Nutrition Action

Plant-Lover's Plate Plate

5 reasons to cut back on animal foods



How to toss less food

April Fools!
The latest tricks

Got **Plant Milk?** MFMO

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT MEAT



hey say you can **L** gauge the success of your efforts by how vehemently your opponents react. By that criterion, alternative meats are on

A fledgling sector that has morphed into an

\$800-million-a-year darling of Wall Street, the alternative-meat industry is now on the receiving end of some serious pushback from cattle ranchers and others.

Some of the dustup is about naming rights: Can plant-based meats—especially the breakout stars Beyond Meat and Im-

possible Burger call themselves "meat"?

The cattle ranchers want to confine "meat" to foods derived from actual animals. (Meat made from cells in a lab raises another set of questions about naming... and safety. See Oct. 2018, p. 2.)



Does "plant-based patties" sound like real meat to you?

The fuss over names is playing out in Congress, the states, the courts, and the all-important court of public opinion.

The Real MEAT Act of 2019—which has been introduced in both the House and Senate—would require alt-meats to carry the moniker "imitation." The bills are currently languishing in their respective committees.

Under the guise of protecting consumers from deceptive labeling, a number of state legislatures have introduced or passed similar bills.

But it's not a slam dunk for the meat industry. A federal judge blocked one state law when she ruled that Arkansas cannot ban the term "meat" or similar terms on Tofurky products. In her preliminary ruling, Judge Kristine

Baker reasoned that consumers will understand that Tofurky products are not derived from animals because labels prominently feature words like "vegetarian," "vegan," or "plant based" on the front of the package.

We agree.

While CSPI supports legitimate efforts to protect consumers from deceptive labels and ads, these bills are designed to protect the meat industry from competitors.

Into the fracas has waded the ill-named Center for Consumer Freedom, which cut its teeth running interference for the tobacco industry but has diversified to support restaurant, alcohol, and food company interests.

In October, the center took out a full-page

ad in the New York Times asking menacingly, "What's hiding in your plant-based meat?"

That's rich, coming from a group whose earlier foravs into chemicals in food included pooh-poohing the risks of mercury in fish.

The industry front group is fear

mongering, not raising legitimate safety questions. And what about the risks red meat poses to our health and to the planet we leave to our children (see p. 3)?

CSPI is working to make sure that both meat and meat alternatives are safe. Meanwhile, consumers are voting with their pocketbooks, and even giants like Burger King and McDonald's are adding meat-free menu items.

How's that for consumer freedom?

Peter G. Lurie, MD, MPH, President Center for Science in the Public Interest

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e Plant-Lover's Plate 5 reasons to cut back on animal foods BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Red meat is in the hot seat these days. Experts call it a threat to both our health and the health of the planet our children will inherit. But it's not just whether to cut back on red (and processed) meat. The question is: What will take its place? Here are five reasons to fill most of your plate with plants.

Help your heart. How do researchers know that a "plant-forward" diet is good for the heart?

"There are layers of evidence," says Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

For starters, nuts, beans, soy, and other plant sources of protein have more polyunsaturated fat and less saturated fat than red meat and dairy.

"We've known for 50 years that polyunsaturated fats reduce LDL—or badcholesterol and saturated fats raise LDL," says Willett. And "red meat is extremely low in polyunsaturated and quite high in saturated fats."

Dozens of studies have demonstrated the impact of different fats on LDL.1

"Trials clearly show that replacing red meat with plant-based protein sources like nuts, beans, and soy foods reduces LDL levels," notes Willett.²

And it's not just saturated vs. polyunsaturated fat. Last year, researchers fed people diets rich in red meat (beef), white meat (chicken and turkey), or non-meat proteins (largely beans, nuts, and soy foods) for four weeks each.3

To look beyond the impact of fats, the scientists made all three diets equal in saturated and polyunsaturated fat, largely by adding saturated fat from full-fat dairy foods and butter to the white meat and non-meat diets.

(That's why LDL was equal on the red-meat and white-meat diets. See Sept. 2019, p. 3.)

The surprise: LDL was lowest on the non-meat diet.

"Detailed comparison suggests plant proteins are better for the heart," said

the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (which funded but did not conduct the study) on its website.

"Ideally, if we wanted to know about the long-term health effects of plants, red meat, or other foods on heart attacks or other chronic disease, we'd randomly assign thousands of people to different diets for many years to see what happened to their rates of those diseases," savs Willett.

But few such studies have ever been done.

"It could be very hard to get thousands of people to sign up to be randomized, hard to keep them on those diets, and hard to get an ethics board to approve diets that have adverse effects on cardiovascular risk factors like LDL," notes Willett.

So instead of assigning people to different diets, researchers ask people what they eat, then track their illnesses for years or decades. Recently, those studies have looked at people who eat



Healthy plant foods can help protect your heart and your brain.

diets rich in *healthy* plant foods.

"Soda and doughnuts are plant foods," says Willett, "but they're definitely not healthy." So his team created an index for healthy and unhealthy plant foods.

People gained points for eating fruits, vegetables, nuts, beans, whole grains, oils, tea, and coffee more often. And they lost points for eating refined grains, potatoes, fruit juices, sugary drinks, sweets, and desserts more often.4-6

"Diets high in healthy plant-based foods did best," says Willett. That is, people eating them had a lower risk of both heart disease and type 2 diabetes. "The unhealthy plant-based diets did the worst."

But people don't have to go vegan that is, avoid all animal foods.

"The further you go toward a plantbased diet, the lower your risk of these diseases," says Willett. "But it's not all or nothing."

"In fact, we can't say whether a very low intake of animal protein is better or worse than no animal foods at all. Having a little fish, poultry, or dairy may be a safety net to provide certain nutrients. That's typical of many traditional diets like the Mediterranean diet."

Sustain your brain. "Another reason to keep your blood pressure down: It can lower your risk of dementia," ran the Los Angeles Times headline in 2018.

The big news: In the SPRINT MIND trial, people with high blood pressure who were randomly assigned to reach a systolic blood pressure below 120 had a lower risk of mild cognitive impairment —which can lead to dementia—than people assigned to reach 140 systolic.⁷

"What SPRINT has shown is that what is good for your heart is also good for your brain," co-author Jeff Williamson,



professor of gerontology and geriatric medicine at the Wake Forest School of Medicine, told the *Times*.

