

News Article

USA: Research suggests 98% of Americans are meat eaters

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Americans age 18 to 24 years old are three times as likely than the general population to follow a vegetarian diet with only 2% of the general population saying they don't eat meat or seafood, according to Mintel's recently released research.

Interestingly, although there was a low penetration of red meat eaters among respondents in the oldest age group (65 and older), they were significantly more likely to eat fish or seafood. This is likely a factor of the increased need to monitor cholesterol, fat and calorie intake, and a move to a lighter diet, Mintel said.

In regards to the general population, 10% of Americans say they do not eat fish or seafood. Vegetarians are much more likely to exercise than those who do not agree with the statement "I am a vegetarian." Nearly 70% of vegetarians say that "they make sure to exercise regularly" in comparison to 38% of those who are not vegetarians. In addition, vegetarians are almost twice as likely as all respondents to snack on healthy foods.

More than one-third of Americans consume some type of vegetarian food, with meat-free meat substitute products having the highest level of uptake among respondents. Prepared vegetarian meals were consumed by nearly one in five respondents, which could reflect the trend toward interest in convenient, healthy, and easy-to-prepare meals.

The vegetarian food market in the US has grown rapidly over the past five years, from US\$646.7m in 1998 to \$1.6bn in 2003. Mintel predicts that the market will grow another 61% to reach \$2.5bn by 2008.

In the food subcategory of the vegetarian market, the segment to post the most significant growth is frozen meat substitutes, increasing nearly 18% in the two-year period, and which also commands 73% share of the vegetarian foods subcategory. Refrigerated dairy milk alternatives (primarily soy milk) showed the strongest growth of all vegetarian food and drink covered here from 2001 to 2003. This is likely at the expense of its shelf-stable counterpart, which posted a 3.3% loss compared to a 68% jump for the refrigerated segment of dairy milk alternatives.

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