



# Surfing the Plant-based Wave in Singapore

abillion

Supported by:  
**Enterprise  
Singapore**

## Key Takeaways

- Interest in conscious consumption in Singapore doubled in 2020.
- Flexitarians are the fastest growing consumer group in Singapore.
- Top performing plant-based products in Singapore are snacks (chips & crisps, mylk, and cookies, biscuits & crackers).
- Demand for plant-based chicken and pork in Singapore is rapidly growing.
- Growing demand for plant-based meat mince and strips over patties.

---

### About abillion:

abillion is a digital platform that assists people that want to make sustainable choices. Using the abillion app, members can discover vegan food and vegan and cruelty-free products. abillion, launched in 2018 by CEO Vikas Garg, is unique in harnessing social media for social good. Whenever a member chooses sustainably and shares a review, abillion donates \$1 to a life-saving cause which the member can choose through the app. The abillion app has been downloaded by nearly one million people around the world and has donated more than US \$500,000 to life-saving causes around the world. Consumer reviews, along with consumer insights, are shared with business owners, influencing nearly 100,000 brands worldwide to offer more sustainable options.



Get the latest **plant-based industry insights** in your inbox.

**SUBSCRIBE HERE**

# Full Report

Sustainability in Southeast Asia is projected to generate US\$1 trillion worth of economic opportunities annually by 2030, largely derived from sustainable production and consumption. (1) To tap on this enormous potential, a deep understanding of conscious consumers in the region is critical. From [Tindle's plant-based chicken launch](#) to [Eat Just's upcoming plant protein production facility](#), Singapore is quickly establishing herself as Asia's central node in the global supply network serving socially responsible consumers. Previously, we've identified Singapore consumers as [one of the most vocal groups calling for environmental and social change among businesses](#). In this report, we dig deeper into Singapore's sustainability landscape and surface findings from our proprietary data spanning 10K Singapore members and 62K consumer reviews. We also extract key market insights for consumer brands seeking to tap on plant-based growth opportunities in Asia.

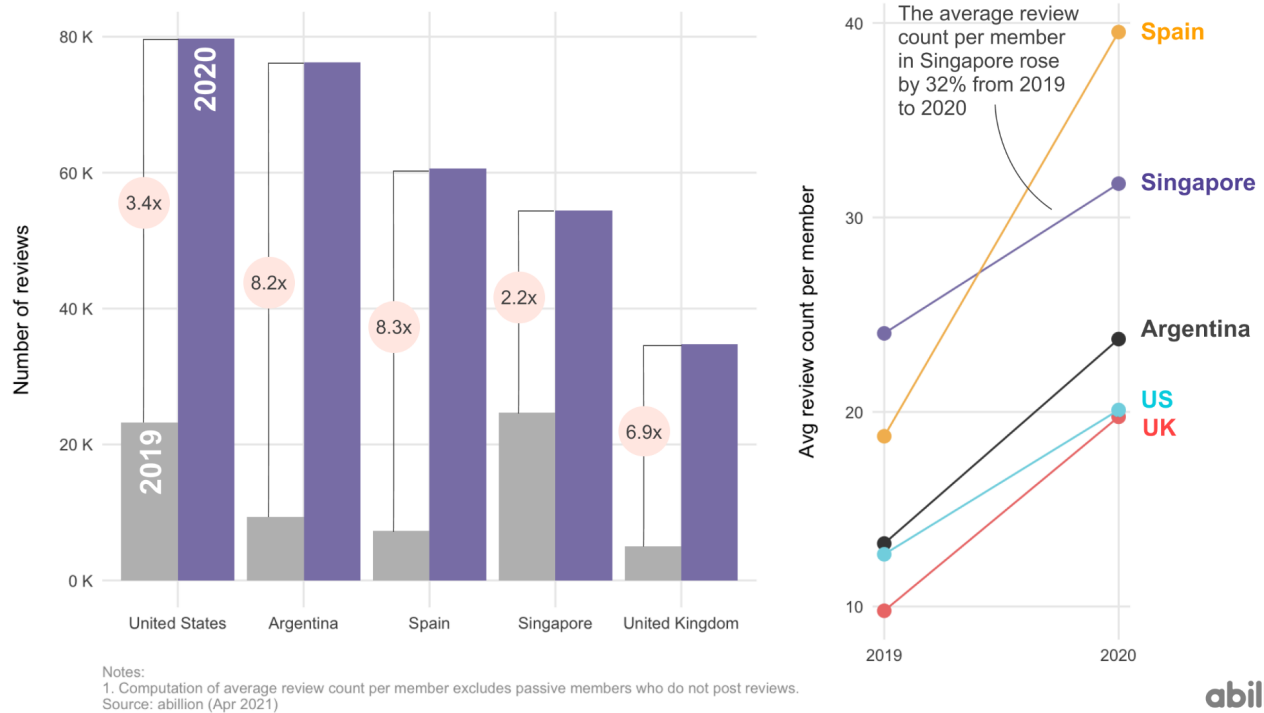
*This report is supported by Enterprise Singapore.*

## Interest in socially responsible consumption among Singapore consumers doubled in 2020

Singapore is abillion's fourth largest market based on the number of reviews on the abillion app, and ranks first in Asia. Reviews posted by Singapore members more than doubled in 2020, reflecting robust growth in consumer interest for conscious and ethical purchases. This was underscored by an expanding consumer group who are keen or curious about plant-based living, illustrated by the 2.5X growth of the abillion community in Singapore in 2020.