SPRINT MIND cut blood pressure in the below-120 group by an average of 18 points using multiple drugs. But in some people, a DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet can bring blood pressure into the normal range without drugs.

"In the DASH trial, a DASH diet lowered blood pressure by 11 points in people with hypertension," says Frank Sacks, professor of cardiovascular disease prevention at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

"That's as effective as some drugs."

A key component of DASH: fruits and vegetables.

"Fruits and vegetables are important foods to protect us against hypertension," says Sacks. But they only accounted for half of the diet's impact in the DASH trial.

"Eating fish and chicken instead of beef and pork, vegetable oils instead of butter, and more low-fat dairy ac-

counted for the other half," says Sacks.

Could lowering blood pressure with diet protect the brain as well as lowering pressure with drugs?

The MIND trial is looking at whether a DASH-like diet—tweaked to include more of some foods like berries, olive oil, and nuts—can slow cognitive decline (see Jan./Feb. 2020, p. 3).

But even if the diet only prevents strokes, that's a plus. Tiny, often undetected strokes are the underlying cause of what scientists call vascular dementia, the second most common cause of memory loss.

"We're hoping the MIND diet can prevent both Alzheimer's and vascular dementia, but there's more reason to be optimistic about vascular dementia," says Sacks. "Many people with memory loss have both." Cut your risk of cancer.

Willett's studies didn't find a link between the plant-diet index and deaths from cancer, possibly because cancer isn't just one disease.

"Cancer is complicated because each cancer has a different set of risk factors acting at different ages," he cautions.

Nitroso Trouble

Processed Meat

Nitrites + Meat Protein = N-nitroso Compounds

Gut Bacteria

Nitroso Trouble

Red Meat

Processed Meat

Nitrites + Meat Protein = N-nitroso Compounds

Red meat's heme iron can help create carcinogenic N-nitroso compounds. (Don't worry about nitrates from vegetables or water.)

But a plant-forward diet can help you dodge at least one cause of one cancer.

In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) put processed meats—like bacon, hot dogs, ham, sausage, and lunch meats—in the same evidence category as tobacco smoking and exposure to asbestos.⁸

"IARC had 22 experts from 10 countries evaluate over 800 studies, and they classified processed meats as carcinogenic to humans based on sufficient evidence for colorectal cancer," says Marjorie McCullough, senior scientific director of epidemiology research at the American Cancer Society.

But that conclusion "does NOT mean that they [processed meats, tobacco, and asbestos] are all equally dangerous," noted IARC.

Each daily serving of processed meat (2 oz., or roughly the size of a hot dog) increases the risk of colorectal cancer by about 18 percent, said IARC. In contrast, smoking raises the risk of lung cancer by 1,500 to 3,000 percent (that is, 15 to 30 times).

Burgers, steaks, pork chops, and other *un*processed red meats (beef, pork, lamb,

and veal) are *probable* human carcinogens, concluded IARC, because the evidence was less certain than it was for processed meats.

What's the evidence behind IARC's conclusions? Most comes from studies that ask people what they eat and then track them for years to see who gets cancer.⁹

"The data suggests that there's no threshold below which you can say that an amount of processed meat poses no risk of colorectal cancer," notes McCullough.

(Last year, a metaanalysis concluded that there is too little evidence to recommend eating less red or processed meat, but the authors failed to consid-

er all the evidence on meat and cancer.)

IARC also relied on "strong mechanistic evidence," says McCullough. "How these foods increase cancer risk is not known, but there are several strong possibilities." Among them:

■ N-nitroso compounds. "When you consume processed meat, you may consume pre-formed N-nitroso compounds, which are carcinogens," says McCullough.

"Other processed meats contain nitrates and nitrites, which can form N-nitroso compounds in the gut."

■ Heme iron. Red meats are rich in heme iron, which is part of the hemoglobin in blood. "Heme iron can catalyze the formation of N-nitroso compounds in the gut," says McCullough.

Almost 20 years ago, researchers put





The more we use antibiotics, the more bacteria become resistant to them.

people on a diet that included either beef and pork or poultry and fish.10

"When they ate the red meat, they had a greater output of N-nitroso compounds than when they ate the white meat," says McCullough.

■ Mutagens. "Mutagens are formed when meats are cooked at high heat or when they're exposed to smoke," explains McCullough. "Mutagens can cause DNA damage, and that increases the potential for colorectal cancer."

Beyond meat and colorectal cancer, the evidence on diet and cancer is intriguing but uncertain.

"Fruits and vegetables are related to lower ER-negative breast cancer," says Willett. (ER-negative tumors are not responsive to estrogen.)

In a 24-year followup of roughly 182,000

nurses, the risk of ER-negative breast cancer was 12 percent lower for every two servings of fruits and vegetables eaten per day.11

The links were clearest for orange or yellow vegetables (like carrots or winter squash) and berries.

"The association with ERnegative breast cancer is also seen in studies that look at blood carotenoid levels," adds Willett. (Carotenoids like beta-carotene give many fruits and vegetables their orange or yellow color.)

And ER-negative tumors are more difficult to treat.

"It's the most dangerous kind of breast cancer," says Willett.

Keep antibiotics work-

"WHO warns that pipeline for new antibiotics is running dry," reported the New York Times in January.

"Never has the threat of antimicrobial resistance been more immediate and the need for solutions more urgent," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, in summing up the WHO report that led to the *Times* headline.

Each year, at least 2.8 million U.S. residents get an antibiotic-resistant infection, and more than 35,000 die, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.12

What makes bacteria resistant to antibiotics?

"It's just a matter of evolution," says Lance Price, professor of environmental and occupational health at George Washington University.

"Every now and then, a bacteria picks up a mutation or a gene from another bacteria that makes it resistant to some antibiotic. If that antibiotic is present, then the susceptible bacteria are going to die off and the resistant ones are going to multiply."

And bacteria multiply fast.

"You can go from a single drug-resistant E. coli to more than a billion in 24

hours," says Price.

