

PURPOSEFULLY PLANT BASED

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SPACE

2023 TREND REPORT BITE



PLANT-BASED

With the plant-based industry continuing to explode, new brands and startups are experimenting with flavor to create alternatives that are enjoyable for traditional meat-eaters, but also vegetarians and vegans. At the same time, they are considering the environmental impact and leaning towards ingredients that are fresh, preservative-free, and clean from additives. Across food categories, brands are encouraged to add more vegetables and greens to their products—and sometimes, even to go completely vegan while considering the impact on the environment.

Innovation Themes:

Meatless Umami • Sustainable Seaweed • Perfectly Pistachio • Modern Mylk



36% GROWTH

Plant-based food and beverage launches grew exponentially between 2017 and 2022 in North America.

TASTE & TEXTURE
are top considerations when purchasing plant-based alternatives.

Source: Innova

Meatless Umami

Food startups are leveraging the use of bold and earthy mushrooms to create a meat-like flavor and texture, while still delivering that full-flavored umami mouthfeel.

Packed with nutrients and flavor, mushrooms (lion’s mane, shitake, portobello) offer a robust plant-based (and sometimes vegan) meat alternative.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



BIG MOUNTAIN FOODS FIRST-TO-MARKET LION'S MANE MUSHROOM CRUMBLE is loaded with protein and plant-powered nutrients. Ingredients: Lion’s mane, portobello, shiitake mushrooms

“Plant-based protein is now a common household term as it increased in popularity competing against traditional fresh meat products.” KANTAR



SOL SIPS, A BROOKLYN-BASED VEGAN RESTAURANT, LAUNCHED ITS SIGNATURE PLANT'D CHICK'N that’s made with fried oyster mushrooms in a chickpea batter. A cult favorite at the restaurant, the meat-mimicking Plant'd Chick'n is also free of gluten, nuts, and soy.

Sustainable Seaweed

Snack brands and plant-based companies are rethinking the seaweed they source and leaning towards sustainable options that offer pure flavor profiles without any additives.

The benefits of seaweed are going beyond the beauty category. It can take on a variety of flavor profiles (chickpea miso, sesame furikake seasoning, bacon) as well as forms (flakes, salt, burger).

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



AKUA KELP BURGER IS THE WORLD'S FIRST KELP BURGER. It’s a 100% vegan, plant-based, non-GMO, soy-free, and gluten-free burger created from ocean-farmed kelp, mushrooms, and superfoods. Ingredients: Kelp, mushrooms, pea protein, quinoa, black beans, chickpea flour, seasonings



ALG SEAWEEED USES AUSTRALIAN SEAWEEED TO CREATE PANTRY ITEMS AS WELL AS SNACKS including chocolate bars, snack bars, spice blends, protein bars, and seaweed flakes. Flavors: Chickpea Miso, Crunchy Sesame Furikake Seasoning; Seaweed Salt

Perfectly Pistachio

Brands and chefs are increasingly experimenting with pistachios for a subtly sweet and nutty flavor profile by using it in bases such as milk and pasta, and in dessert dishes for added pops of texture and flavor.

The protein-rich ingredient adds a subtle, yet elevated flavor to beverages and dishes beyond the traditional snack.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



CHEF-MADE PLANT-BASED BRAND, LAZY FOOD, CREATES READY-TO-EAT DISHES INCLUDING VEGAN PISTACHIO PESTO with the pistachios providing an added nutty flavor profile to the dish.



MILK AND HONEY NUTRITION OFFERS A RECIPE FOR CARAMELIZED ONION AND PISTACHIO VEGGIE BURGERS packed with 12g protein per burger, with a secret ingredient that is the perfect grain-free binder and adds plant-based protein and fat, pistachios.

Modern Mylk

Brands are tapping into new plant-based ingredients (beyond oats, almonds, and cashews) for dairy-free bases that are better for the environment and offer delicious flavor profiles.

The newest dairy substitutes also put the planet first (upcycled barley and regenerative Bambara groundnuts). These milks can take on many flavor profiles including chocolate and vanilla.

PRODUCTS OF NOTE



DUG POTATO MILK, A VEGAN-FRIENDLY, PLANT-BASED DRINK COMPANY INTRODUCED POTATO MILK IN THREE DIFFERENT VARIETIES.

Original, Barista, and Unsweetened



THIS PKN IS A NEW MILK BRAND MADE ENTIRELY FROM PECANS with no sugar added and tastes reminiscent of pecan pie and praline. Flavors: Original and Chocolate

“Brands are exploring new dairy alternative ingredients to keep consumers engaged.” MINTEL

THE TAKEAWAYS

Purposeful Plant-Based highlights how plant-forward alternatives are swiftly becoming mainstream. Support the experimentation with flavorful, fresh, and clean ingredients.

- Bold and earthy mushrooms create full-flavored meat alternatives.
- Use of pistachios' subtly sweet and nutty flavor profile in bases such as milk, pasta, and desserts.
- Snack brands and plant-based companies are offering seaweed in new forms, while staying true to its natural flavor profile.
- New plant-based ingredients that are better for the environment and offer delightful flavor, while acting as a healthy dairy substitute.



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