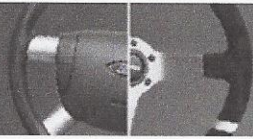


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Milk loses its bottle to almond, oat and hemp drinks



Gwyneth Paltrow makes her own almond milk MediaPunch/Rex Features

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They were once the preserve of vegans, allergy sufferers and healthy eating enthusiasts. Yet almond, oat, rice and even hemp milk have moved into the mainstream thanks to celebrity endorsement and are now taking their place on supermarket shelves.

Sales of almond milk — made from ground almonds, water and sometimes a sweetener — have risen by nearly 200 per cent at Waitrose year-on-year, while sales of the hazelnut and coconut varieties are up by nearly 30 per cent.

According to a study by the retailer, one in five families now chooses non-dairy options, often buying them as alternatives to cow's milk for children.

Sainsbury's is also planning to expand its own-brand range of "milk alternatives", which typically contain no saturated fat or lactose and have a far lower calorie count than cow's milk.

Nutritionists, though, have warned that the health effects are limited. "No alternative non-dairy milk provides all the nutrients provided by dairy milk," said Áine O'Connor, a nutrition scientist at the British Nutrition Foundation. "Alternative non-dairy milks often need to be fortified with calcium and vitamin D to reach the levels in cow's milk and can be low in protein."

Alice Mackintosh, a nutritional therapist at the Food Doctor Clinic, London, disagreed. "It is a bit of myth about calcium — there is more calcium in broccoli than there is in milk," she said. "I would recommend hemp milk because it is a good source of omega-3."

Almond milk has earned the adoration of Gwyneth Paltrow, who makes her own, and Amanda Seyfried, who recently told *Marie Claire* magazine that almond milk could always be found on her weekly shopping list.

Simone De La Rue, a New York-based trainer and fitness expert whose clients include Anne Hathaway, Sandra Bullock and Matt Damon, advises her clients to drink almond milk with cereal and in protein shakes.

"I think the celebrity thing is obviously huge, it's become cool," she said. "Even Starbucks now offers almond milk. But I also think it's an awareness of the health benefits."