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INDUSTRY WEEKLY DIGEST

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management

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A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO 'PLANT-BASED' CONSUMERISM

The significant uptake of alternative milks is by no means a novel contribution towards industry discussion, however, as the plant-based trend continues to evolve, Lakeside's **Lauren Haffenden**, asks, are we milking it? Or is this an established purchasing behaviour that signposts hospitality towards adopting an even more flexible future?



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LAKESIDE: MILKING IT?

LAUREN HAFFENDEN

According to a recent **report**, 37% of consumers now seek out a plant-based alternative to milk. Findings in our own hospitality training environment: **Lakeside Restaurant and Coffee Shop**, back this notion and we further observe that not only is demand steeply increasing, but we are also beginning to see a change to the type of customer opting to go dairy-free. Many demographic determining factors appear to be less significant and even our most loyal 'blue-top' Flat White fans are opting for oat milk on occasion!

Why? Whether for environmental, health or ethical reasons, switching out dairy comes with little cost and a comparable taste thanks to stiff competition and advancements in product development.

Some sources may maintain that living an entirely plant-based life style is the only sustainable diet, but 'supplementary' plant-based consumerism is clearly a strengthening trend, with **75%** of plant-milk users still also using dairy milk.

By **2025**, 1 in 4 of us are expected to be vegetarian or vegan with a further 1 in 2 of us adopting a 'flexitarian' diet. We could call this selective plant-based consumerism, or perhaps we could take a more positive outlook and see it as a real opportunity to welcome customers back with more flexible menus and encouragement to experiment with alternatives.



FURTHER READING:

[Sustainable Restaurant Association](#)

[Veganuary](#)

2021 possesses conflicting interests for hospitality. Significantly, survival during the ongoing pandemic and beyond. Considering trends may be therefore seen as a luxury activity, however with climate change on the agenda, embracing trends and capitalising on sustainably conscious customers will be prudent in appealing to a wider market and sustaining a competitive edge.