

ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS



HOW CAN RESTAURANTS REDUCE MEAT CONSUMPTION TO HELP TACKLE THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE?

Encouraging restaurant guests to order vegetarian dishes plays a key role in creating a more environmentally sustainable tourism sector. However, for many consumers eating a meat dish is an important aspect of their enjoyment-focused restaurant experience.

In this study, Dr Marion Karl and colleagues from the Low Harm Hedonism Initiative identified that new approaches that support restaurants in selling more vegetarian dishes are urgently needed.



HOW CAN RESTAURANTS ENTICE PATRONS TO ORDER ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DISHES? TESTING NEW APPROACHES BASED ON HEDONIC PSYCHOLOGY AND AFFECTIVE FORECASTING THEORY

Dr Marion Karl

The environmental footprint of the global food system is largely determined by what type of foods are being produced – and consumed. Compared to diets which include 100 g of meat per day, on average, plant-based diets emit 25% less greenhouse gases, require 25% less land and 46% less water.

Transitioning to a plant-based diet would half food-related greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging restaurant guests to order vegetarian dishes plays a key role in creating a more environmentally sustainable tourism sector, but is challenging because eating a meat dish is an important element of an enjoyment-focused restaurant experience.

Drawing from hedonic psychology and affective forecasting theory, this study tests how restaurants can direct ordering towards specific vegetarian dishes in a scenario-based survey experiment.

The main finding of this experiment is that displaying an appetising photograph of a vegetarian dish on a restaurant menu may be sufficient to increase ordering of this dish because the photograph directs consumer attention to the dish and triggers them to imagine eating the dish. Consumers who imagine eating the dish feel stronger anticipated enjoyment of eating it. This study provides restaurants with a cost-effective and easy to implement menu design approach to direct ordering towards dishes with a low environmental footprint.

Showing a picture of a vegetarian dish on the menu is a simple and cost-effective way to reduce meat consumption because consumers imagine themselves eating the dish which triggers higher levels of anticipated enjoyment.

Fechner, D., Karl, M., Grün, B., & Dolnicar, S. (2023). How can restaurants entice patrons to order environmentally sustainable dishes? Testing new approaches based on hedonic psychology and affective forecasting theory, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.

Link: bit.ly/49uSaX6