

The Science of Vegan

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March 29, 2018



Consumer demand for vegan products is growing. A recent study from Nielsen on behalf of both the *Plant Based Foods Association* and *The Good Food Institute* showed sales of vegan alternatives to dairy products increased by **20%** in 2017 compared to 2016¹. Food delivery company GrubHub² reported a **19%** increase in vegan orders for the first half of 2017 compared to the previous year. Even more revealing, according to research firm GlobalData, **6%** of U.S. consumers now claim to be vegan, up from just 1% in 2014³.

Even if veganism is still a somewhat niche approach to eating, awareness and social drivers behind this trend, such as the growing demand for eating better, sustainability and animal welfare, have pushed veganism to the mainstream.

These consumers tend to skew younger, indicating this trend may not be going away. According to a 2018 report by The Hartman Group⁴, a majority of consumers who have tried a vegan or vegetarian diet, as well as those who have switched to a dairy/lactose free diet, are Millennials.

To meet the increasing demands of consumers, more—and more creative—vegan alternatives are showing up on grocery store shelves and on restaurant menus. The Hartman Group reported a 25% increase in vegetarian product launches between 2010 and 2016, and a 257% increase in vegan options. With all this competition, companies are wondering: how do we set our products apart? How do we process food in a shelf-stable product, with balanced nutrition, but maintain consumer-attractive pricing?

At Edlong, those are the same questions we ask ourselves every day. We strive to create authentic dairy flavor profiles that meet the demands of our customers, and their consumers. Our flavor scientists are experts in understanding the key components and reactions needed

to reflect those needs, creating formulas that meet real-world challenges and tastes. One example is our Vegan Vanilla Ice Cream.

Creating the perfect vegan ice cream was particularly challenging. As [this article](#) about Ben and Jerry's Flavor Guru Kirsten Schimoler explains, "Milk may look surprisingly simple in its smooth, silky whiteness, but it's actually a complex choreography of water, protein, fat and sugar. When it's made into ice cream, each of those components plays a role." Which ups the ante for our flavor scientists—not to make a great vegan ice cream, but to make a great ice cream, that is vegan.

Fortunately, our flavor scientists are up to any challenge. They carefully selected the flavor components to substitute for milk and cream, taking into account a wide variety of factors and components, such as Carboxylic Acids, Esters, Alcohols, Furanones and Lactones, to build a flavor profile that mimics dairy. Plant-based proteins can taste beany and grainy, as well as have waxy characteristics. Masking these undesirable attributes is vital to create a rich, sophisticated and delicious product. Our team not only experimented with ingredients, but with the right balance of each.

Edlong's experts are true masters at creating authentic products. Our Vegan Vanilla Ice Cream combines a coconut base to avoid icy water crystals, organic cane sugar for a sweet mouthcoating, and natural dairy flavors to create a completely dairy-free and vegan ice cream with a true dairy mouthfeel, and no artificial sweeteners. This ice cream also contains pea protein, a common ingredient in dairy alternatives that is known for contributing off-notes. Once our authentic dairy flavors were added, the profile had significantly increased sweetness, vanilla, butter, brown caramelized and marshmallow attributes—and the off-notes from the pea protein were masked completely.

Vanilla ice cream is just one of a nearly endless list of products that can be made to meet the growing demand of vegan consumers. At Edlong, we've created more than **250** authentic, dairy-free flavors across all of our flavor categories. Each helps build the richness, mouthfeel and authentic taste of dairy that are often lost in dairy-free formulations.

Another enticing example of a savory vegan dessert is our [Edlong Vegan Praline Blondie](#). We've captured the rich, sweet and decadent taste of a praline blondie with ingredients such as chickpeas and sweet potatoes—not that you would know it. Toasted pecans and brown sugar flavors delightfully capture the taste of this Southern favorite.

For more than one hundred years Edlong has been perfecting the taste of dairy. We know that today's dairy-free and vegan-leaning consumers demand better products. [Download more information](#) about our vegan flavors, and to see how we can help you rise to today's challenges, [contact us](#).

Plant Based Foods Sales Report, September, 2017

Grubhub's Mid-Year Data Analysis, July, 2017

Top Trends in Prepared Foods, July, 2017

The Hartman Group: *Vegan and Dairy-Free Report*, January 2018

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