What does that have to do with food? Two-thirds of the 20 million pounds of medically important antibiotics sold every year in the United States are used in livestock (mostly cattle and pigs), according to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"The antibiotics are being used to prevent or treat diseases that occur in part because we raise animals in concentrated animal feeding operations," explains Price.

"When I see these operations, I don't see factories making meat. I see factories making trillions and trillions of drugresistant bacteria."

And some of those drug-resistant bacteria end up in people. "We're barreling toward a time when our antibiotics no longer work," says Price.

Protect your children's planet.

"Wildfires at all-time high. Arctic sea ice remains at record lows," says the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 13 "The Earth's climate is changing."

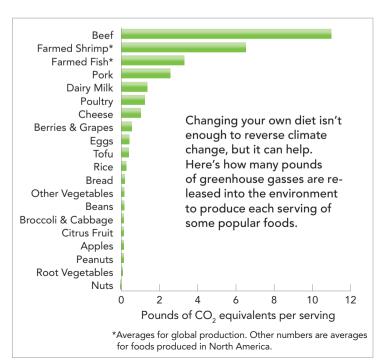
The change shows up in virtually every indicator that the EPA and the National Climate Assessment track, from rising global greenhouse gas emissions, sea levels, and air and ocean temp-

> eratures to more heatwaves, heavy rains, persistent drought in the Southwest, and flooding on the coasts and in Northeast, Pacific Northwest, and Midwest rivers. 14,15

And time is running out.

"The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected," said a "climate emergency" warning from 11,000 scientists in 153 countries in January.16

"Especially worrisome are potential irreversible climate tipping points... that could lead to a catastrophic 'hothouse Earth,' well beyond the control of humans."



Among the events that could trigger a tipping point: melting Antarctic or Greenland ice sheets, loss of Arctic sea ice, or drought in the Amazon rainforest (see map).17

And what we eat matters.

"Business as usual in the food system is not an option," says Nicole Tichenor Blackstone, assistant professor of agriculture, food,

and environment at Tufts University.

Eating more plants and fewer animal foods can help.18

"Globally, livestock systems are responsible for around 11 to 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, they occupy 80 percent of global agricultural land, and they use around 30 percent of agricultural water," notes Blackstone.

Beef takes the greatest toll.

"The differences are not small," says Harvard's Walter Willett. "Beef produces far more greenhouse gas per serving than plant proteins like soy and nuts." (See graph, p. 5.)

Why? "Beef cattle have a much higher carbon footprint than nonruminant animals like pork or poultry or plant-based proteins in part because cows consume grass," explains Blackstone.

Digesting that grass makes cattle expel methane from both ends of their GI tracts (mostly from burps).

And "methane is a greenhouse gas that's 25 to 28 times more powerful than carbon dioxide," says Blackstone.

Greenhouse gasses aren't the only problem. Growing enormous quantities of grain to feed livestock—and the animals' manure—can pollute water with nitrogen and phosphorus.19

"Nitrogen and phosphorus have consequences, like the algal blooms in Lake Erie and the Gulf of Mexico," says Blackstone.



Tipping points like melting ice in Greenland, Antarctica, and the Arctic could amplify each other, creating a catastrophic "hothouse Earth."

What's more, "plant-based proteins tend to use less water, which matters in places where water is scarce." (Exception: In North America, almonds require about as much water per serving as beef. 19)

What about plant-based "meats"? "Life-cycle assessments commissioned



Eat more plants. You can swap the tofu for chicken, seafood, or even red meat when you miss them.

by Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods show roughly 90 percent lower greenhouse gas emissions, 90 percent less water use, and 90 percent less land use compared to beef," says Blackstone. 20,21

"If you eat plant-based meats in place of pork, the reductions are a little less dramatic."

Overall, red meat has ripple effects throughout the environment.

"We're cutting down forests and

plowing under prairies to produce animal foods that are destroying our biodiversity and interfering with water systems," explains Willett.

"We're growing vast amounts of grain, much of it to feed to animals, not people. And the fertilizer that's being used to grow that grain is poisoning our streams and oceans."

"This bizarre food system is bad

for the planet and bad for people."

Worst of all, our children and grandchildren will face the consequences.

"When we talk about environmental sustainability, we're not only talking about our ability to live now with clean water. clean air, et cetera," says Blackstone.

> "We're talking about avoiding catastrophic warming and, in some cases, total ecosystem collapse."

> "If you don't do it for today, do it for your kids and grandkids. The choices we make can build a more sustainable future for them."

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Quick Studies

A snapshot of the latest research on diet, exercise, and more.

Coconut Oil Comes Up Empty



s coconut oil harmless, even though its fat is 90 percent saturated?

Researchers analyzed 14 randomized controlled trials that pitted coconut oil against non-tropical vegetable oils like soybean, canola, and olive. Compared with those oils, coconut oil raised LDL ("bad") cholesterol by 11 points.

Coconut oil did raise HDL ("good") cholesterol, but genetic studies and trials testing HDL-raising drugs have failed to show that HDL protects the heart, noted an editorial published with the new study.

Coconut oil's main fat, lauric acid, is sometimes called a medium-chain fat, but biologically, it acts more like a long-chain saturated fat, added the editorial.

The researchers found no evidence that coconut oil lowers body weight, body fat, blood sugar, or inflammation, as some enthusiasts claim.

What to do: Aim for a diet rich in unsaturated rather than saturated fats.

Circulation 2020. doi:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.119.043052 & 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.119.044687.

Mmm... Smells Good!

o aromas alter how much people eat? Italian scientists had 30 women with obesity sit in a room with or without a mild bread fragrance (dispersed from a vaporizer) for 15 minutes. After sitting in



the scented room, the women ate about 25 percent more vegetable soup than after sitting in the unscented room.

What to do: Be aware that appealing aromas may make you eat more.

Front. Psychol. 2019. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00007.

Dairy Fat Makeover



airy fat raises LDL ("bad") cholesterol, boosting the risk of heart disease. Could farmers give milk a makeover?

British researchers asked 54 people to consume about 1½ cups of milk, 1½ oz. of cheddar cheese, and 1½ tablespoons of butter every day. Each food was made from either ordinary milk or higher-monounsaturated-fat milk (from cows fed high-oleic sunflower oil). The volunteers got about 7 more grams of monounsaturated fat and 6 fewer grams of saturated fat per day on the higher-mono foods.

