

## PLANT BASED REVIEW 2021

Despite recent reports that plant-based meat alternatives are losing their appeal in the US with sales down for seven consecutive months up to October, in the UK sales continue to gather pace. Phenomenal growth of 16.3% in the last year has taken the market value to £660m (Kantar Aug 21) making the UK one of the largest markets for plant-based products globally, second in size only to the US. And all indications are that there is still plenty of headroom for growth.

Veganuary, the annual challenge to eat vegan for the month of January, is a popular opportunity for many consumers who want to try out the diet for a month. Some 580,000 consumers took part in Veganuary in the UK this year, up from 400,000 in 2020. According to Veganuary stats, their participants cited the following reasons for taking part: 22% Health | 46% Animals | 21% Environment | 11% Other.

Mintel report that 34% of UK adults have limited their meat intake all/most of the time. So it's not surprising that with so much consumer interest, UK retailers & brand owners have responded in earnest to the increased need for broader ranges & higher quality plant based products. There is confidence that sales can grow - in September 2020, Tesco set out plans to quadruple its plant-based sales by 2025.

### UK Retailers

Sainsbury's is pushing meat alternatives with its recent 'try your halfest' campaign which encourages everyone to eat better, one dish at a time. As a sponsor of the UN Climate Change Conference the retailer is doing its bit to raise awareness & provide consumers with accessible strategies to reducing their meat consumption should they wish to.

Waitrose has launched its biggest range of vegan and vegetarian products, unveiling its GoVeggie and Plantlife brands across its meals & snacking categories to help consumers looking for a more holistic approach to their lifestyle.

The Co-op reduced the cost of 29 fresh, chilled & ambient vegan products in 2021, making them more accessible to help shoppers adopt flexitarian diets.

Asda followed its 2020 launch of an ambient vegan aisle with a trial of its new 'vegan butchers counter' concept at its Watford store at the start of the year. The 'Veelicious' counter was trialled for 6 months to help Asda understand what works with customers and enable them to improve their plant-based food proposition.

### Eating Out

Veganuary is a great opportunity for pubs & restaurants to explore and test vegan meals on their menu when there is high demand. Younger consumers aged 18-44yrs consider healthy food options to be important when eating out, with 57% interested in diet specific menus such as vegan menus.

Pizza Express has opened a new vegan restaurant in London and launched a new menu with vegan versions of its classics, which is something pubs can emulate with their



menus. Wagamama launched a new 50% plant-based menu in October and even introduced Vegamama, a Godzilla-style monster to promote it on TV!

## Innovation

### *Fast Food Appeal*

Vegan fried chicken start-up VFC launched a range of products in Tesco on 1 November 2021 for World Vegan Day. These include the brand's VFC Original Recipe Chick\*n Fillets, VFC Original Recipe Popcorn Chick\*n and VFC Original Recipe Chick\*n Bites. VFC was founded in the UK in December 2020 by Veganuary co-founder Matthew Glover alongside chef and restaurateur Adam Lyons.



### *Focus on Flavour*

In 2021 brands focused on elevating the taste experience of Tofu & Tempeh through the launch of new flavours. Tiba Tempeh launched its plant based and 100% natural product in new curry-spiced and sweet chilli flavours, while Planet Kuku incorporated Tofu Kuku in a frittata with roasted vegetables and thyme in 2021.

## *Fish Alternatives*

Nestlé unveiled plans in October for plant-based NPD across fish, seafood and egg replacements, with its creation of a plant-based shrimp called Vrimp! Currently sitting under its Garden Gourmet brand, Vrimp is made from soy and flavoured with bell peppers, paprika and carrot. It is being trialled in the Swiss market, with plans to bring it to the UK and other global markets later.



With Veganuary 2022 just around the corner, there has never been as much choice when it comes to eating plant-based whether it's in or out of home!

Source : Veganuary.com | Mintel Attitudes towards Pub Catering 2021 | The Grocer Blog 11.21

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