**Figure 1: Interest in conscious consumption among Singapore shoppers doubled in 2020**

*The average sustainable consumer is also making more purchases*



Interestingly, not only are more people joining the socially responsible movement, the average conscious shopper in Singapore is also making more sustainable purchases, as seen by the 32% increase in the average review count per member from 2019 to 2020. This shows that consumers in Singapore are placing a larger weight on sustainability and social impact in their purchasing decisions. For instance, the Climate Change Public Perception Survey found that 80% of respondents were prepared to play a role towards a low-carbon Singapore, even if they have to bear additional costs as consumers. (2)

"As the world's population grows, agri-food tech and food innovation become critical means to meet our future nutritional needs in a sustainable way. COVID-19 further demonstrated the importance of alternative food options from a security and resilience angle, as traditional supply chains came under pressure. To help Singapore enterprises build capabilities and meet this growing demand for alternative food options, Enterprise Singapore launched FoodInnovate in 2018, a

multi-agency initiative. Food manufacturers and startups can easily access resources, partners and distribution channels to innovate and develop new solutions. To date, we have supported the commercialisation of close to 300 new products through FoodInnovate, and worked with 5 global accelerator partners to grow close to 100 agri-food startups locally. As our startups and food companies begin to scale and venture overseas, we will support them to access global partnerships and channels to serve a wider consumer base"

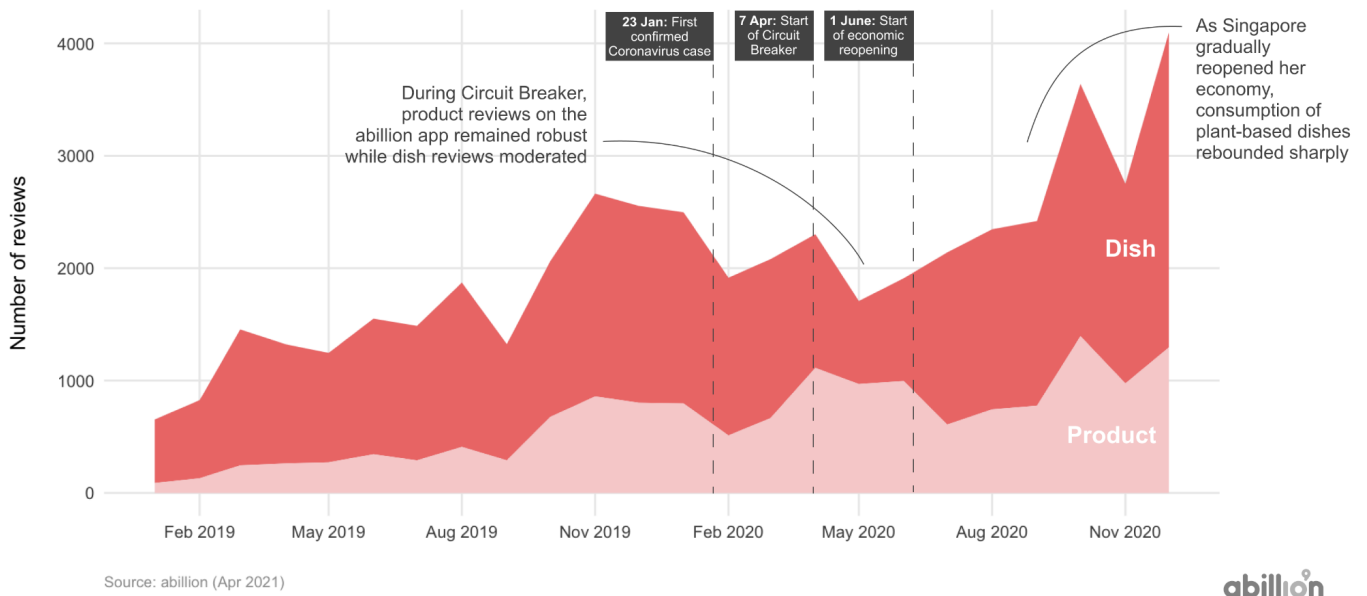
- Bernice Tay, Enterprise Singapore, Director of Food Manufacturing

## **Global pandemic spurs surge in popularity of plant-based shopping and dining activities in Singapore**

During Singapore's Circuit Breaker in April - June 2020, reviews on sustainable products remained strong as Singapore shoppers flocked to e-commerce platforms and grocery stores for plant-based purchases. Meanwhile, dish reviews moderated as retail dining activities were suspended. As Singapore's economy gradually resumed economic activities after May 2020, consumption of plant-based dishes experienced a sharp rebound, bringing total consumer reviews in Singapore to historic highs. In particular, reviews posted on the abillion app surpassed 4K in December 2020.