After 12 weeks, LDL had risen by 7 points on the ordinary dairy foods, but by only 1 point on the higher-mono dairy foods. What's more, the participants' blood vessels were better able to dilate on the high-mono dairy.

What to do: Until healthier dairy milks hit the market, stick with 1% or fat-free. Better yet, try one of our plant-milk Best Bites, which may help lower LDL (see p. 13).

Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2020. doi:10.1093/ajcn/ngz344.

oes downing a sugary or diet drink make you eat less—or more—of a sweet or salty snack?

Researchers fed 51 people the same lunch with one of four (labeled) beverages—ordinary water, sparkling water, diet cola, or sugary cola—on four occasions. Each time, the people had 10 minutes to eat a 225-calorie cheese sandwich with

Want More Calories? Have a Coke!

half the drink plus 10 minutes to finish the drink and eat as many corn chips and chocolate chip cookie pieces as they wanted.

Corn chip consumption didn't vary. In contrast, people did eat fewer cookies with the sugary cola, but its 210 calories gave their lunches more calories (675) than their lunches with diet cola (495), sparkling water (510), or ordinary water (515).

What to do: Water is best, but any calorie-free beverage beats a sugary drink.

Appetite 2020. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2020.104631.

Every day is April 1st in the supermarket



s Smucker's Strawberry Simply Fruit made from nothing but strawberries? It's not that simple.

The "fruit spread" has more fruit suruv than strawberries. which explains why 9 of the 10 grams of sugar in each tablespoon are added. Gotcha!

/ ou're beautiful, let's keep it that way," says VitaCup Beauty Blend Infused Coffee with Collagen, Biotin, Cinnamon & Vitamins. It's a mix of "all-star beauty ingredients intended



for show-stopping hair, skin, and nails."

Intended for? There's no good evidence that VitaCup's collagen, biotin, cinnamon, folate, or manganese enhances your hair, skin, or nails. And every cup has 333 times more biotin than you should get in an entire day. That could interfere with some blood tests.

Beauty Blend? We guess Baloney Blend wouldn't have made it through Marketing.

ow do you eat a Joyböl Strawberry Almond Quinoa Crunch with Granola Clusters Smoothie Bowl?

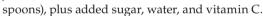
Just pull off the plastic lid and wrapper, unfold the plastic spoon, add water, and stir. (Thanks for a new way to

generate plastic waste, Kellogg!) Then dig in to your böl of oats, almonds, sugar, soy protein isolate, oil, sorghum, brown rice syrup, dairy solids, strawberry powder, whey, dried strawberries, quinoa,

cranberry powder, and roughly 20 other ingredients. Sure, you could just eat fruit, milk, nuts, and oats in a reusable bowl (or blend them into a smoothie). But that wouldn't help Kellogg's bottom line.

ight & refreshing ₄ taste," says Ocean Spray PINK Cranberry Juice Cocktail. "With antioxidant vitamin C. Made with real fruit iuice."

Translation: Made with only 15 percent juice (about 11/2 table-



The taste may be light, but the cocktail sure isn't.

You get 70 calories and 4 teaspoons of added sugar in each 5.5 oz. mini can. Ounce for ounce, that's about equal to the 140 calories and 9½ teaspoons of added sugar in a 12 oz. Coke.

"Tastes good. Good for you!" says the label. Since when are sugar drinks good for anyone?

TRADER JOE'S

3 TAO

GREEK YOGURT

SANDWICH COOKIES

Filled with Yogurt Creme

NET WT. 7.92 0Z (225g)

illed with yogurt creme," says the box of Trader Joe's Oat & **Greek Yogurt** Sandwich Cookies.

Really? The

cookie wafers do have some oat flour and flakes. But they have

"health halos" to sell 140-calorie cookies. Nah.

more sugar, brown sugar, and honey than greek yogurt. And the "creme" filling has more palm oil and sugar than yogurt powder. Surely, Joe isn't using any

// orta sweet," says Straight Up Tea, which is made by Snapple. Sorta?

Each 18.5 oz. bottle has 90 calories (disclosed in barely visible gray-on-black print on the

front label). That's thanks to the 5 teaspoons of added sugar (more than 40 percent of a day's worth).

Sorta sneaky?





Waste Not, Want Not Reducing waste can lower your "foodprint" BY CAITLIN DOW

waste an incredible amount of food," says Edward Spang, assistant professor of food science and technology at the

University of California, Davis.

It's not just the slimy lettuce, moldy leftovers, or green cheese in your fridge.

"It starts at the farm or a livestock facility, where food might spoil or be damaged by weather or pests," says Spang. "Then a forklift could damage a pallet of food or the refrigeration on a truck could cut out and cause spoilage."

Estimates that include those losses reach 1,400 calories a day per person. 1.2

But the lion's share of waste happens after food leaves the farm.

"Businesses that serve or sell food are responsible for 40 percent of food waste in the United States," says Jennifer Molidor of the Center for Biological Diversity, which has graded supermarket chains on how well they track and report food waste.

Stores may toss holiday foods that never sold or fruits and vegetables with less-than-perfect color, shape, or size.

"We need revised cosmetic standards across all stores," says Molidor.

To create a look of abundance, stores may keep in-store delis and bakeries looking well-stocked right up until closing. Then some of that food gets dumped.

"Stores can also eliminate promotions like buy-one-get-one schemes for perishables," says Molidor. Odds are, some will end up in your trash.

Restaurants are also to blame. What happens when Red Robin sells "Bottomless Steak Fries" or TGI Fridays sells "2 apps+2 entrées+2 desserts" for \$20? It's either excess waist...or excess waste.

Our food system churns out enough to provide every man, woman, and child with 3,800 calories a day. But only 2,550 of those calories get eaten. With 70 percent of adults and 35 percent of children overweight or obese, we'd be better off eating even less. Even so, those 1,250 wasted calories lead to greenhouse gas emissions, thrown-away resources, and higher prices. What can we do?

While some food waste is inevitable, throwing away so much has consequences that you may not think about:

■ Higher prices. "Wasting food pushes up the price of food and means that it's not accessible to people who could use it," says Brian Roe, professor of agricultural, environmental, and development economics at Ohio State University.



