



Culinary Institute  
of America

# Adding Plants to Your Menu

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# Understanding the Terms







# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

**Plant-Forward:** Often used synonymously with “vegetable-centric,” “vegetable-forward,” and “plant-centric.”

**Plant-Based:** Used to refer to ingredients and foods themselves, i.e. fruits and vegetables (produce); whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses), and soy foods; nuts and seeds; plant oils; and herbs and spices. Different from “plant-forward,” which refers to the style of cooking and eating that emphasizes and celebrates these foods, but is not limited to them.

**Vegetarian:** Dishes that do not contain meat or fish but may, or may not, contain dairy, eggs, and/or honey, and individuals who do not eat meat or fish but may, or may not, eat dairy, eggs, and/or honey.

**Vegan:** Dishes that do not contain any ingredients that came from animals, or individuals who do not eat any ingredients that came from animals.

**Flexitarian:** Describes individuals whose primary eating pattern does not contain meat but may occasionally include meat or fish.



# More on Plant-Forward

- We are talking here primarily about *whole, slow-metabolizing, minimally processed* foods—not (plant-based) chips and soda. And not an over-reliance on other, common fast-metabolizing carbohydrates—noodles, white rice, white bread, sugar, etc.
- Diversity, flexibility, and preserving choice are key to successful plant-forward menu innovation.
- And always good to remember: In traditional cultures, plant-forward has meant appealing family meals that are *accessible and affordable*.



# Why is it so hard?

- Consumer perception hasn't caught up yet
  - Vegetables are bland
  - Vegetables are boring
- Employee skill hasn't caught up yet
  - Vegetables need care and talent
  - Techniques are not different from animal products
  - Give permission to do something other than boil vegetables





## Taste satisfaction remains the most salient barrier to eating less meat at restaurants.

Over a third of consumers are also worried about not getting enough protein and being hungry shortly after a plant-forward or meat-free/reduced meal. In particular, concerns around missing out on protein and energy are shared among more consumers in 2024 than in years past and is highest among Gen Z and Boomers.



# THE BIG STAT

# 44%

of consumers are open  
to a plant-forward diet

49% of Gen Z

51% of Millennials

51% of High-Income HHs (\$100K+)

54% of Foodies

67% of Meat Limiters







# 55%

of consumers are open to  
trying more **dishes that mix  
animal and plant proteins**

57% of Gen Z

60% of Millennials

62% of High-Income HHs (\$100K+)

66% of Foodies

60% of Meat Limiters







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How do we  
make it happen



# Elevating vegetables



“We don’t like vegetables any more than you (Americans) do. The reason we eat so many vegetables is because of how we prepare them, with olive oil.”

--Antonia Trichopoulou, MD, PhD  
Head, Academy of Athens Center for  
Public Health Research and Education  
Athens, Greece



# Loose the labels

- Do not label your menu with vegetarian / vegan / plant forward / plant based etc
- Use descriptive words to highlight ingredients and technique
  - Charred brussels sprouts
  - Roasted cauliflower
  - Summer squash and egg tagine

## DINNER AT SUPPER

### START

- + **roasted sweet peppers & eggplant** vinagre de jerez, rogue river blue cheese...11
- + **charred squash & cucumber** chilled ricotta whey, black garlic, pistachio...12
- + **pimento cheese** benne seed crackers, red pepper jelly...10
- + **hot-smoked salmon** dapper goat cheese, pickled red onion...18
- + **surryano country ham** cheddar croquette...19
- + **hill country venison tartare** sweet onion, sonoran wheat, quail egg...26
- + **grilled greens** poached egg, truffle bagna càuda...20

# Go Global

- Many global cuisines are plant forward
  - Tagines
  - Stir-frys
  - Mezzes
  - Gyros / tacos







Making vegetables *craveable*!

In Asia, deliciousness in the plant-forward kitchen is often achieved by leveraging spices, aromatics, fermentation, and array of techniques such as roasting, wok frying, and more.



