

Report [here](#) and poll [here](#)

New sandwich survey: sector's still too meaty, but big jump in alternative protein

- Analysis by Eating Better reveals many retailers have reduced or dropped plant-based sarnies, while others charge more for climate-friendly fillings
- A public attitudes poll shows 95% of people eat sandwiches for lunch and 60% are willing to eat less meat, with cost and health the main drivers



Food service and food retail greatly influence how we shop and what we eat and holding them to account is key to shifting the dial to get us all eating better. Using the sandwich sector as a proxy, Eating Better tracked and benchmarked retailer commitment to sustainable eating by examining changes in their sandwich offer. Our new report “**Sandwiches Unwrapped 2022**” looks at changes in vegetarian and plant-based sandwich ranges against meat-based ones.

Working with [Oxford University's foodDB](#) team, we surveyed **430** sandwiches in **14** different food retail and food service outlets in the UK (including the Big Four - Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons) during **February 2022**.

What's new: Big jump in alternative protein, but plant-based still pricey or not on offer

- One of the stand-out statistics this year is the rise of alternative protein as a meat-free

sandwich filling, up by **620%** since our last sandwich survey in **2019**.¹

- **Tesco** has **reduced** its plant-based sandwich offer by **28%** on 2019 figures, whilst **Morrisons** and **Asda** have **dropped** their plant-based sandwich options entirely.
- On average, plant-based options are the **most expensive** sandwich type, making the most sustainable option less accessible, and particularly so in a cost of living crisis.
- **Sainsbury's** plant-based offer is **15%** more **expensive** than its meat offer.

No change: Sector's still too meaty with high fat and salt

- Our 2022 data shows that **84%** of sandwiches contained meat, fish or cheese, a drop of only **1%** on our last sandwich survey three years ago.
- **Meat** is the **main ingredient** in **59%** of the sample we surveyed. Of those **38%** contain red or processed meat and **28%** contain chicken.
- More than **50%** of sandwiches, with **high salt** or **high fat** levels, contain **meat**.

What's new: Sector's shrinking and food service leading on plant-based

- Our analysis shows the range has **decreased** across the board since our **2019** survey, shrinking by more than **50%** at some outlets.
- **Food service** is now **out performing** food retail, in terms of providing more sustainable offers, with **34%** of their sandwiches meat-free and **half** of this is plant-based, e.g **Pret** - only **42%** meat of its range is meat, meeting our [Better By Half](#) roadmap² ask of having no more than **50%** of the range meat-based.

Executive Director at Eating Better, Simon Billing said:

“Three years on from our last sandwich survey, and with yet more evidence from climate scientists on the need to reduce our meat consumption, it's deeply disappointing that the sandwich aisle is still too meaty and that plant-based is too pricey.”

“Companies make commitments to tackle climate change and promote healthy eating, but our survey shows they're still not doing enough to support affordable, sustainable diets. And even though there's been a big leap in alternative protein fillings, it's been at the expense of dropping veggie sandwiches. Our poll shows they're still a popular choice.”

“If we're to stand any chance of tackling the climate, nature and health crisis we need to be eating a lot less meat and dairy and a lot more affordable and nutritious plant-based foods. A better balance would be meat fillings making up no more than 50% of all sandwich ranges.”

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director at Food Foundation said:

“Eating Better's sandwich survey highlights the need for reformulation of convenience foods to contain less meat and more veg to improve outcomes for our health and the environment. The lack of affordability of plant-based options is a serious barrier to people transitioning to healthier and more sustainable diets. If people are going to reduce their meat consumption, alternative

options need to be the most convenient and affordable for everyone.”

Annette Mansell-Green, Director of Trade Union and Public Affairs, British Dietetic Association said:

“We want to see retailers as partners in public health so that affordable, convenient options are available to consumers and they can achieve balance in their diets easily. It’s crucial that a range of options are available as we know that upping our intakes of plant-based foods is a great way to get beneficial nutrients across the day, as well as reducing our climate impact.”

Eating Better regularly conducts public attitude surveys to take the temperature of where people are on the journey to shifting to sustainable diets with less meat and dairy and more plant-based foods. The key findings of this year’s survey³ are:

- More than **60%** of respondents are willing to consider eating less meat, of those **nearly two thirds** are aged **18-35**.
- **Nearly a quarter** are eating less meat than they were in **2020**.⁴
- The trend towards a flexitarian diet continues with **16%** of people only eating meat **one or two** days a week, a **45%** increase on **2020** figures.
- A **fifth** would give up meat for health reasons, while **nearly a quarter** would give up meat to save money.

This year’s analysis also took a deep dive into food-to-go to find out what’s happening in that sector and if sandwiches are still popular. We found that:

- **94%** of people eat sandwiches for lunch
- **64%** of people buy lunch to go at least **once** a week.
- **Nearly half** of people eat vegetarian or vegan sandwiches
- **Price** is the **biggest priority** for people when choosing to buy sandwiches.

Ends

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact:

Carole Mitchell | Head of Communications

Email: carole@eating-better.org | media@eating-better.org

Mobile: 07917 105000

Notes for editors:

- ¹Eating Better’s “Sandwiches Unwrapped 2019” survey [here](#)

- ²[Better by Half: A roadmap](#) to less and better meat and dairy provides 24 actions to be taken across 5 sectors to create an better food environment to drive the necessary transformation in eating habits.
- ³Eating Better polled 2311 individuals across the UK's general population over the weekend of 11th/12th June 2022. The survey was conducted by Savanta on behalf of Eating Better. People were asked 10 questions across a range of topics, 5 of which were consistent with previous iterations of Eating Better's public attitude survey. The sample is representative of the adult population of the UK, covering all major regions and age groups (18+) and can therefore be used to draw reasonable assumptions on the attitudes of the general population. Full results [here](#)
- ⁴Eating Better's 2020 Public Attitudes Survey [here](#)

About Eating Better

Eating Better is a movement for change of [sixty organisations working together](#) to accelerate the transition from producing and eating too much meat and dairy to a fairer, healthier and more sustainable food system that is better for our own health, for animal welfare and for nature.

Together we can all eat better for people and planet

<https://www.eating-better.org>

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