

MODERN FOOD TRENDS VOCABULARY IN ENGLISH

Vegetarian, vegan, organic, sustainable and ethical food vocabulary

This reference guide organises the key vocabulary from the lesson into clear tables. Each entry includes a concise meaning and a natural example sentence, making it suitable for classroom use, revision and Cambridge B2-C1 exam preparation.

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1. Core Food-Trend Vocabulary

Term	Meaning	Example
food trend	a change in the types of food people choose, prepare, buy or discuss	Social media can turn an unfamiliar ingredient into a global food trend almost overnight.
consumer values	the principles and beliefs that influence what people buy	Modern food choices often reflect changing consumer values.
health-conscious	concerned about how food and lifestyle affect health	Health-conscious consumers often read food labels carefully.
trend-driven	strongly influenced by current fashions	Some products appeal mainly to trend-driven consumers.

2. Vegetarian and Plant-Based Eating

Term	Meaning	Example
vegetarian	a person who does not eat meat or fish; also used to describe suitable food	Sandra became a vegetarian in her twenties for ethical reasons.
vegetarian diet	an eating pattern that excludes meat and fish	He adopted a vegetarian diet after learning more about animal welfare.
meat-free	containing no meat	The café has introduced a new range of meat-free meals.
meatless	containing no meat; more common in American English	The hotel provides several meatless options.
cut down on meat	reduce the amount of meat you eat	Many people are trying to cut down on meat without becoming completely vegetarian.
meat substitute	a food used instead of meat	Tofu is commonly used as a meat substitute.
protein alternative	a non-meat source of protein	Pulses, tofu and tempeh are common protein alternatives.
plant-based	consisting mainly or entirely of food derived from plants	She follows a mostly plant-based diet.
plant-based diet	an eating pattern based mainly on food from plants	Plant-based diets have become increasingly visible on restaurant menus.
plant-based alternative	a product made from plants and used instead of an animal-based product	Oat milk is a popular plant-based alternative to dairy milk.
plant-forward	giving plant foods the central role without necessarily excluding meat completely	The restaurant has introduced a plant-forward menu.
flexitarian	a person who mainly eats vegetarian food but occasionally eats meat or fish	She describes herself as a flexitarian because she only eats meat at weekends.

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Term	Meaning	Example
flexible eating	an approach that avoids strict food rules	He prefers flexible eating to following a highly restrictive diet.
pescatarian	a person who avoids meat and poultry but eats fish and seafood	My sister is pescatarian, so she eats fish but avoids meat.
semi-vegetarian	a person who mainly eats vegetarian food but occasionally consumes meat	The term semi-vegetarian is sometimes used in a similar way to flexitarian.

3. Vegan Vocabulary

Term	Meaning	Example
vegan	a person who avoids animal products; also used to describe animal-free food	She became vegan after learning more about animal welfare.
vegan diet	a diet excluding meat, fish, dairy products, eggs and honey	The restaurant has added several dishes for customers following a vegan diet.
go vegan	begin following a vegan diet or lifestyle	Some people go vegan gradually rather than changing their diet overnight.
vegan-friendly	suitable for vegans	The hotel offers a vegan-friendly breakfast.
dairy-free	containing no milk or milk-based ingredients	The café serves several dairy-free desserts.
egg-free	containing no eggs	The bakery sells egg-free cakes.
animal-derived	obtained or produced from animals	Vegans avoid animal-derived ingredients.
animal-free	containing or involving no animal-derived ingredients or materials	The company is developing animal-free food products.

4. Ethical Eating and Animal Welfare

Term	Meaning	Example
ethical eating	choosing food according to moral, social or environmental principles	Ethical eating may involve animal welfare, working conditions and environmental impact.
ethical consumer	a person who considers social or environmental effects when buying products	Ethical consumers often want to know where their food comes from.
ethically minded	concerned with moral considerations	Ethically minded shoppers may pay attention to working conditions and animal welfare.
animal welfare	the physical and emotional well-being of animals	Consumers are becoming more interested in animal welfare.

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Term	Meaning	Example
cruelty-free	developed or produced without animal testing or unnecessary harm to animals	The brand promotes cruelty-free cosmetics.
free-range	describing animals allowed to move outdoors rather than kept permanently confined	She prefers to buy free-range eggs.

