

Plant-based Milk

A Dairy Alternative



The rise of veganism has fueled strong growth in plant-based foods and drinks. Globally, around 80 million people now follow a vegan lifestyle, with the number of vegans in Europe doubling between 2016 and 2020.

Plant-based milk refers to beverages made from nuts, cereals, or legumes—offered as sustainable, dairy-free alternatives. Though often called “milk,” these products are more accurately described as plant-based drinks. They serve as bases for items like tea, coffee, shakes, and smoothies, and are also used in dairy-free versions of yogurt, cheese, butter, and other spreads.

The global market for plant-based milk reached €21.3 billion in 2021 and is projected to hit €58.9 billion by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 13.6%. North America and Europe lead this trend, with the U.S. making up the largest share—about 35%—of global plant-based beverage sales.



Why CHOOSE Plant-Based Milk?

Diet Preferences: With 37% of Europeans identifying as vegans, vegetarians, or flexitarians, demand is rising for dairy alternatives that align with animal welfare and sustainable lifestyles.

Sustainability: Plant-based milk requires less water and land and generates fewer emissions than animal farming, making it an eco-friendlier option.

Lactose Intolerance: Many people, especially in countries like Italy where up to 50% are lactose-intolerant, turn to plant-based milk as a digestible alternative.

Health Benefits: Typically low in calories and free from hormones, plant-based milk appeals to health-conscious consumers.

Lower Production Costs: Without the need for animal care or breeding, production is often more cost-efficient than traditional dairy.

USES of Plant-Based Milk

- Plant-based milk can replace dairy in nearly all applications:
- Ideal for coffee, cereal, or drinking on its own
- Works well in baking—soy and almond milk are popular choices
- Coconut milk substitutes for heavy cream
- Cashew and almond milk are used in dairy-free ice cream
- Oat and almond milk are common in smoothies
- Coconut or cashew milk can be used to make thick yogurt and cheese



The choice depends on texture, functionality, and personal taste.

CHALLENGES

A significant challenge in the adoption of plant-based milk is its often disliked aftertaste. To overcome this, manufacturers are creating flavored variations, such as nut-infused oat milk or vanilla-flavored plant milks. It is crucial to use high-quality ingredients, like nature-identical flavors, to improve taste and appeal to consumers.

GROWING ADOPTION IS EXPECTED TO DRIVE GROWTH IN THE NEXT DECADE

With rising demand for healthier, sustainable options, the plant-based milk market is projected to continue expanding rapidly over the next 10 years.



Ultimately Plant-Based Alternatives are a STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

The environmental impact of traditional dairy production has led to a surge in demand for plant-based foods and beverages. This shift is driven by increased ecological awareness, changing dietary preferences, and rising lactose intolerance. Consumers are actively seeking healthier, more sustainable alternatives, fueling the growth of the plant-based milk market.

To meet these expectations, producers must prioritize high-quality ingredients, particularly natural or organic flavors, to ensure appealing taste and broad consumer acceptance. With strong potential for innovation and continued growth, the plant-based milk market offers abundant opportunities for manufacturers to explore.



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