Easter candy appears the day after Valentine's Day. How much of the old candy gets dumped?

- Wasted water and land. "Growing food is resource intensive," notes Spang. Wasted food uses 21 percent of U.S. agricultural water and enough cropland to cover New Mexico, says the nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council.³
- Greenhouse gasses. Food waste creates as much greenhouse gas as 37 million passenger vehicles, estimates the NRDC.³ "About 75 percent of wasted food in the U.S. ends up in a landfill," says Roe. When food scraps in landfills decom-

pose, they create methane, a greenhouse gas that is roughly 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

What's the answer? We can

all do more (see p. 10). But some steps are out of our hands.

"The government's lack of specific actions lets the biggest food-waste of-fenders, especially grocery stores, off the hook," says Molidor.

But some progress is being made.

"In California, we have a law focused on reducing methane emissions," says Spang. "One of its targets is to cut food and other organic material going to landfills by 75 percent by 2025."

That has led some communities to charge "pay-as-you-throw" fees to curb waste that will end up in a landfill.

"The more garbage you throw out, the more you have to pay," notes Roe.

Thanks, in part, to pay-as-you-throw fees, South Korea now recycles 95 percent of its food waste.

And in San Francisco, where every household and restaurant must use a composting bin, the city has diverted more than two million tons of compostables from landfills.

The feds could also do more. In November, when romaine lettuce was linked to an outbreak of foodborne illness, the FDA couldn't trace the source, so enormous amounts of lettuce got tossed, no matter where it was grown.

"We have the tools needed to improve traceability," says Spang. "They just haven't been widely adopted."

³ nrdc.org/sites/default/files/wasted-2017-report.pdf.



¹ ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/43833/43680 eib121.pdf.

² <u>PLoS One 4: e7940, 2009</u>.

Ilustrations: Jorge Bach/CS

No Bad Apples

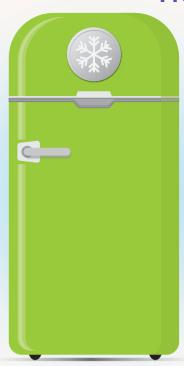
"The government needs to compel the whole industry to prevent food waste rather than pushing the problem onto consumers," says Jennifer Molidor of the Center for Biological Diversity.

But you can still do your bit.

"If there were a cash register on top of the garbage can that said, 'Cha-ching! You threw away \$32.73 of food over the past week,' that might provide motivation to toss less," says Ohio State's Brian Roe.

Here's what may help.

Freeze It



The freezer is ideal for storing nuts, bread, butter, meat, fish, poultry, and blocks of hard cheese.

You can freeze milk. Just shake the thawed milk if the fat has separated.

Freeze (cooled-down) chicken or vegetable stock in ice cube trays. Put the frozen cubes in an airtight container or a zip-top bag.

Blanch vegetables before freezing to preserve their flavor.

Peel ripe bananas before freezing. Toss frozen chunks in a smoothie, or immerse the plastic bag in water to thaw to use in cooking or baking.

Freeze berries on a tray so they don't stick together. Then transfer them to an airtight container or bag.

Chop peaches, melon, mangoes, pineapple, and other fruit before freezing.

Freeze lightly beaten eggs in an airtight container. Thaw in the fridge and use for scrambled eggs or cooking.

Pack ice-cube trays half full with fresh herbs like oregano, thyme, and basil, then top with olive oil. Transfer the frozen cubes to an airtight container or bag.

Before you put food in the freezer, label and date the containers.



Navigating Restaurants

Most entrées have 1,000+ calories. Don't eat more to waste less. Take home the excess.

BYOB! (Bring your own to-go box for leftovers.)

Split an entrée with a friend.

Order a half entrée if you can.

Pass up buffets and other all-you-can-eat offers.

Shop Smart

Three avocados for \$5? You probably don't have to buy them all to get the promotional price.

To avoid overbuying, plan meals ahead.

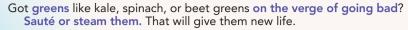
Look for misshapen produce at reduced prices.

Buy frozen fruit for smoothies.

Try items made from stems, like cauliflower rice and broccoli slaw.







Revive wilted greens by putting them in ice water for 5-10 minutes.

Soft apples or pears? Place peeled, cored chunks in a pot with a bit of water, then heat and mash. Voilà! Apple (or pear) sauce.

Use leftover herbs in salads or sandwiches, as a garnish in soups, or for making pesto.

Stuck with small amounts of a variety of uncooked grains that have similar cooking times? Mix them together.

Find a few recipes with flexible ingredient lists to clean out your fridge. Veggie stir-fry, anyone?

Do a semi-annual or quarterly "eat up the pantry" to use up grains and canned goods.

Before traveling, eat your perishables or give them to friends. Or take them along.

Keep a container in the freezer for scraps of carrots, onions, celery, herbs, garlic, and poultry bones. Once it's full, make stock. (Need a recipe? See <u>nutritionaction.com/stock</u>.)

Storage Tips

Create an "eat first" area in your fridge where you're most likely to see leftovers.

Disinfect your fridge regularly. Invisible mold spores can speed food spoilage.

Store fresh herbs like parsley and cilantro in a glass of water (like cut flowers).

Store mushrooms in a paper bag in the fridge (or in an open container if you like them drier).

Onions can make potatoes sprout. Keep them apart. Bananas and apples can make other fruits ripen. Separate them.

Store oils that you use often (like olive or peanut) in a cool, dark place.

Keep oils that you use infrequently (like sesame or walnut) in the fridge.

Store leftovers in clear containers so you can see what they are.

Most "best by" dates refer to a food's quality, not safety. If it smells and looks fine, no need to toss it (see Jan./Feb. 2020, p. 10).

Go to <u>savethefood.com/storage</u> for more tips.





Composting

Interested in backyard or indoor composting? Go to epa.gov/recycle/composting-home.

Go to <u>litterless.com/wheretocompost</u> to see if your community has a composting program. (Private services charge a modest fee.)

Urge your condo or apartment building to start composting.

You can compost fruit and veggie scraps, pasta, bread, cereal, egg shells, coffee grounds, paper plates, and more.

