

A GUIDE TO NUTRITIOUS PLANT-BASED DIETS



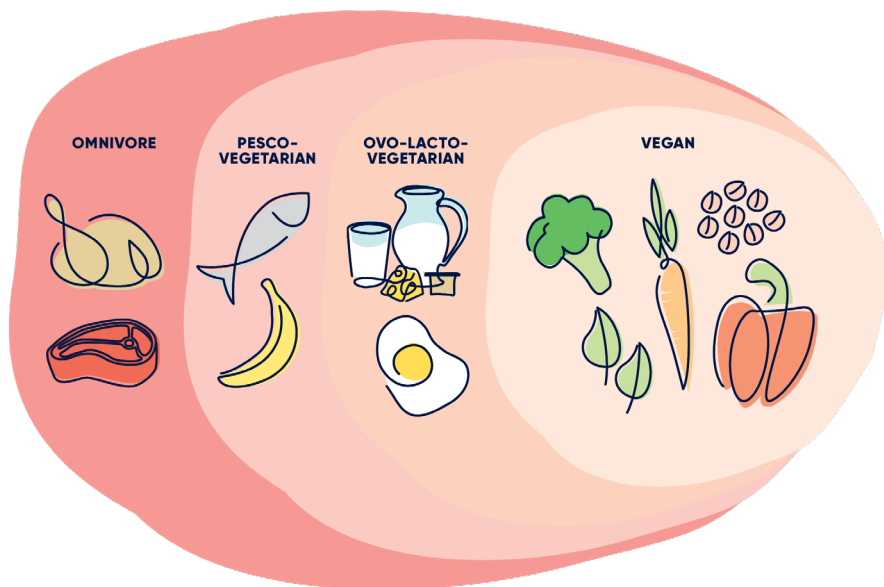
While plant-based dietary patterns are very much on-trend, they aren't anything new. The current interest in sustainability, along with health and animal welfare, are key drivers behind this interest. However, with the overwhelming volume of information available, it's hard to know where to start, and what a healthy, plant-based diet actually looks like.

What is a plant-based dietary pattern?

Plant-based dietary pattern is an umbrella term for a variety of dietary patterns that emphasise food derived from plants, including omnivore, flexitarian, vegetarian and vegan.¹ Plant-based dietary patterns are flexible and can include animal sourced foods, such as dairy (milk, cheese, and yoghurt).

Current Australian and international dietary guidelines recommend a plant-based dietary pattern to support positive health outcomes.² Dietary modelling shows that a plant-rich dietary pattern that also includes nutrient dense dairy foods increases the likelihood of nutritional adequacy.^{3,4}

THE SPECTRUM OF PLANT-BASED DIETARY PATTERNS



What are the benefits of including dairy in a plant-based dietary pattern?

1. Including **nutrient-rich foods like milk, cheese, and yoghurt** not only enhances the nutritional adequacy of a plant-based dietary pattern, but also adds to taste, variety, and enjoyment.
2. Dairy foods offer a unique matrix of nutrients, including **protein and calcium, in a highly absorbable form**. The nutrient package of dairy cannot be compared to or replicated by plant-based alternatives.
3. **Dairy foods can offer health benefits** to the whole family. Milk, cheese, and yoghurt are associated with a range of positive health benefits for people of all ages, ranging from infants and teens, through to adults and seniors. Consuming dairy across all ages can help support in the development of strong bones, teeth and healthy muscles, while also reducing the risk of heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, colorectal cancer and more.



How does dairy compare to plant-based alternatives?

Plant-based beverages struggle to replicate the unique nutrient package that milk offers. Stacked up against milk, plant-based beverages contain a different package of vitamins and minerals, which are often added through fortification. These fortified nutrients appear in smaller quantities, which may differ depending on the type and brand of beverage, and often aren't as well absorbed by the body.

Beverage ingredients list

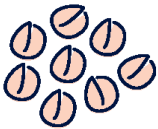


MILK
Milk.



OAT BEVERAGE

Filtered Water, Whole Oats (min 15%), Oat Flour, Sunflower Oil, Gum Arabic, Mineral (Calcium Phosphate), Sea Salt.



SOY BEVERAGE

Filtered Water, Organic Whole Soy Beans (min 17%), Pearl Barley, Barley Malt, Raw Sugar, Sunflower Oil, Minerals (Calcium Phosphate), Natural Flavouring, Sea Salt, Kombu (Kelp), Vitamins (Vitamin B2, Vitamin A, Vitamin B12).



PEA BEVERAGE

Filtered Water, Pea Protein Isolate (4%), Sugar, Minerals and Vitamins (Calcium Phosphate, Vitamin B2, Vitamin D, Vitamin B12), Natural Flavours, Stabilisers (418, 415), Salt.



RICE BEVERAGE

Filtered Water, Whole Brown Rice (min 1.3%), Sunflower Oil, Calcium Phosphate, Sea Salt.



