



“The Accidental Vegetarians”

New study reveals that 52% of Brits eat vegetarian 261 days of the year

We might not realise it, but it seems we all enjoy a bit of vegetarian dining with more than half the UK population not eating meat or fish for almost three quarters of all meals.

The survey of 1,000 men and women, undertaken on behalf of the Linda McCartney Vegetarian range, revealed 52% of Brits eat meat or fish less than twice a week, the equivalent of 104 days of the year. This means 31 million Brits are ‘Accidental Vegetarians’ – eating the vegetarian way most of the time, and often without being aware of it! More than a quarter of people surveyed (26%) said they eat less meat now than they did five years ago, so maybe the old tradition of meat and two veg really is becoming a thing of the past.

Taste comes out top

Surprisingly only 10% of people chose not to eat meat every day for health reasons, suggesting that taste and quality of food are more important issues than health. Meanwhile, 29% of respondents said they chose to cook without meat because it was quicker and easier and fitted in with today’s busy lifestyles.

Variety is the spice of life

32% of people said that they chose not to eat meat or fish as they liked variety in their diet, with pasta, stir fries and rice dishes featuring heavily in Brits’ weekly menus.

- 94% of people surveyed eat pasta or rice at least once a week
- A whopping 81% of 20-25 year olds eat stir fry 2-3 times a week
- 76% of people surveyed eat a vegetarian ready meal/meat replacement once a week or more, this percentage increases to 88% among 20-25 year olds

Going vegetarian

The survey also revealed that more and more people are going completely meat-free, with 1 in 10 people surveyed (6.2 million people) leading a vegetarian lifestyle. With many celebrities across the UK adopting the vegetarian way, the benefits of a meat-free diet are there for all to see.

Comments Hain Celestial's James Gentle who is working closely with the McCartney family on the re-launch of the Linda McCartney range: "'Meat and two veg' was still very much a part of people's everyday lives when Linda first launched her range of vegetarian ready meals more than fifteen years ago. It's really interesting to see how times have changed since then and how her pioneering of the vegetarian food market has had an impact on people's eating habits today."

Other interesting facts

- Northern cities had the highest percentage of vegetarians (13% of people surveyed), 3% above the national average
- 21% of people in Southern England cities of Maidstone and Norwich, and 20% of Londoners admitted to eating meat every day
- 51% of people over 40 choose not to eat meat as they like variety in their diet
- The Welsh are most cost-conscious with 34% of people surveyed choosing not to eat meat as it is expensive
- 10% of 20-30 year olds eat pasta/rice every day
- 48% of 20-25 year olds eat less meat than they did five years ago
- 80% of Londoners eat a vegetarian ready meal/meat replacement once a week or more

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