecutive year, *U.S. News & World Report* voted the plant-based eating plan the best choice overall for losing and maintaining weight.³ Plant-based diets are typically higher in fiber, help people feel full longer, and they usually contain a higher percentage of fruits and vegetables which are less calorie-dense than other foods with similar volume.

¹ E. Benjamin, M. Blaha, S. Chiuve, M. Cushman, S. Das, R. Deo, et. al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2017 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2017;135:e1–e458.

² Nielsen, US Homescan Panel Protein survey, April 2017.

³ *U.S. News & World Report*, January 4, 2017.

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The percentage of consumers who reported eating meatless to be more socially responsible or sustainable increased by **44%** from 2014 to 2017.⁴

SUSTAINABILITY

Although consumers report health as being the primary motivator of choosing to eat plant-based dishes, the percentage of consumers who reported eating meatless to be more socially responsible or sustainable increased by 44% from 2014 to 2017.⁴ From an environmental perspective, meat that is derived from factory farms, which is 98% of all meat in the U.S., is damaging on many levels. Conventional animal agriculture contributes 18% of all global greenhouse gas emissions – more than the entire transportation sector! Animal agriculture covers 30% of all land on earth not covered in ice, and utilizes 25% of all freshwater on earth. The inherent caloric and resource inefficiencies of factory farming will be unsustainable in the years ahead as we struggle to feed 9.7 billion people globally by 2050.


MEDIA ATTENTION


Plant-based eating is becoming mainstream in part because of celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres, Miley Cyrus, Casey Affleck, Jay-Z, Beyoncé, and many others.

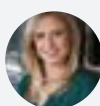
Athletes like Venus Williams, Kyrie Irving, NFL players, ultramarathoners, and bodybuilders all extol the benefits of plant-based eating and the impact it's had on their performance. Health-oriented podcasts and movies like *"Forks over Knives"* have gained traction as well; a new movie about plant-based athletes from Avatar-director James Cameron, *"The Game Changers,"* recently premiered to great acclaim at the Sundance Film Festival. New plant-based products like the Impossible Burger and the Beyond Burger have seen their sales skyrocket due to viral media attention in mainstream news channels.

Whether consumers are motivated to seek out plant-based options for health, weight management, or sustainability factors, The Good Food Institute's Restaurant Toolkit can help you respond to the demand in ways that are consistent with traditional drivers such as taste, price and convenience.

⁴ *Center of the Plate: Seafood & Vegetarian Consumer Trend Report*, Technomic (2017).



 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.

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