**Figure 2: Surge in plant-based consumption with re-opening of Singapore's economy**

*The global pandemic has elevated Singapore consumers' consciousness of sustainability and health factors*



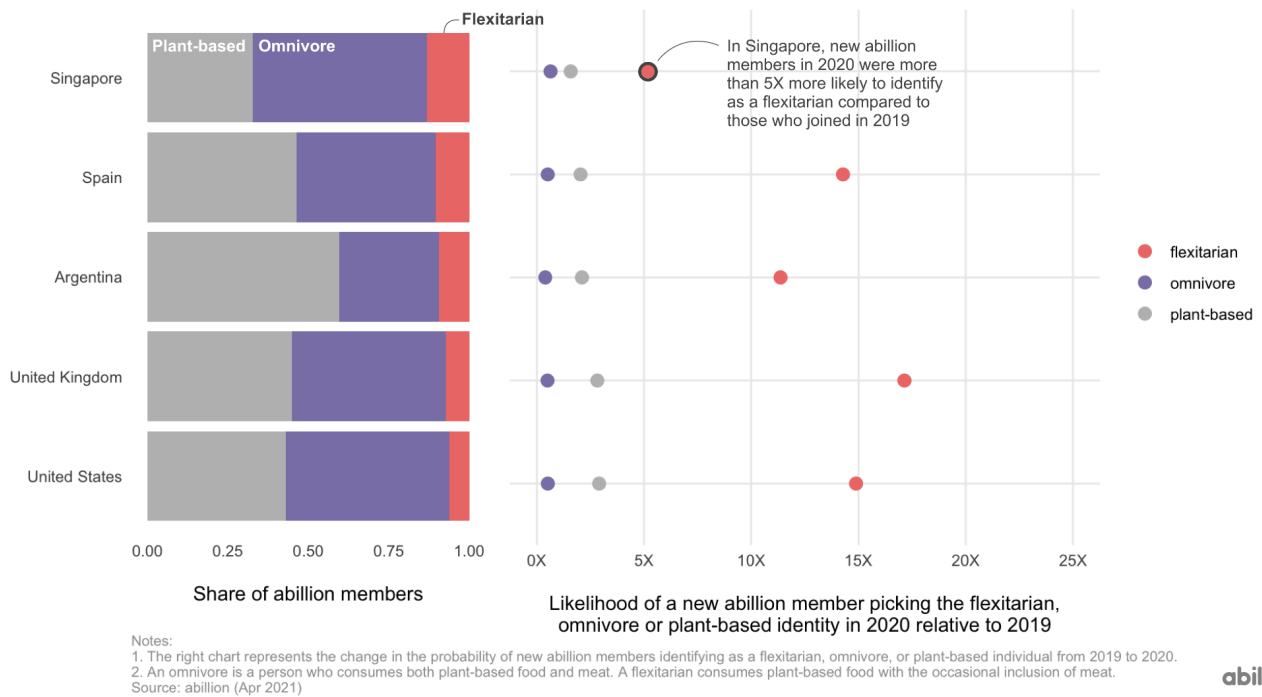
This points towards an increasing popularity of sustainable living among Singapore consumers due to heightened awareness of environmental, social, and health issues during the global Coronavirus pandemic. (3) Indeed, a survey conducted by Accenture revealed that 60% of respondents were making more environmentally friendly, sustainable, or ethical purchases since the start of the pandemic. (4) Our analysis corroborates findings from the survey and indicates that the global Coronavirus pandemic has elevated Singapore consumers' consciousness of sustainability and health factors when making purchasing decisions.

## Flexitarians gaining force among Singapore shoppers

The majority of sustainable shoppers in Singapore are omnivores, who consume both plant-based food and meat. Flexitarians, on the other hand, have a primarily plant-based diet but occasionally consume meat or seafood.

**Figure 3: More Singapore consumers identifying as flexitarians**

*While flexitarians make up the smallest share on the abillion app, they represent the fastest growing segment*



While flexitarians account for the smallest share of the consumer base, they represent the fastest growing segment. New abillion members in 2020 were more than 5X more likely to identify as a flexitarian compared to those who joined in 2019. Likewise, flexitarians topped the growth charts in other key markets like the US, UK, Spain and Argentina. According to Euromonitor, flexitarians now make up 42% of global consumers. (5) We believe the appeal of the flexitarian lifestyle will continue to grow rapidly among consumers, and lead demand for sustainable options in Singapore and beyond.

