

'More than just eating bugs': Future proteins made from fungi, algae, and bacteria offer sustainable alternatives to current global diet

Would you eat a burger enriched with mealworms? Fake bacon sliced from a mass of fermented fungi? Milk proteins extruded by microbes? Maybe you already have. Dozens of companies are now banking on these alternatives to animal protein becoming a regular part of your diet.

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In the past few decades, there has been an explosion of plant-based meat imitators from companies including Impossible Foods, Beyond Meat, Gardein and more. Most are still niche products. The Good Food Institute, a non-profit organization based in Washington DC, reports that sales of plant-based alternatives to meat and fish totalled US\$6.1 billion in 2022. That is an 8% increase from 2021, it notes, but still a tiny proportion of the multitrillion-dollar market for animal products.

[Now the market is widening](#) to encompass all kinds of alternatives, from insects to microbes. These proteins could have an important role in making food more efficient and environmentally friendly for both humans and animals. Researchers and manufacturers are joining the hunt for the protein of the future, all hoping to overcome the challenge of cost — and the whims of taste.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)