If you don't take compostables out regularly, keep them in the freezer so they don't smell.

The Healthy Cook

Going Green



This stir-fry works for most Asian greens. Look for yu choy, amaranth, gai lan, or tatsoi at farmers markets or Asian supermarkets. Or use bok choy (see back cover), spinach, kale, chard, or broccolini.

Stir-Fried Asian Greens



- 1 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- ½ tsp. balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cornstarch
- Ib. Asian cooking greens with their stems, separated and chopped
- 1 Tbs. peanut oil
- 1 Tbs. minced garlic

- 1. In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and cornstarch with ¼ cup of water.
- 2. In a large pan or wok, bring another ¼ cup of water to a boil over high heat. Add the stems and stir-fry until hot, about 1 minute.
- 3. Add the leaves a few handfuls at a time. Toss with tongs to help them wilt. Once all the greens are in the pan, stir-fry until the water has cooked off, 1–2 minutes.
- 4. Push the greens to one side of the pan. Add the oil to the other side and tilt it over the burner. Add the garlic to the oil and cook for 30 seconds. Return the pan to level on the burner
- 5. Add the soy sauce mixture to the oil and garlic. Cook until the liquid thickens, 30–60 seconds. Mix with the greens.

PER SERVING (½ cup): calories 50 | total fat 3.5 g sat fat 0.5 g | carbs 4 g | fiber 1 g | total sugar 2 g added sugar 1 g | protein 2 g | sodium 210 mg

Want more?

Go to

nutritionaction.com/greens

for

How to stir-fry greens
Sesame Ginger Baby Bok Choy

Need cooking advice?

Write to Chef Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org



oo is moot." "Pourable progress." "Dairy-free. As it should be." Plant-based milks are going on the offensive. Should you trade in your milk moustache for almond, coconut, soy, or peas? Which are better for you...and for the planet? Here's our guide to the ever-churning alt-milk aisle.

The information for this article was compiled by Kaamilah Mitchell.

1 Check calcium and vitamin D. Dairy milk is rich in nutrients. Among them: calcium (300 milligrams per cup) and added vitamin D (100 IU per cup—listed on newer labels as 2.5 mcg). Our Best Bites and Honorable Mentions have roughly that much or more.

Some dairy and plant milks now add twice as much vitamin D (200 IU, or 5 mcg). That's a plus, since many people fall short on D. But calcium is complicated (see "Is More Calcium Better?" p. 14).

2 Consider vitamin B-12. Not all plant milks add B-12, but many do. Our Best Bites have at least as much as cow's milk (about 1.2 mcg per cup).

That matters for vegans and older adults. A vegan diet excludes all of the dairy products and meats that supply B-12. But even if you eat those foods, 10 to 30 percent of adults over age 50 have too little stomach acid to digest their B-12. They need either a multivitamin or foods (like plant milks) that have added B-12.

3 Look for potassium. Milk's potassium is harder to come by in the plant-milk aisle, so we didn't require it in our Best Bites or Honorable Mentions.

But soy, pea, and some oat milks have enough naturally occurring or added potassium to mimic dairy. Almond, cashew, rice, coconut, flax, and hemp milks don't.

4 Get enough protein. Does protein matter? It depends on what else you're eating. But if you count on milk for protein, look for at least 7 grams per cup, which is typical for soymilk. (That's the amount we required in our Best Bites.) Dairy milk has 8 grams. Most pea protein milks have 8 to 10 grams.





At least as much protein, potassium, calcium, and vitamins D and B-12 as cow's milk.

Expect no more than 1 gram of protein from a cup of most almond, coconut, flax, rice, or cashew milks. Most oat or hemp milks have 2 to 4 grams.

5 Minimize added sugar. A cup of cow's milk has 3 teaspoons (12 grams) of naturally occurring lactose (milk sugar). Plant milks naturally have just 0 to 2 grams of sugar.

Odds are, your taste buds won't want much more. Our added-sugar limit for Best Bites and Honorable Mentions is 5 grams (roughly 1 teaspoon). That's about what you get in most "Original" varieties. Many vanillas (1½ to 3 teaspoons) and chocolates (3 to 5 teaspoons) add more.

6 Get healthy fats. If you drink cow's milk, stick with 1% or fat-free to limit saturated dairy fat. That's not an issue for plant-milk drinkers. Nuts, seeds, peas, and soy supply healthy fats. Just steer clear of coconut milk.

7 Skip rice milk. Arsenic is a human carcinogen and can impair learning in children. Rice soaks up arsenic from soil and water more readily than other grains do. With so many other options, why go there?

8 Think of the planet. Most non-dairy milks tread more lightly on the Earth (see "Plants & the Planet," p. 14). Miss the taste of cow's milk? Add a touch to your plant milk.

Hot Oats

Oat milk is the new kid on the block. A primer:

■ Added sugar. Some oat milks, like Oatly, use enzymes to break down some oat starch into sugar. That sugar counts as "added," the FDA said in 2018. (Some brands are still fixing their labels to reflect that.)

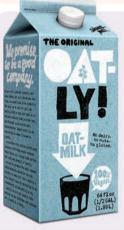
So it doesn't matter that Pacific Organic Vanilla Oat milk is "sweetened with oats" and has "no added



The best-tasting oat Honorable Mention.

cane sugar." To your body, its hefty dose of oat sugar (4½ teaspoons per cup) is more than a third of a day's added-sugar limit.

- Carbs & protein. You're sipping liquefied grains, so even "plain" oat milks contain slightly more carbs (10 to 15 grams per cup) and less protein (2 to 4 grams) than soy or pea milks.
- Fat & calories. "Extra creamy" or "full fat" varieties have more calories (120 to 160 per cup), thanks to their extra (healthy) fat.
- Taste. Oat milk comes closer to cow's milk than most other non-dairies. Our fave Honorable Mention: Planet Oat Extra Creamy Original. Über-creamy Oatly just missed our added-sugar limit.



Gluten-free? Check oat milk labels.

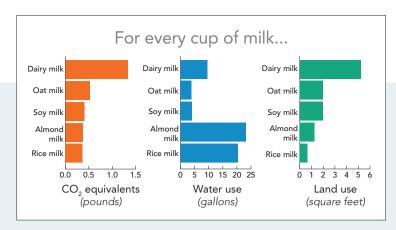
Free Market

Which "free" claims matter?