"We made the right and easy decision to establish a Singapore office at the same time as we launched in New York. Here, we are well-positioned to invest in Asia, a rapidly growing market with discerning consumers who care deeply about the environment and their health, which we think is an important growth region alongside the US. Singapore is one of the world's top food tech innovation hubs and we are proud to be embedded in this vibrant ecosystem that boasts support from

government agencies and startups with game-changing ideas. We think this is just the beginning of a broader shift toward sustainability, and we are delighted to be among the major stakeholders in Asia leading this transformation."

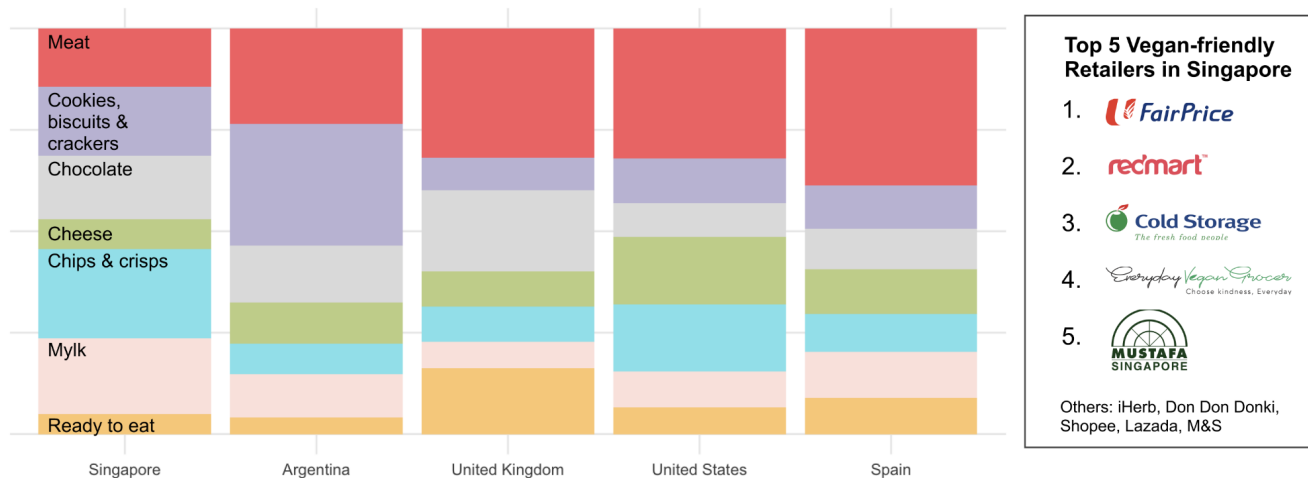
- *Andrew D Ive, Founder, Big Idea Ventures*

## **Singapore snackers embracing plant-based options; Opportunity to expand retail accessibility of plant-based meat and dairies**

Compared to other key markets, retail consumption of plant-based products in Singapore is more broadly distributed across categories. The top three most popular categories in Singapore are chips & crisps, mylk, and cookies, biscuits & crackers, reflecting a vibrant plant-based snack market. [Eat Real](#)'s and [Veganz](#)'s snack products are top-ranked in terms of demand, underscored by an increasing preference for healthier snack options. (6)

Unlike the Singapore market, plant-based meat constitutes the bulk of consumer reviews in the UK and the US. Our investigation reveals a handful of product categories with rapid growth in consumer interest, but a less competitive operating environment in Singapore. In particular, alternative meat products saw a 306% jump in reviews in 2020, with 8.4 consumer reviews per brand. Taken together, the relatively smaller presence of meat alternatives relative to other markets indicates ample growth potential to expand retail accessibility of these products for Singapore consumers. For example, Impossible Foods announced in October 2020 that it will begin stocking its plant-based meat burgers at 100 NTUC FairPrice outlets and online grocer RedMart. (7) Our retailer analysis revealed FairPrice, RedMart, Cold Storage, Everyday Vegan Grocer, and Mustafa Centre as the top five most popular vegan-friendly retailers in Singapore. As more retailers stock plant-based products to meet burgeoning consumer demand, we expect plant-based meat products to feature more prominently in Singapore reviews.

