

DAVID
RUSSELL ON ...



Tofu or not tofu, that is the question

Have you eaten your soya today? Whether you intended to or not, the chances are that you have, as it is now added to a massive 60 per cent of all processed food. The soya industry's meat and dairy alternatives are an easy solution when catering for vegetarians and vegans. They are also marketed as being low-fat, allergy-friendly alternatives for health-conscious consumers. But for every scientific study pronouncing its ability to lower cholesterol or reduce menopausal symptoms, there's another that claims that soya is an 'anti-nutrient' that affects everything from digestion to fertility. Confused? Here is a round-up of the pros and cons of soya products:

PROS

1. Dairy-free.
2. Vegan source of complete protein.
3. Low in saturated fat.
4. Said to lower cholesterol.
5. Reputed to help balance female hormones.

CONS

1. Inhibits protein digestion – unfermented soya (as in tofu and meat substitutes) inhibits the protein-digesting enzyme 'trypsin', so you will absorb far less protein than you think.
 2. Contains haemagglutinin – reduce their ability of red blood cells to take up oxygen, which in turn affects energy levels.
 3. Contains phytic acid – binds to minerals so they are excreted. Can result in calcium, zinc, magnesium and iron deficiencies.
 4. Goitrogenic – interferes with thyroid function (but so do many cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage).
 5. Allergen – soya is often cited as being one of the top 10 most allergenic foods.
 6. Highly processed – unfermented, processed soya products like tofu and meat substitutes contain more anti-nutrients listed above and are likely to contain additives and preservatives.
 7. Hormone-disruptor – some studies indicate soya can impact on oestrogen-dependent breast cancer and on sperm quality.
- Most of the cons relate to the highly refined, processed foods – soya meat substitutes and tofu. Eat small amounts of fermented bean curd, miso and soya milk from whole soya beans.

UNIVERSITY ACHIEVES HOSPITALITY ASSURED

Canterbury Christ Church University has achieved Hospitality Assured – the internationally recognised standard for delivering service and business excellence in the hospitality industry, championed by the Institute of Hospitality.

The rigorous accreditation process focussed on the university's campus catering services team, conference services team and the Student Building. In gaining the award, Canterbury Christ Church joins an elite band of organisations that have achieved Hospitality Assured – including the world-renowned hotel The Ritz; the flagship NHS Hospital Trust, Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Hospital Trust in London; leading leisure-industry operation, Center Parcs; and top conference and exhibition venue: the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC).

The university's director of hospitality services, Michael Murray, said: "Service quality is the Canterbury Christ Church's number-one priority, and the university is proud that the dedication and enthusiasm of its staff has led to gaining Hospitality Assured. This award reflects the university's commitment to providing the highest standard of service for its students, staff and external visitors. I'd like to congratulate the university's catering, student building and conference staff for their hard work and dedication."

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR CAVIAR

Caviar has never been a staple of the impoverished, but for years caviar prices have been rising fast and high – they are now 60 per cent higher than they were two years ago. Also, with calls for a more sustainable approach to fishing and new CITES quotas detailing a further fall in the Caspian catch, it seems that caviar could be on the way out.

Sustainable fishing is so important from an environmental perspective, that now even manufacturers of this exclusive product are farming sturgeon to create a sustainable solution, with a sustainable breed from a Caspian sturgeon generation. Luxury purveyor, Caviar House & Prunier, has been looking to the future and breeding the sturgeon in its exclusive farms to ensure future generations are still able to savour this treasure – once eaten only by royalty – meaning even the future of top-end food can be sustainable.