

The world's first sustainable meat made out of beetles is launched in Copenhagen restaurants



Calling all meat lovers who have spent the last couple of years eating their weight in plant-based mince and veggie patties in the name of Mother Earth. Imagine sinking your teeth into a juicy, double hamburger — without guilty climate conscience.

The food company Hey Planet's brand new product has hit a series of Danish gourmet restaurants after several years in the making. It is climate-friendly meat, and according to the people behind, it will revolutionise the food industry.

Great news for umami-loving climate enthusiasts

Hey Planet's new meat consists of pea protein and dried, powdered buffalo beetles. Thanks to the beetles' high content of protein, iron, B12 and other vitamins, the meat nutritionally lives up to beef and pork. With the use of an innovative texturising process developed in partnership with The Danish Technological Institute, the buffalo beetle powder and pea protein get a meat-like consistency and along with the umami flavour from the insects, we are left with a product that differs from any other on the market by being very similar to minced beef and pork.

The planet is spared 31,64 kg CO₂ per kilo meat

But you are not harming the climate by digging into a Hey Planet patty. You 31,64 kg CO₂ with every kilo of beef you replace with Hey Planet meat. The buffalo beetles are farmed vertically and fed with by-products from beer brewing.

“We need to change the way we eat, but we can't compromise on taste, so we're ecstatic that we've made this happen,” Malena Sigurgeirsdottir says. She founded Hey Planet in 2016 with business partner Jessica Buhl-Nielsen after having studied edible insects for years — both in Kenya, Cambodia and at Cornell University. So far the company has succeeded in selling insect-based snacks. And now it is time for a new market conquest.

Restaurants lead the way

It was not hard to find partners for the meat launch. The renowned restaurant Sanchez, owned by former Noma chef Rosio Sanchez, did not hesitate for a second to put the meat on the menu, and several other locations offer the meat in burgers, dumplings and tacos at pop-up events in Copenhagen and at workplace cafeterias.

According to Malena, restaurants and catering companies have been very open-minded when it comes to the new product: “The meat constitutes a unique trinity that is unlike any other meat alternatives. A lot of people miss the flavour, nutrition and texture from meat, when they try to follow a more flexitarian diet. This meat solves all of this while doing minimal harm.”

Buffalo beetle powder

The insects are what most people first notice when they hear about the new product. “Of course it's challenging to some people that our meat is based on buffalo beetles,” Jessica Buhl-Nielsen says as she recalls her own scepticism when Malena served her fried insects she had grown fond of on a trip to Tanzania.

“I think people just need to taste, understand and see the product. Many types of popular food have been perceived as strange or ‘scary’ at first. Just think about sushi,” Jessica says and points out that the beetles are powdered which eliminates the risk of running into a wing or leg while eating.

A part of the everyday diet

Hey Planet's ambition is to make the food we eat every day more sustainable — one bite at the time. “We're facing a global crisis and a lot of people want to contribute to a better climate. If we start changing the way we eat we can save huge amounts of CO₂,” Malena says. “I think people are ready to start eating insects if it can help save the planet. And if it tastes good, of course.”

Facts on climate and insects

- 77 percent of all agricultural land is used for grazing areas and feed cultivation for e.g. cattle and pigs. However, livestock only make up 18 percent of the world's intake of calories - and 37 percent of the proteins we consume.¹

80 percent of agricultural land is used for cultivating feed for animals, posing a massive threat to biodiversity and as of this moment 28.000 species are in danger of extinction.¹

In comparison, buffalo beetles are farmed vertically which saves space - and they are fed with food waste.²

- 64 percent of the world population is expected to live with water shortage in 2050. 8 percent of the human water consumption is used on cattle breeding. Agriculture uses 70 percent of the water we have access to worldwide.³

For every kilo of beef that is replaced with insects, we save 15.000 litres of water.³

- It's estimated that we can bring down the CO₂ footprint of every Dane by 1,9 tons per year if we change our eating habits and improve the food production.⁴

For every kilo of beef that is replaced with Hey Planet meat, we save 31,64 g CO₂, which is similar to a car ride from Copenhagen to Hamburg.⁵

- 2 billion people eat insects daily worldwide.⁵

Sources:

¹<https://ourworldindata.org/global-land-for-agriculture>

²<https://www.protifarm.com/about-us/who-we-are/>

³<http://www.fao.org/3/i3253e/i3253e.pdf>

⁴<https://concito.dk/projekter/store-klimadatabase>

⁵<http://www.fao.org/3/i3253e/i3253e.pdf>

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Hey Planet founders, Jessica Buhl-Nielsen and Malena Sigurgeirsdottir, are happy to make themselves available for interviews, further comments and questions.

See more at www.hey-planet.com

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