**Figure 4: Growth potential to enhance accessibility of alternative meats among Singapore consumers**  
*Prominence of plant-based meats in local supermarkets to grow as brands enhance their retail presence*



Notes:  
 1. This figure covers the top three product categories (by review count) in each of our key markets. Top categories in other key markets are included for comparison.  
 Source: abillion (Apr 2021)

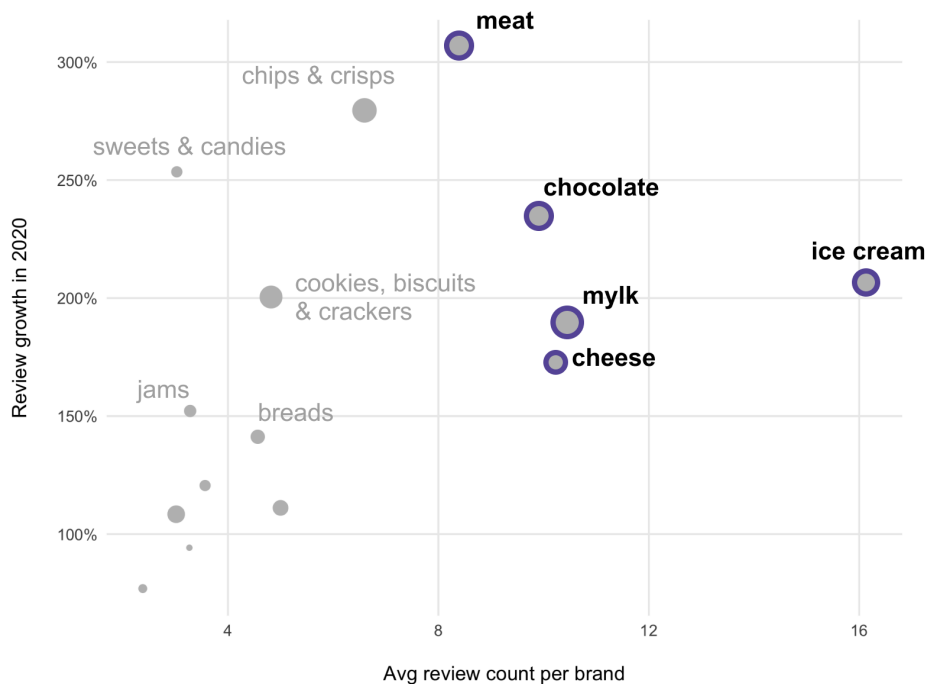
abillion

Similarly, the ice cream, mylk, cheese, and chocolate categories have relatively high average number of reviews per brand, at 16, 10, 10, and 9.9 respectively. Popularity of these products is also expanding quickly, with consumer reviews rising by more than 170% in 2020. There is a viable market opportunity for local retailers, e-commerce platforms, and manufacturers to bridge consumer access to leading plant-based brands operating in these categories.

Recognising this market gap, global plant-based brands have already begun increasing their presence in Singapore. For example, Oatly launched at Cold Storage, FairPrice Finest, RedMart, and Amazon Prime SG in November 2020. (8) More recently, the company announced a co-investment with local beverage producer Yeo Hiap Seng to build a production factory in Singapore. Production is slated to start by mid-2021 to serve surging demand for plant-based alternatives across Asian markets. (9)



**Figure 5: Apart from alternative meat, plant-based ice cream, mylk, and cheese are promising growth segments in Singapore**  
*Consumer interest is expanding quickly while retail brand competition is relatively low*



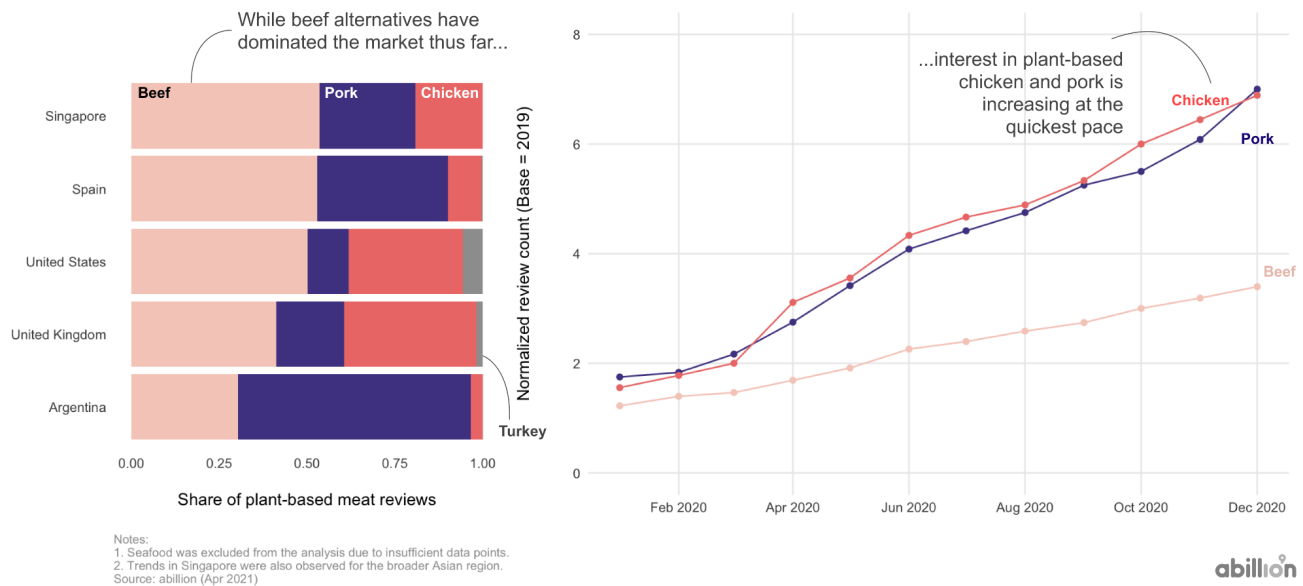
Notes:  
 1. Brands with fewer than two reviewed products on the abillion app were excluded from this analysis.  
 2. The size of each bubble represents the category size by total number of reviews.  
 Source: abillion (Apr 2021)