■ Gluten-free, Need to avoid gluten? Most plant milks are okay (so is cow's milk). The exception: some oat milks. Oats (which are gluten-free) can get contaminated with other grains in the field or in processing facilities. Califia Farms, Chobani,

Oatly, and Planet Oat are certified gluten-free or are tested to be sure.

- Carrageenan-free. Most plant milks now use gums like gellan or locust bean instead.
- No artificial colors, flavors, or sweeteners. We found no plant milks with those ingredients. And all are free of lactose (milk sugar).



Plants & the Planet

"Plant based is planet based," says alt-milk maker Califia. True enough. Here's what it takes to produce an average cup of dairy, oat, soy, almond, or rice milk in North America, researchers estimate:

- Greenhouse gasses. Milking cows instead of plants releases roughly 2½ to 3½ times as many pounds of carbon-dioxide equivalents.
- Water. Oat and soy beat dairy. Almonds and rice are thirstier.
- Land. Plants win by a landslide. Dairy milk gobbles up some 2½ to 8 times as much land.

Source: Science 360: 987, 2018 (with additional calculations by author J. Poore).

Is More Calcium Better?

"40% more calcium than milk," says Califia Farms Original Almondmilk. Do you need more?

Depends. Tally 250 milligrams of calcium for each serving of dairy you typically eat (150 mg for greek yogurt), then toss in 250 mg for the rest of your diet.

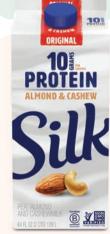
Your goal: 1,000 mg a day from milk, food, and (if needed) supplements. The target jumps to 1,200 mg for women over 50 and men over 70.

But more isn't better. Taking a daily supplement with 1,000 mg or more may raise the risk of kidney stones. And getting 2,000 mg a day or more is linked to a

higher risk of prostate cancer.



Need more calcium? Check your diet.



For protein, pick pea or soy milk.

Pea is for Protein

Want protein but don't like soy? Give peas a chance. Ripple (8 grams of protein per cup) and Bolt**house Farms** (10 grams) were the best-tasting Best Bites. Both brands' Original pea protein milks add just a teaspoon of sugar. Or go Unsweetened.

Another good bet: Silk Protein, a pea, almond, and cashewmilk blend with 10 grams of protein per cup. The Original and Unsweet flavors are Honorable Mentions because they don't have B-12 (see p. 13).

Tip: Pea-protein milks are named "Protein" or "Plant-based," not "Pea Milk." Check our chart.

Milking It

Best Bites (✓✓) and Honorable Mentions (✓) have no more than 5 grams (1 tsp.) of added sugar and 2 grams of saturated fat per cup, no rice or rice syrup, and at least 10% of the Daily Value (DV) for vitamin D and 20% for calcium. Best Bites also have at least 7 grams of protein and 50% of the DV for vitamin B-12. Milks are ranked from least to most added sugar, then most to least vitamin D, calcium, and protein, then least to most calories. Milks in bold have at least 50% of the DV for vitamin B-12.

	. 6	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	, ,	§ §)
Soy Milk (1 cup)	Calo _{ries}	400ed Su	, vo.	Vitamin C	a/cji
365 Everyday Value (Whole Foods)	Ü	₹ &	Q.	7.	0
Organic Unsweetened Original	70	0	7	25	25
✓✓ Silk Organic Unsweet¹	80	0	8	15	20
✓ Silk Light Original	60	0.5	6	15	30
Silk Original	110	1	8	15	30
Edensoy Organic Original	140	1*	11	0	8
Silk Vanilla ¹	100	1.5	6	15	30
Silk Chocolate	150	3.5	9	15	30
Silk Very Vanilla	130	3.5	6	15	30
Pea Protein Milk (1 cup)					
Ripple Unsweetened—Original or Vanilla	a 80	0	8	30	35
✓ Bolthouse Farms Plant Protein Unsweetened	90	0	10	20	35
✓ Silk DHA Omega-3 Unsweet Vanilla	50	0	6	20	35
✓ Silk Protein—Unsweet or Unsweet Vanilla	110	0	10	10	35
✓ Good Karma Flaxmilk+Protein—Un-	110			10	
sweetened or Unsweetened Vanilla	60	0	8	10	25
✓ Silk Protein Original	130	0.5	10	10	30
Ripple Original	90	1	8	30	35
Bolthouse Farms Plant Protein Original	110	1	10	20	35
✓ Silk DHA Omega-3 Original	60	1	6	20	35
Silk Protein Vanilla	140		10	10	30
Ripple Vanilla	120	3	8	30	35
Ripple Chocolate	140	3.5	8	30	35
Silk Protein Chocolate	150	3.5	10	10	30
Bolthouse Farms Plant Protein Chocolate	160	4	10	20	35
Almond Milk (1 cup)					
✓ So Delicious Unsweetened	25	0	1	15	35
✓ Almond Breeze Unsweetened Original	30	0	1	15	35
✓ Almond Breeze Unsweetened Vanilla	30	0	1	15	35
✓ Almond Breeze Unsweetened Chocolate	40	0	1	15	35
✓ Silk Unsweet—Original or Vanilla¹	30	0	1	10	30
Califia Farms Unsweetened	35	0	1	0	35
Almond Breeze Reduced Sugar Original	40	0.5	1	15	35
✓ Silk Less Sugar Original	30	0.5	1	10	30
Califia Farms Original	60	1*	1	0	35
Almond Breeze Original	60	1.5*		15	35
Silk Less Sugar Vanilla	45	1.5	1	10	30
Silk Original ¹	60	1.5	1	10	30
Almond Breeze Reduced Sugar Vanilla	60	2*	1	15	35
Almond Breeze Vanilla	80	3*	1	15	35
Silk Vanilla	80	3	11	10	30
Silk Dark Chocolate	100	4	1	10	30
Almond Breeze Chocolate	100	4.5	1	15	35