5. Organic, Natural and Additive-Free Food

Term	Meaning	Example
organic	produced according to organic standards, with restrictions on certain chemicals and GM ingredients	Organic vegetables are often more expensive than conventionally grown ones.
organic produce	fruit, vegetables and other agricultural products grown to organic standards	The market specialises in locally grown organic produce.
organic farming	farming that follows recognised organic production standards	Organic farming limits the use of certain synthetic chemicals.
conventionally grown	produced using standard modern farming methods rather than organic methods	Conventionally grown vegetables are usually less expensive.
certified organic	officially confirmed as meeting recognised organic standards	The farm produces certified organic fruit.
natural	described as close to its original state or containing few artificial ingredients	The company promotes its drinks as natural products.
all-natural	marketed as containing only natural ingredients	The label describes the snack as all-natural.
additive-free	containing no added artificial substances	Some shoppers actively look for additive-free products.
preservative-free	containing no added preservatives	The bread is preservative-free and should be eaten quickly.
minimally processed	changed only slightly from its natural state	Plain yoghurt and dried beans are often described as minimally processed foods.
clean label	describing products with short, simple ingredient lists that are easy to understand	Clean-label products have become popular among consumers who check ingredients carefully.

6. Local and Seasonal Food

Term	Meaning	Example
locally sourced	produced near the place where it is sold or consumed	The restaurant uses locally sourced ingredients.

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Term	Meaning	Example
local produce	food grown or produced in the surrounding area	The market sells fresh local produce.
seasonal produce	fruit and vegetables grown and eaten during their natural season	The menu changes throughout the year to reflect seasonal produce.
in season	naturally available at a particular time of year	Strawberries are in season during the summer.
out of season	not naturally available during a particular period	Some fruit is imported when it is out of season locally.
farm-to-table	involving food supplied directly from farms to restaurants or consumers	Farm-to-table restaurants often promote fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

7. Sustainable Food Vocabulary

Term	Meaning	Example
sustainable	produced or consumed in a way that protects resources and reduces long-term damage	Consumers are showing greater interest in sustainable food choices.
sustainable farming	farming that aims to protect the environment while remaining productive	Sustainable farming methods may focus on soil health, water use and biodiversity.
environmentally friendly	causing less harm to the environment	Reusable containers are a more environmentally friendly option.
eco-friendly	environmentally friendly	The café has replaced plastic cutlery with eco-friendly alternatives.
carbon footprint	the total greenhouse-gas emissions connected with a product, activity or person	Some consumers are trying to reduce the carbon footprint of their diet.
food miles	the distance food travels from where it is produced to where it is consumed	Buying locally may reduce food miles.
sustainable seafood	fish and seafood obtained in ways intended to protect marine populations and habitats	The restaurant has introduced a sustainable seafood policy.
environmentally conscious	concerned about environmental impact	Environmentally conscious consumers may prefer reusable packaging.

8. Food Waste and Circular Food Trends

Term	Meaning	Example
food waste	edible food that is thrown away or not used	Food waste is a major issue in households, restaurants and supermarkets.
reduce food waste	decrease the amount of food that is thrown away	Meal planning can help families reduce food waste.

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Term	Meaning	Example
zero-waste cooking	preparing food in a way that uses as much of each ingredient as possible	Zero-waste cooking encourages people to use vegetable stems and leftovers.
use up leftovers	finish food that remains after a previous meal	We used up the leftovers by making soup.
rescue food	save food that would otherwise be thrown away	The organisation rescues food from supermarkets and distributes it to charities.
upcycled food	food made using ingredients or by-products that might otherwise be wasted	Upcycled food is an emerging trend in sustainable production.

9. Alternative and Emerging Food Products

Term	Meaning	Example
meat alternative	a product intended to replace meat	The supermarket has introduced several new meat alternatives.
dairy alternative	a non-dairy product used instead of milk, yoghurt, cheese or cream	Oat drinks are widely used as dairy alternatives.
mock meat	food designed to resemble meat in appearance, flavour or texture	Some consumers enjoy mock meat, while others prefer less processed alternatives.
cultivated meat	meat produced by growing animal cells rather than raising and slaughtering an animal	Cultivated meat continues to attract public debate.
lab-grown meat	an older, widely understood term for cultivated meat	The phrase lab-grown meat is common in news reports.
fermented food	food produced or preserved through the action of microorganisms	Kimchi, sauerkraut and kefir are fermented foods.