abillion

## Beef currently dominates plant-based meat scene in Singapore but pork and chicken top the growth charts

In Singapore, plant-based beef has dominated the market. In terms of growth, plant-based pork and chicken outperform. In December 2020, consumer interest in plant-based pork and chicken products among Singapore consumers increased to close to 7X their levels at the end of 2019. Demand for plant-based beef continued to register strong growth (3X) over the same period, albeit at a slower pace of expansion than pork and chicken. In line with East Asian preferences for pork and poultry over beef, we foresee the popularity of plant-based chicken and pork gaining significant traction among conscious consumers in Singapore. (10)

**Figure 6: Singapore consumers are increasingly enthusiastic about plant-based pork and chicken**  
 Consumer interest in plant-based pork and chicken products surged 7X in 2020



For example, plant-based chicken brand [TiNDLE recently launched its versatile chicken product](#) which can be cooked in various cuisines.

"Chicken is the most versatile animal protein available, and can be used in a wide range of cuisines. It delivers great versatility across cultural communities, and can be incorporated into both traditional and innovative dishes. The potential for plant-based chicken is tremendous. The demand for plant-based chicken will continue to be driven by the appeal of food sustainability and health interests, and win consumers' hearts with its superior consumer experience and deliciousness."

- Andre Menezes, Co-Founder & COO, TiNDLE



## TINDLE

Next Gen Foods is a technology company that develops plant-based foods and brands using advanced food technology and scales them globally.

### Key milestones:

- **Aug 2020** - First market fit test of TINDLE Thy.
- **Sep 2020** - Secured production capacity.
- **Oct 2020** - First distribution contract in SG, Completed development of TINDLE Thy.
- **Jan 2021** - Closure of Seed round.
- **Mar 2021** - Global debut in SG with 11 restaurants, Collaboration with abillion and Prive.
- **Apr 2021** - Collaboration with 28 Hongkong Street Bar.

### Upcoming plans:

- **International expansion:** Targeting product launches in key cities in APAC region.
- **Product range:** In the medium- to long-term, Next Gen intends to launch additional products across various plant-based categories under its umbrella brand and scale these products globally.

Singapore is also a big seafood consumer. In the past year, there has been brewing interest in seafood that is sourced sustainably. (11) At the same time, we've observed more investments channeled towards plant-based seafood product development. (12) In response to growing demands for seafood options with a lower environmental footprint, we anticipate the retail presence of alternative seafood in Singapore to increase significantly in the next three to five years.

