

Plant-Based Milks

What is Plant-Based Milk?

Plant-based milk is a drink that is produced as an alternative to dairy milk. Most plant milks have a similar colour to dairy milk; however, texture will vary dependent on the main ingredient and the amount of water added. Taste will vary from one variety to another and is very much a personal to the individual and what it is being used for.

Within the European Union plant-based milk cannot be called milk and because of this ruling many plant-based milks will refer to themselves as alternatives to milk or by a description such as 'Almond drink'.

History of Plant based Milk

Did you know that the idea of 'Vegan milk' or 'Plant-based milk' had been considered as a recent innovation however, the use of plant juices or liquids being consumed as beverages ages back to medieval times.

Soya milk was first mentioned in 1866, as a drink by the Frenchman Paul Champion, who wrote about the Chinese taking their cups to tofu shops to get hot soya for their breakfast.

Plant Based Milks and their Allergens

- Soya milk: **Soya**
- Rice milk: **None**
- Oat milk: Will either stating **Gluten Free** or **May contain Cereals containing Gluten**
- Almond milk: **Tree nuts**
- Pea milk: This is a growing allergy for young children and is also considered a legume and may cause a reaction for those allergic to legumes including peanuts.
- Coconut milk: **None** unless a specific allergy to coconuts.

What plant-based milks can be used for:

- Soya milk is used as a substitute for low fat cow's milk, and processed foods
- Rice milk is best for those with common allergies although not suitable for young children
- Oat milk is best for coffee lovers as it has a creamy texture
- Almond milk is best for those on a low-calorie or low-carb diet.
- Pea milk is best for those looking for an eco-friendly option.
- Coconut milk is good for Asian and Caribbean recipes

Symptoms of an allergic reaction

Reactions to plant-based milks (allergen containing) will be similar to that of a milk allergy, **mild symptoms** include itching, hives, swelling, nausea and vomiting and diarrhoea and **severe reactions** include anaphylaxis, difficulty in breathing, collapse or unconsciousness.

Seek medical assistance at the first signs as appropriate.

Pea Milk how it is produced

Pea milk is not actually made from the regularly considered green pea but from the protein in yellow peas. This is then extracted by grinding the peas into a powder and separating the protein from starch.

The powder is then combined with water, oil (usually sunflower) and other sweeteners, thickeners, phosphates and fortifiers such as vitamins and minerals.

Pea milk can be considered by some people similar in taste to cow's milk over other plant-based milks.

Vegan

The caterer should not assume that because a product is labelled vegan that is safe for someone with an allergy to milk, and the same applies to Oat Milk do not assume it is gluten free unless it specifically states gluten free oats.

Currently the vegan society have accredited products which are labelled 'May contain' for example milk.

This labelling will be in place due to the methods of manufacturing, and it may not be possible to ensure that the line which is used is cleaned to a safe level.