

The Meat of the Matter

Plant-based alternatives are increasingly grabbing consumers' attention and dollars

Vegetarians and vegans remain a small, single-digit percentage of the U.S. population — only around 5 percent of households — but that isn't stopping the rapid growth of plant-based meat alternatives. Increasingly at major restaurant chains, consumers can find plant-based burgers, fried chicken, sausage sandwiches, and more. Wider availability is prompting increased trial among meat and non-meat eaters alike. Here are some of the latest insights on the plant-based trend:

18%

of the adult population is trying to increase the amount of plant-based foods in their diets.

Consumers want to incorporate more plant-based foods because:

- They wish for more protein in their diets;
- Concerns for animal welfare and how meat products are brought to market;
- Sustainability; and
- What they perceive to be healthier nutrition.



Source: The NPD Group, Health Aspirations and Behavioral Tracker



228 MILLION

There were **228 million servings of veggie burgers and veggie sandwiches ordered** at quick-service restaurants in the year ending May 2019, up 10 percent from a year ago.

Source: The NPD Group, CREST

The strong year-over-year growth is primarily due to increased availability at major chains:



Burger King recently made its plant-based meatless and vegan burger, the Impossible Whopper, available nationwide for a limited time at 7,000-plus locations and via delivery.



Dunkin' launched a plant-based meat alternative, The Beyond Sausage Breakfast Sandwich, at select locations in New York City. The chain plans to roll out the sandwich nationally at a future date.



Kentucky Fried Chicken started a limited test run of a plant-based chicken, Beyond Fried Chicken. Customers can enjoy it in the form of nuggets or boneless wings.

“Plant-based burgers allow consumers to substitute without sacrifice. **They get the ‘burger’ experience while assuaging their need for more protein and social concerns.** With that said, U.S. consumers have not given up on beef burgers, but are willing to mix things up every now and then.”

— DARREN SEIFER, The NPD Group

6.4 BILLION

Beef burgers, though, are still by far the most popular burger ordered at QSRs. There were **6.4 billion servings of beef burgers ordered** at QSRs in the year ending May 2019.