## Move over patties, Singapore consumers want more plant-based mince and strips

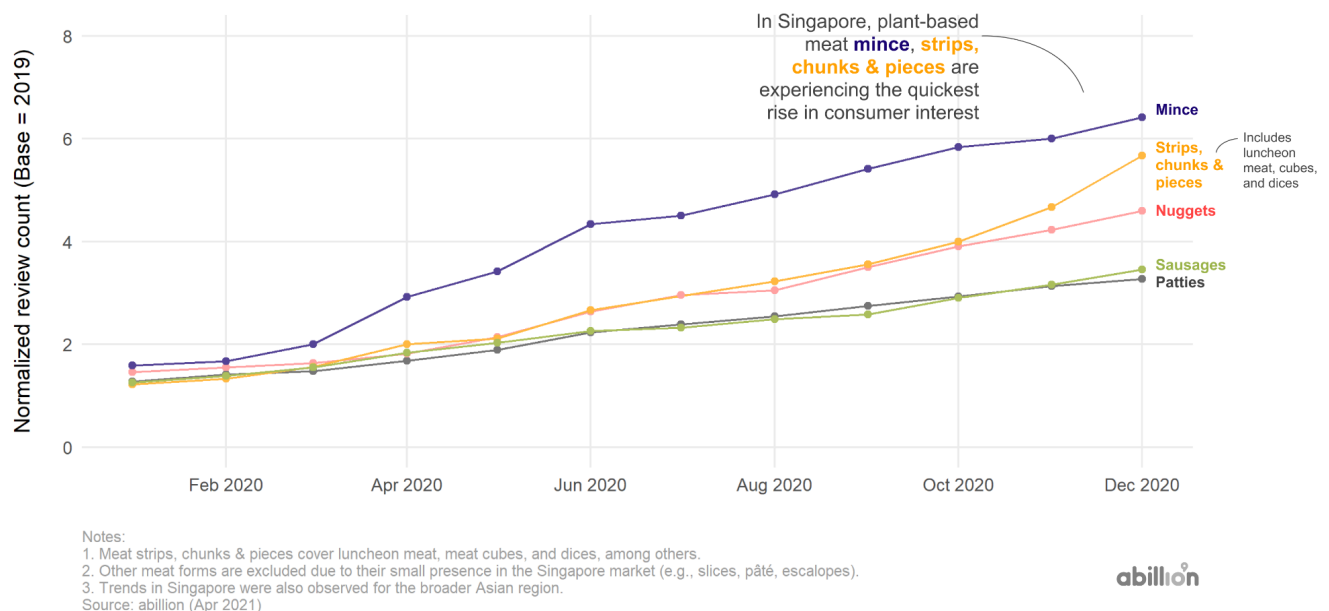
Thus far, alternative meat forms aligned with Western cuisines (e.g., burger patties, sausages) have accounted for most plant-based meat products. In Singapore, however, plant-based meat mince and strips are experiencing the quickest rise in consumer interest, likely because they are more appropriate for Asian cooking. The latter, in particular, includes luncheon meat, cubes, dice and pieces, among others.

"As the plant-based meat alternatives market develops, it's natural that consumers seek a wider variety of products that work in the cuisines and product formats that they grew up

with...and love. The most popular and accessible meat alternatives globally have mainly come from Western markets and primarily focused on beef for obvious reasons. From here, we expect a rapid increase in products & formats that better cater to the needs of the markets where pork and chicken are traditionally more prevalent protein choices."

- Duncan Robertson, Head of Marketing, Karana

**Figure 7: Plant-based mince and strips accelerating ahead of patties**  
Asian-appropriate meat forms critical to garner interest in Singapore and other Asian markets



[Karana](#) launched its whole-plant jackfruit-based pork product in Singapore earlier this year across six leading restaurants such as [Open Farm Community](#) and [Grain Traders](#). The brand intends to roll out its jackfruit-based pork in shredded and minced meat forms. (13) [OmniFoods](#), famed for its popular [OmniPork mince product](#), has expanded its Asian-focused product range. The company launched luncheon and pork-like [OmniMeat Strips](#) in local supermarkets across Singapore in November 2020. (14)



## KARANA

KARANA is a Singapore-based new food tech start-up, focusing on creating healthy, sustainable food for discerning Asian palates. They produce whole-plant food that is minimally processed.

### Key milestones:

- **Jan 2021** - Launched first product - 'pork' made from young jackfruit sourced sustainably from small-holder farmers in Sri Lanka.
- **Apr 2021** - Securing resilient supply chain that caters to future product range and market expansion capabilities, Increasing retail distribution in Singapore and preparing to launch in Hong Kong.

### Upcoming plans:

- **Retail launch:** Bringing to market a range of ready-to-cook retail products in Singapore and Hong Kong by mid-2021.
- **International expansion:** In the medium- to long-term, KARANA is assessing international expansion plans on the back of significant interest at both the B2C and B2B level.

On the abillion app, we've observed consumers incorporating OmniMeat Strips into homemade stir-fried dishes, hotpot, and noodle soups. To appeal to local conscious consumers, retailers and producers should establish product lines in plant-based pork and chicken, and focus on forms which are suitable for Asian cuisines.

"It is clear that plant-based foods are one of the key priorities as Asian consumers, food manufacturers and restaurants look to sustainable alternatives. While still nascent in Singapore, we see emerging demand for such alternatives. Enterprise Singapore is keen to work with partners to strengthen infrastructure, talent and consumer awareness so that there can be a wider range of plant-based foods at competitive prices in the market. We hope to leverage the ongoing momentum to find opportunities to create healthier, safer and more resilient food solutions and systems for the benefit of Asia and the world."