ALMOND BEVERAGE

Filtered Water, Whole Almonds (min. 3.8%), Raw Sugar, Minerals (Calcium Phosphate), Emulsifier (Sunflower Lecithin), Sea Salt, Vegetable Gum (Gellan), Natural Flavour.

Did you know?

Milk protein is a complete protein – containing all the essential amino acids our bodies need – whereas many plant sources of protein, such as cereals, nuts, and seeds, are considered lower quality, incomplete proteins.



True or False?

True or false? All animal-based foods are unsustainable.

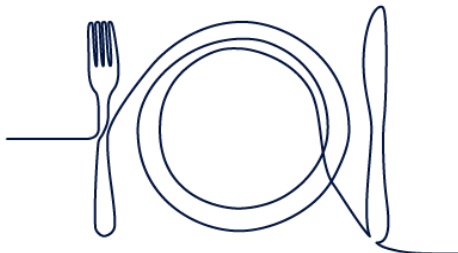
False! Not all animal-based foods are unsustainable. The Australian dairy industry has been at the forefront of sustainable food production in our country – with 2022 marking 10 years since the introduction of the Australian Dairy Sustainability Framework. The industry has made significant progress since 2012, and is continuously working to improve through farming practices, animal welfare, and supporting local communities through providing healthy nutritious food at low cost.

True or false? Dairy can be part of a healthy sustainable, plant-based dietary pattern.

True! Dairy can be part of a healthy sustainable, plant-based dietary pattern. Plant foods provide plenty of fibre and an array of unique antioxidants and nutrients. However, they lack nutrients like vitamin B12, long chain omega-3 fats and are low in absorbable forms of iron, zinc, and calcium. Dairy can help fill in these nutrient gaps, while also adding to taste, variety, and enjoyment.

True or false? Plant-based alternatives are always healthier.

False! There are significant knowledge gaps in the nutritional composition, food matrix, nutrient bioavailability and health attributes of plant-based meat, dairy and egg substitutes. There remains a shortage of long-term evidence on not only the health outcomes, but the broader sustainability impact of substituting animal-based foods for newer plant-based alternatives.



How can I start eating a dairy-rich, plant-based diet?







Eating a variety of nutrient-rich foods in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, which includes milk, cheese, and yoghurt, will naturally result in a nutritionally balanced plant-based diet.

The World Health Organisation Europe⁵, in their 2021 review of evidence on plant-based diets and the impact on health, sustainability, and environment suggests:

"It may be helpful to focus on incremental transitions towards plant-based diets by adopting plant-forward eating, in which meat is not necessarily excluded but is not the central feature of the meal."

For more information on how to start eating a dairy rich, plant-based diet, consult your GP or visit <https://www.dairy.com.au/sustainablediets>

Characteristics of dietary patterns that emphasise the consumption of plant foods (Salas-Salvado et al.)⁶

Foods	
DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)	Emphasises fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products, and includes whole grains, poultry, fish, and nuts. Reduced consumption of saturated fat, red meat, sweets, and sodium. 
Macrobiotic diet	Emphasises locally grown whole-grain cereals, pulses (legumes), vegetables, seaweed, fermented soy products, and fruit, combined into meals according to the ancient Chinese principle of balance known as yin and yang. 
Mediterranean diet	Characterised by a high intake of olive oil as the principal source of dietary fat, fruit, nuts, vegetables, and cereals; a moderate intake of fish and poultry; a low intake of dairy products, red meat, processed meats, and sweets; and a moderate intake of wine with meals. 
Pescatarian diet	Plant-based diet including fish or other seafood, but not the flesh of other animals. 
Vegan diet	Plant-based diet avoiding all animal foods such as meat (including fish, shellfish, and insects), dairy, eggs, and honey, as well as products such as leather, and those that are tested on animals. 
Vegetarian diet	Plant-based diet avoiding all animal flesh-based foods and animal-derived products. Some modified versions allow eggs (ovo), dairy products (lacto), or a combination of both. 

1 Salas-Salvadó J, Becerra-Tomás N, Papandreou C, Bulló M. Dietary patterns emphasizing the consumption of plant foods in the management of type 2 diabetes: a narrative review. *Adv Nutr.* 2019;10(S4):S320–S331.

2 Food and Agriculture Organization. Food-based dietary guidelines. Available: fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines.

3 R Salas-Salvadó J, Becerra-Tomás N, Papandreou C, Bulló M. Dietary patterns emphasizing the consumption of plant foods in the management of type 2 diabetes: a narrative review. *Adv Nutr.*2019;10(S4):S320–S331.

4 Harland J, and Garton L. An update of the evidence relating to plant-based diets and cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and overweight. *Nutr Bull.* 2016;41(4):323–338.

5 World Health Organization. Plant-based diets and their impact on health, sustainability and the environment: a review of the evidence. 2021. Available: apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/349086

6 R Salas-Salvadó J, Becerra-Tomás N, Papandreou C, Bulló M. Dietary patterns emphasizing the consumption of plant foods in the management of type 2 diabetes: a narrative review. *Adv Nutr.*2019;10(S4):S320–S331.



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