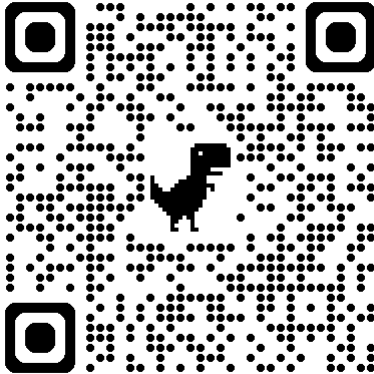




**Venerable Jeong  
Kwan**

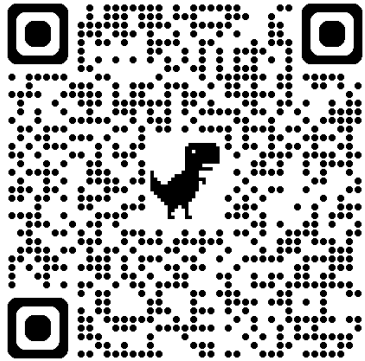
# Bowls

- A new favorite
- Can represent many cuisines
- Lots of veg / grain / legume
- Small amounts of animal protein on top



# Flip The Protein

- Reimagine the 6:00 / 2:00 / 10:00 plating pattern
- Make the animal portion as delicious / succulent / craveable as possible
- The plant part needs to stand up as well

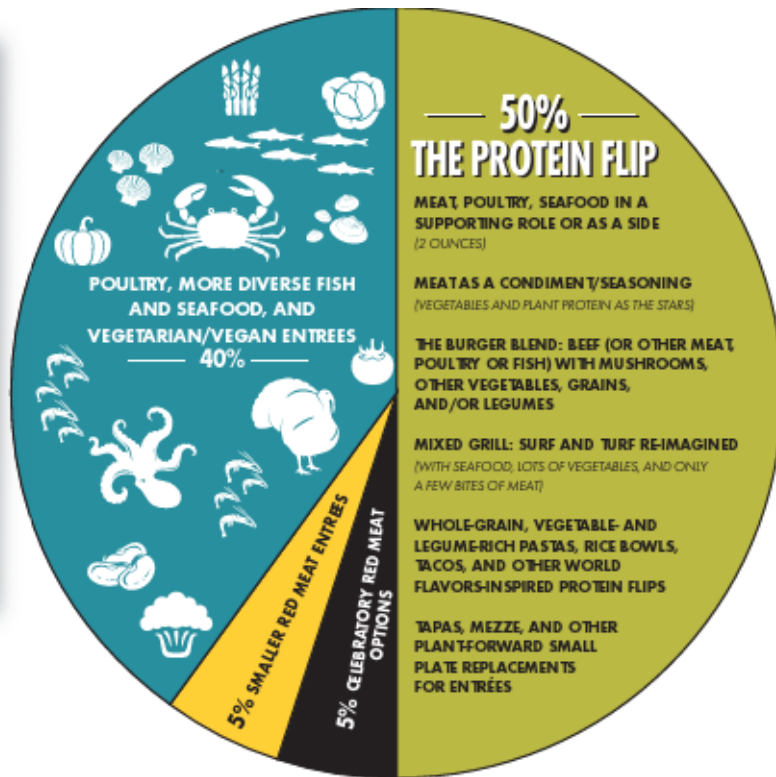


[https://www.ciaprochef.com/MCURC\\_ProteinFlip/](https://www.ciaprochef.com/MCURC_ProteinFlip/)



## REBALANCE YOUR PROTEINS

HERE'S ONE APPROACH TO SHIFTING YOUR PROTEIN SOURCES AND ENTRÉE STRATEGIES AS PART OF A NEXT-GENERATION MENU MIX. HOW MIGHT YOU CRAFT THIS MIX FOR YOUR OPERATION?



## OPERATORS: IS YOUR PROTEIN PORTFOLIO READY FOR THE FUTURE?

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# Blend the Protein

- For burgers up to 30% chopped mushroom
  - For sauces / chili / shepherds pie up to 50% chopped mushroom
  - Up to 20% lentil
  - Other grains and seeds
- White bean puree in egg salad
- Tofu in chicken salad



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# The Blended Burger: Culinary Strategy



- Potential to transform 10 billion hamburgers consumed each year
- 70% beef/30% mushroom hamburger blend would translate into (per year)\*\*
  - 10.5 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions eliminated with associated agricultural changes (equivalent to taking 2.3 million cars off the road)
  - 83 billion gallons of irrigation water saved
- CIA-UC Davis sensory science work established evidence-base for its later success.