	6	Sugar		6 5	Calcium (%D)
Other Nut Milks (1 cup)	alorie.	ام ام	rotein	itamin	alciun
✓ Milkadamia Unsweetened	50	0	1	20	35
✓ Milkadamia Unsweetened Vanilla¹	60	0	1	20	35
✓ Silk Almond & Coconut Unsweet	35	0	1	10	35
✓ Silk Cashew Unsweet	25	0	1	10	30
✓ Silk Cashew Unsweet Vanilla	25	0	1	10	30
So Delicious Cashew Unsweetened	45	0	1	10	10
✓ Silk Almond & Coconut Original	50	1	1	10	35
Pacific Hazelnut Original ^R	110	3	2	10	10
Silk Cashew Chocolate	90	4	1	10	30
Oat Milk (1 cup)					
✓ Dream Unsweetened	70	0	1	25	25
✓ Silk Oat Yeah The 0g Sugar One	60	0	1	15	35
Califia Farms Unsweetened	100	0	2	0	20
✓ Silk Oat Yeah The Plain One	80	1	2	20	35
✓ Planet Oat—Original or Vanilla	90	1	2	20	25
✓ Planet Oat Extra Creamy Original	120	1	2	20	25
Silk Oat Yeah The Vanilla One	80	1.5	2	20	35
Oatly Low Fat	90	1.5	3	20	25
Oatly	120	1.5	3	20	25
Oatly Full Fat	160	1.5	3	20	25
Chobani Plain	100	2	2	15	25
Chobani Plain Extra Creamy	120	2	2	15	25
Chobani Vanilla	110	2.5	2	15	25
Silk Oat Yeah The Chocolate One	120	3	2	20	35
Oatly Chocolate	150	4	3	20	25
Chobani Chocolate	140	4	2	15	8
Pacific Organic Vanilla	130	4.5	4	10	10
Flax, Hemp, & Rice Milks (1 cup)					
✓ Tempt Hempmilk Unsweetened Original	80	0	2	25	30
✓ Tempt Hempmilk Unsweetened Vanilla	80	0	2	25	30
✓ Good Karma Flaxmilk Unsweetened	25	0	0	10	25
✓ Pacific Hemp Unsweetened Original	60	0	3	10	20
✓ Pacific Hemp Unsweetened Vanilla	60	0	3	10	20
Good Karma Flaxmilk Original	50	1.5	0	10	20
Dream Organic Rice Enriched Original	120	2.5*		15	25
Dream Organic Rice Classic Original Pacific Hemp Original ^R	120 140	2.5* 3	4	10	20
Coconut Milk (1 cup)F					
Silk Unsweet	40	0	0	10	35
Silk Original	70	1	0	10	35
So Delicious Organic Original	70	1.5	0	10	10
So Delicious Chocolate	90	2	1	10	10
✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. * E shelf-stable and refrigerated varieties. R C F Coconut milks contain more than 2 gram Protein Target: 85 grams. Daily Values (DV Added Sugar: 50 grams (12 tsp.). Vitamin	Contain ns of sa (s): Satu	s rice turate ırated	syrup d fat Fat :	o. per c 20 gra	

Added Sugar: 50 grams (12 tsp.). Vitamin D: 800 IU (20 mcg). Calcium: 1,300 mg. Vitamin B-12: 2.4 mcg.

Note: % DVs for calcium and vitamins B-12 and D are based on the new Nutrition Facts label. The old label, which is still on some foods, has lower DVs for calcium (1,000 mg) and vitamin D (400 IU) and a higher DV for vitamin B-12 (6 mcg).

Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

FOOD FIND

Good Greens



Most cruciferous superstars—think kale, Brussels sprouts, cabbage pack a bold taste and texture. Not bok choy.

The Chinese cabbage has crunchy, almost sweet white stems topped off with mild dark green leaves. And pale-green **baby bok choy** is especially tender and mild.

Look for it at **Trader Joe's** or your favorite grocer or farmers market. A side of the quick-cooking marvel can jazz up just about any dish. A good place to start: a simple recipe from our Healthy Cook (see p. 12).

Tip: Stir-fry the chopped pale green stems until tendercrisp, then toss the (quicker-cooking) leafy green parts into the pan or wok.

Or drizzle a miso-sesame dressing over halved, steamed heads. Mmm. (See the Jan./Feb. 2020 back cover or go to nutritionaction.com/misobokchoy for the recipe.)

Bok choy is impressively high in vitamins A, C, and K and supplies a decent dose of fiber, iron, potassium, and folate. All that for just 20 calories per cooked cup.

But why stop there?

Organicgirl prewashed Baby Bok Choy salad greens are delicate enough to enjoy raw or quickly stir-fried.

"Not kale. Not sorry," says the container. Neither are we.

iloveorganicgirl.com - (866) 486-4939

DISH of the month Not-Your-Mom's Asparagus Whisk together 2 Tbs. mayonnaise, 1 Tbs. tahini, 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice, 1 tsp. lemon zest, and 1/4 tsp. salt. Spoon over 1 lb. steamed asparagus. Sprinkle with toasted almonds. Serves 4.

FOOD FAIL



Just Doughn't

Nestle

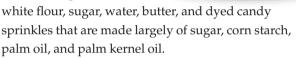
TOLL

HOUSE

"Made with the same ingredients you use in your mixing bowl at home, but it's safe to eat right from the tub," says Nestlé Toll House Funfetti Edible Cookie Dough with Candy Sprinkles.

"Go ahead, dig in!"

Oh boy. We've always wanted to rip into a tub of



As the label says, it's "made with 100% real fun!" And it's hard to imagine more fun than swallowing a palette of artificial food dyes—like Yellow 5, Red 40, Blue 1, and Red 3. Who needs colorful fruit, when you can eat

dyed sugar?

The Nutrition Facts "serving" is two flat tablespoons, so the label shows only 140 calories, 2½ grams of saturated fat, and 3½ teaspoons of added sugar. That's about what you'd get in a Twinkie.

But how many cookie dough fans are scooping up just two (non-heaping) tablespoons? When it comes to ice cream, many people don't stop after ½ cup. That's eight tablespoons.

"This expanded collection of edible cookie doughs provides even more ways to create fun, lasting memories while snacking on your favorite treats—no baking needed!" said Nestlé Toll House's associate brand manager in a press release.

verybestbaking.com—(800) 637-8537

Lasting, indeed.

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