



# III. DEFINING PLANT-FORWARD: GUIDANCE FOR OUR INDUSTRY

## PLANT-FORWARD

A style of cooking and eating that *emphasizes and celebrates*, but is not limited to, plant-based foods—including fruits and vegetables (produce); whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses), and soy foods; nuts and seeds; plant oils; and herbs and spices—and that reflects evidence-based principles of health and sustainability.

### HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, PLANT-FORWARD FOOD CHOICES

This distilled guidance about the future of our food choices, for individuals and professionals, is an outgrowth of multiple, joint leadership initiatives of The Culinary Institute of America and the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, including Menus of Change; Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives®; Teaching Kitchen Collaborative; and Worlds of Healthy Flavors. It reflects the best, current scientific evidence supporting optimal, healthy, and sustainable dietary patterns while addressing vital imperatives to achieve short- and long-term global food security.

Healthy, sustainable, plant-forward food choices—when informed by culinary insight—can transform palates and spur next-generation innovation, as is evident in the success of new menu, restaurant, and retail product concepts thriving in the marketplace. In short, this is a practical, achievable vision for a delicious future. For more information, please read the Principles of Healthy, Sustainable Menus at [www.menusofchange.org](http://www.menusofchange.org).

### HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, PLANT-FORWARD FOOD CHOICES ARE THOSE WHICH:

- Center around minimally processed, slow-metabolizing plant-based foods: fruits and vegetables (produce); whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses) and soy foods; nuts and seeds; healthy plant oils; and herbs and spices. For protein sources, such choices lead with plant protein.
- Emphasize healthy dietary patterns and a rich diversity of whole foods versus an undue focus on specific nutrients and percentages; avoid excess quantities of calories but first ensure calorie quality.
- Can include animal-based foods in a reduced (optional) role, with a special emphasis on decreasing purchases of red meat and minimizing foods sourced from animals raised with the routine, non-therapeutic use of antibiotics. These choices prioritize fish and poultry among animal-based proteins, with dairy options and eggs playing a supporting role (if desired).
- Celebrate cultural diversity, personal needs and preferences, and the unapologetic elevation of deliciousness, including room in our diets for foods of special occasions.
- Highlight the value of fresh, seasonal, locally produced foods; minimize sugary beverages and added sugars and sweeteners; and reduce sodium and unhealthy additives.
- Begin with transparent ingredient sourcing that supports sustainable farming methods and fisheries.
- Through food purchasing patterns, encourage innovation and sustainable practices in retail food and restaurant concepts and business models to advance public health, social well-being, and our food system.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

To help communicate with your customers and the media about the distinctions between different menu strategies that leverage vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, whole grains, and plant proteins in leading roles, we've settled on some naming protocols. Let us know what you think.

• **Plant-Forward:** Please see definition on the right. Often used synonymously with “vegetable-centric,” “vegetable-forward,” and “plant-centric.”

• **Plant-Based:** Used to refer to ingredients and foods themselves, i.e. fruits and vegetables (produce); whole grains; beans, other legumes (pulses), and soy foods; nuts and seeds; plant oils; and herbs and spices. Different from “plant-forward,” which refers to the style of cooking and eating that emphasizes and celebrates these foods, but is not limited to them.

• **Vegetarian:** Dishes that do not contain meat or fish but may, or may not, contain dairy, eggs, and/or honey, and individuals who do not eat meat or fish but may, or may not, eat dairy, eggs, and/or honey.

• **Vegan:** Dishes that do not contain any ingredients that came from animals, or individuals who do not eat any ingredients that came from animals.

• **Flexitarian:** Describes individuals whose primary eating pattern does not contain meat but may occasionally include meat or fish.