

# Germany launched the most vegan food products last year

By Katharine Martinko, Living/Green Food



**Who would have imagined such a meat-centric nation becoming a world leader in veganism?**

Germany, home to famous bratwurst and schnitzel, is leading an unlikely food revolution. According to a recent market analysis by Mintel, the northern European nation is leading the rest of the world in the creation of vegan food products. A surprising 18 percent of all global food and drink launches in 2016 took place in Germany, which is a significant increase from 1 percent in 2012. The closest contender is the United States at 17 percent and the United Kingdom at 11 percent. Other European nations hover around 3 percent.

How has Germany, long heralded as the land of meat and potatoes, become an unlikely leader in veganism, of all things? Mintel's senior food and drink analyst, **Katya Witham**, explains:

"Veganism is now seen as a trendy lifestyle, and Germany is home to the most vegan product launch innovation. Today, vegan products attract attention from a much wider audience, namely health and ethically driven, flexi-vegan consumers."

Germany is a staunchly green-minded nation with widespread concerns about animal welfare, so reducing meat consumption is a natural extension of those values.

Not all vegan products are growing in Germany, however. Mintel points out that, while the total of vegan and vegetarian food products has grown, the number of *vegan meat substitutes* has fallen 17 percent between 2015 and 2016. This could be due to people avoiding processed products. Witham says:

"The trend towards naturalness plays a dominant role in the food choices of German consumers, who prioritize health benefits of unprocessed, natural and wholesome products. Germans are also very distrustful towards the content of the food and drink products they buy, opting for natural products with short ingredient lists."

It makes sense. If one's vegan ideology has sprung from a reluctance to eat animals, then eating something that's pressed or glued into resembling meat is unappealing. Vegan Germans want non-meat-like foods in their diets, and so are turning to ethnic cuisines for inspiration – places like Greece and India where plants are central to the diet without needing to imitate meat.

Germany ranked high in vegan news earlier this year when its environment minister, **Barbara Hendricks**, controversially asked that no more animal products be served at official dinners. She said, "We want to set a good example for climate protection, because vegetarian food is more climate-friendly than meat and fish."

**Source: Treehugger – Driving Sustainability Mainstream**