- Bernice Tay, Enterprise Singapore, Director of Food Manufacturing

## **Surf's up, it's time to catch the plant-based wave**

The plant-based wave has hit Singapore's shores in full force. Our investigative deep-dive into the Singapore market with a sample size of 10K individuals shows that interest in conscious consumption among Singapore shoppers more than doubled in 2020. This was partly driven by a heightened sense of social, environmental, and health awareness triggered by the global Coronavirus pandemic. While flexitarians currently make up the smallest share of consumers, they are growing at the fastest rate and are poised to lead growth in demand for sustainable options in the coming years. In the direct-to-consumer space, the local plant-based snack market is vibrant and robust as Singapore consumers favour healthier snack options. Nonetheless, there is significant growth potential to enhance retail accessibility of plant-based meats. In addition, plant-based ice cream, mylk, and cheese are promising growth segments. These categories are increasingly attractive to consumers and have relatively favourable market dynamics with low retail brand competition. Zooming into plant-based meat, our findings suggest that retailers and alternative meat manufacturers should channel resources towards plant-based pork and chicken, specifically in forms which are aligned with local cooking styles. With the sustainable wave showing little signs of fading, it is time for businesses to ride the socially responsible consumption wave or risk wiping out. abillion will continue to harness insights from our fast-growing dataset to help the local food ecosystem identify market gaps and opportunities.

### ***Authors:***

Maria Tan, Data, abillion

Ravi Gopalan, Data, abillion

### ***Supported by:***

Enterprise Singapore



# References

1. Consultancy.asia(2021) *Sustainability Heralds \$1 Trillion Opportunity for Southeast Asia*. Retrieved from <https://www.consultancy.asia/news/3806/sustainability-heralds-1-trillion-opportunity-for-southeast-asia>
2. retailasia (2020) *Conscious Consumerism, Experiential Selling are the Top Retail Trends in Singapore for 2020*. Retrieved from <https://retailasia.net/stores/news/conscious-consumerism-experiential-selling-are-top-retail-trends-in-singapore-2020>
3. Ho, K. (2020) *Singaporeans Prefer "Socially Responsible" Brands During Pandemic*. Retrieved from <https://sg.yougov.com/en-sg/news/2020/07/03/singaporeans-prefer-socially-responsible-brands-du/>
4. Latham, K. (2021) *Has Coronavirus Made Us More Ethical Consumers?* Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-55630144>
5. Dodhiya, M. (2021) *42% of Global Consumers are Flexitarians and Driving Mainstream Plant-based Shift*. Retrieved from <https://www.totallyveganbuzz.com/news/42-of-global-consumers-are-flexitarians/?amp>
6. Neo, P. (2020) *Biting Back: Better-for-you Options and Localised Flavours are 'The Future' for APAC Savoury Snack Industry*. Retrieved from <https://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Article/2020/08/21/Biting-back-Better-for-you-options-and-localised-flavours-are-the-future-for-APAC-savoury-snack-industry>
7. Astha, Z. (2020) *Commentary: Going Meatless Doesn't Have to be a Dilemma for the Singaporean Foodie*. Retrieved from <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/singapore-food-vegetarian-vegan-plant-diet-meat-climate-change-13350478>
8. Ho, S. (2020) *Asia Expansion: Oatly Launches in Singapore Where 1/3 Consumers Don't Know About Plant-based Milk*. Retrieved from <https://www.greenqueen.com.hk/asia-expansion-oatly-launches-in-singapore-where-1-3-consumers-dont-know-about-plant-based-milk/>
9. Ho, S. (2021) *Oatly Partners with Yeo's for US\$30M Asia Oat Milk Factory in Singapore, First Time Outside E.U. & U.S*. Retrieved from <https://www.greenqueen.com.hk/oatly-partners-with-yeos-for-usd-30m-asia-oat-milk-factory-in-singapore/>

10. Asia Research & Engagement (2018) *Charting Asia's Protein Journey*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5991a3f3d2b8570b1d58cc7e/t/5b8de692562fa736b204bcd/1536026307523/Charting+Asia's+Protein+Journey.pdf>
11. Vegconomist (2021) *Special: Sustainable Fishing Won't Save The Seas. Plant-based Seafood Will*. Retrieved from <https://vegconomist.com/environment/special-sustainable-fishing-wont-save-the-seas-plant-based-seafood-will/>
12. Fiorillo, J. (2021) *Investors Pour Whopping Amount of Money into Alternative Seafood Items in 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.intrafish.com/finance/investors-pour-whopping-amount-of-money-into-alternative-seafood-items-in-2020/2-1-984301>
13. Neo, P. (2020) *Jackfruit-based Pork: Karana Bids on Minimal-Processing Approach to Stand Out in Plant-based Category*. Retrieved from <https://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Article/2020/06/15/Jackfruit-based-pork-Karana-bids-on-minimal-processing-approach-to-stand-out-in-plant-based-category>
14. Vegconomist (2020) *OmniFoods' "Unprecedented" Vegan SPAM is Now Available in Retail to Enjoy at Home*. Retrieved from <https://vegconomist.com/food-and-beverage/omnifoods-unprecedented-vegan-spam-is-now-available-in-retail-to-enjoy-at-home/>