

## Have you tried the Impossible Burger?



Credit: The Verge

**People who have eaten the Impossible Burger say that it is really yummy and tastes like meat.**

**Why would we want a product that tastes like meat, but isn't?** To be kinder to the environment, and some say, to ourselves. People around the world are starting to switch to vegetarianism, some even to veganism (no meat, no dairy), because they believe that [plant-based diets are better for us, and can help with lowering the risk of developing some major diseases](#).

Fuelling meat-based diets is also harmful to the environment. How? Well, the animals, like cows for instance, generate a lot of methane, which is a greenhouse gas.

**So what tastes like meat and has a meat-like texture, but isn't meat?** Dr. Patrick O. Brown, a professor at Stanford University, thought that if he could design food that is plant based, but incorporates that which people like from meat, this would make the impossible, possible! He came up with a soy-based patty with a secret magical ingredient that he made, founded Impossible Foods, and came up with the Impossible Burger. People who have had it swear by it.

**What's the secret ingredient?** The innovation here is a product called **heme**. This is one of the components of hemoglobin, the iron containing protein in our blood, that carries oxygen to the rest of our body. Dr. Brown's research shows that this is the magical yummy ingredient in meat! In other words, he and his team feel that it is the heme that gives meat the flavour that we like. So he has figured out a way to make it in a lab, and mix it up in a patty made of soy. People all over the world are loving the Impossible Burger, and Impossible Foods' research says that making one Impossible Burger instead of a regular beef burger, uses 96% less land, 87% less water, and 89% less greenhouse gases.

**Where do they get this heme from?** They have taken the gene for heme from the soy plant, and put it into yeast.

**Yeast? The fungus microorganism?** The very same! The yeast cells make this heme protein very effectively in great quantities! This is genetic engineering.

**Is this synthesised heme safe for us to put into our bodies?** Impossible Foods did some studies to show that their ingredient is safe to consume, and submitted this data to the US FDA (the United States Food and Drug Administration). The FDA is the regulatory body that analyses all the information and decides if products are generally safe. The FDA recently agreed that this ingredient is safe for humans to consume.

**Are there any other plant-based alternatives to burgers?** Yes there is something called the Beyond Burger. This uses a different kind of patty.

**Where can you try the Impossible Burger?** Outside India, at chains like Burger King and White Castle.

**What next?** Impossible Foods says that it is committed to coming up with alternatives to different kinds of meat and dairy. Let's see what they come up with next. In the mean time, give the burger a try and let us know what you think!

Adapted from: Vox, The Verge, Time Magazine, Impossible Burger

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Written by: Sunaina Murthy. Sunaina is a biotechnologist, greedy reader, and amateur photographer.