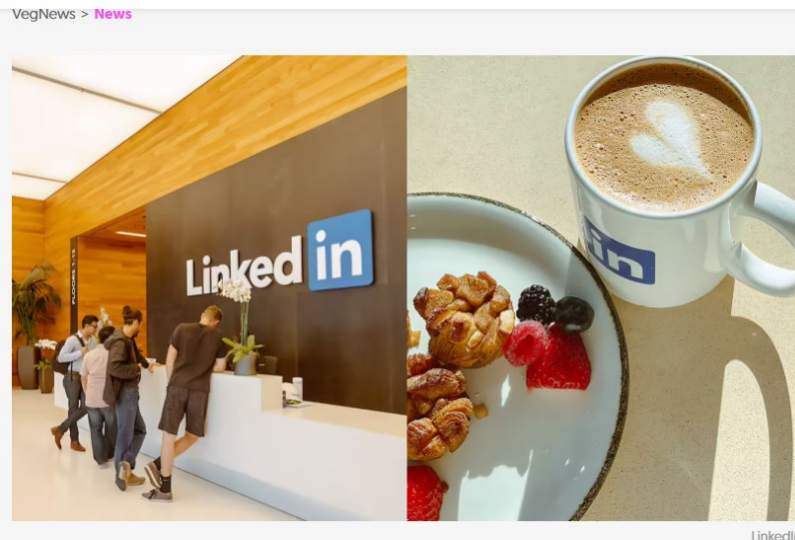
*\*\*Source: World Resources Institute*





# Choice Architecture

- Make the plants stand out
- Make the meat hard to find
- Educate the staff
- Communicate with the guests
- Proof of Concept
  - United States Air Force
  - Google
  - LinkedIn



## LinkedIn's San Francisco Office Quietly Shifts to 65 Percent Plant-Based Menu

<https://vegnews.com/2023/1/linkedin-shifts-65-percent-plant-based>

# Meat Alternatives?

- Beyond / Impossible are losing relevance
  - Plant based yes but healthier?
- Lab grown meat still in development
  - ~5 years before scale-up is likely
- Long term effects are only speculative

## ***Beyond Meat Is Struggling, and the Plant-Based Meat Industry Worries***

A few years ago, business was booming. That growth has slowed, with some wondering if the number of consumers has reached its limit.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/21/business/beyond-meat-industry.html>



<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/the-next-normal/alternative-proteins?cid=other-eml-alt-mip-mck&hlkid=28b0815e28794e0cac4ea88a295d5b15&hctky=13394099&hdpid=1c565546-4dfb-4083-abcd-c9a72353476e>

# Global “Stealth Health” – The 5 “Blue Zones”

- “Blue Zones” – Dan Buettner, Author, *The Blue Zones Solution*
  - Places with the world’s longest-lived and healthiest people
    1. Ikaria, Greece
    2. Okinawa, Japan
    3. Ogliastra Region, Sardinia
    4. Loma Linda, CA
    5. Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica







# Blue Zones

- Ikaria, Greece
  - World's lowest rates of middle-age mortality and dementia
  - Traditional Mediterranean diet
    - Fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, whole grains, legumes, seafood, poultry, red wine, smaller amounts of dairy and meat products
- Okinawa, Japan
  - Home of the world's longest-lived women
  - Okinawan sweet potatoes, soybeans, mugwort, turmeric and goya (bitter melon)
- Ogliastra Region, Sardinia
  - World's highest concentration of men over 100
  - Low-protein diet





# Blue Zones (cont.)

- Loma Linda, California
  - Seventh-day Adventists
  - Some live 10 more healthy years than the average American
  - Biblical diet of grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables
- Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica
  - World's lowest rate of middle-age mortality and second highest concentration of men over 100
  - Strong faith communities, deep social networks and habits of regular, low-intensity physical activity



# Blue Zone Culinary Innovation Project

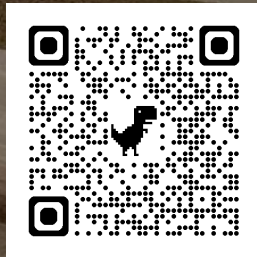
Creating healthy cuisine using global flavors

- Greece
- Japan
- California – Seventh Day Adventist (Lacto-ovo vegetarian or Vegan)
- Costa Rica



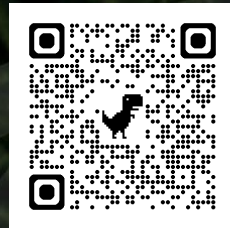


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the Food Team at Google  
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