10. Restaurant and Menu Language

Term	Meaning	Example
vegan option	a dish suitable for vegans	The restaurant provides at least one vegan option in every course.
vegetarian option	a dish suitable for vegetarians	There were several vegetarian options on the menu.
dietary requirement	a particular need or restriction connected with food	Please inform the restaurant of any dietary requirements in advance.
allergen information	information about ingredients that may cause allergic reactions	The menu clearly displays allergen information.
suitable for vegans	containing no animal-derived ingredients	Please check whether the bread is suitable for vegans.

Term	Meaning	Example
clearly labelled	marked so that information is easy to understand	Vegetarian and gluten-free dishes are clearly labelled.

11. Consumer Language

Term	Meaning	Example
price-conscious	careful about how much money is spent	Price-conscious shoppers may find organic food too expensive.
health-conscious	concerned about health effects when making choices	The product is marketed towards health-conscious shoppers.
environmentally conscious	concerned about environmental impact	The company hopes to attract environmentally conscious customers.
ethically minded	concerned with moral considerations	The brand appeals to ethically minded consumers.
trend-driven	strongly influenced by current fashions	Social media has created a highly trend-driven food culture.

12. Useful Collocations

Expression	Example
adopt a vegetarian diet	He adopted a vegetarian diet for ethical reasons.
follow a vegan lifestyle	She follows a vegan lifestyle and avoids animal-derived products.
switch to plant-based alternatives	Many consumers are switching to plant-based alternatives.
reduce meat consumption	The campaign encourages people to reduce meat consumption.
cut down on animal products	He has cut down on animal products without giving them up completely.
choose locally sourced ingredients	The chef chooses locally sourced ingredients whenever possible.
buy seasonal produce	Buying seasonal produce can support local growers.
support local farmers	The restaurant supports local farmers by buying directly from them.
promote ethical eating	The organisation promotes ethical eating and responsible sourcing.
improve animal-welfare standards	Consumers are demanding better animal-welfare standards.
reduce food waste	Meal planning is one way to reduce food waste.

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Expression	Example
lower your carbon footprint	Some people change their diet to lower their carbon footprint.
choose sustainable packaging	The company has begun to choose more sustainable packaging.
meet dietary requirements	The hotel can meet most dietary requirements.
offer vegan-friendly options	Restaurants increasingly offer vegan-friendly options.
use organic ingredients	The bakery uses organic ingredients in several products.
develop meat alternatives	Food companies continue to develop meat alternatives.
appeal to health-conscious consumers	The product is designed to appeal to health-conscious consumers.

13. Commonly Confused Expressions

Pair	First term	Second term	Example
vegetarian / vegan	Vegetarian: no meat or fish.	Vegan: no animal-derived food.	This dish is vegetarian, but not vegan because it contains cheese.
plant-based / vegan	Plant-based: mainly based on plants; may be flexible.	Vegan: completely free from animal-derived ingredients.	He eats a mainly plant-based diet but occasionally has dairy products.
organic / natural	Organic: linked to recognised production standards.	Natural: a broad marketing term with a less precise meaning.	The product is labelled natural, but it is not certified organic.
dairy-free / vegan	Dairy-free: contains no milk ingredients.	Vegan: contains no animal-derived ingredients at all.	These biscuits are dairy-free but not vegan.
cruelty-free / vegan	Cruelty-free: not tested on animals.	Vegan: contains no animal-derived ingredients.	A cruelty-free product may still contain animal-derived ingredients.
local / organic	Local: produced nearby.	Organic: produced to organic standards.	The vegetables are locally grown but not organically certified.

14. Cambridge Exam Language

Function	Model sentence
Introducing a trend	In recent years, plant-based diets have gained considerable popularity.

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Function	Model sentence
Introducing a trend	There has been growing demand for locally sourced and organic produce.
Presenting an advantage	One advantage of seasonal produce is that it can support local agriculture.
Presenting an advantage	Reducing food waste can benefit both households and the environment.
Presenting a disadvantage	One drawback of organic food is that it may be less affordable.
Presenting a disadvantage	Some meat alternatives are highly processed and relatively expensive.
Showing contrast	While vegan products are more widely available, they are not always affordable.
Showing contrast	Although locally sourced food may reduce transport distances, it is not automatically more sustainable.
Expressing an opinion	In my view, modern food trends reflect wider changes in consumer values.
Expressing an opinion	From an environmental perspective, consumers should be encouraged to make informed choices.
Balanced conclusion	Overall, modern food trends can bring positive change, provided that consumers look beyond advertising claims.
Balanced conclusion	Although some trends may disappear, concerns about sustainability and ethical production are likely to remain important.