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Sandwiches unwrapped: snapshot report 2019

It's British Sandwich Week and new research published by the [Eating Better Alliance](#) makes clear the health and environmental impact of this popular lunch time food.

The snapshot survey of 620 sandwiches shows that while some retailers, particularly Tesco and Pret, have made progress in terms of diversifying their sandwich ranges to include more plant-based options. The sheer volume of meat-based sandwiches is a big concern. 85% of sandwiches on the market still have meat, fish or cheese as their main ingredient.

Simon Billing, Executive Director of Eating Better an alliance of over 60 organisations who carried out the research says: 'The good news is that some retailers are responding to consumer demand for more plant-based options. But given the urgency of our climate and biodiversity crisis they need to double down on their efforts to support options that are better for the environment.'

33% of meat sandwiches contained meat of unknown origin. This includes all of the meat sandwiches at Boots and Subway, and the vast majority at EAT. The research found only 2 sandwiches carried any better meat certification which consumers could find helpful when making their selection.

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director, Food Foundation says: 'Sandwiches and ready meals make up a significant part of our diet. Only [14% of ready meals](#) and 30% of sandwiches are meat and fish free. Replacing meat with veg is a critical part of our journey to eating better and living longer, but the supermarkets and manufacturers are not yet doing enough to help us make that journey.'

Dr Nick Palmer, Head of [Compassion in World Farming UK](#), says: 'This survey highlights the need for faster action by retailers. Shops that offer a clear choice of plant-based and high-welfare sandwiches will find that consumers respond, just as they did for clear labelling of eggs of free-range eggs. Surely nobody can argue that it's good for consumers to be kept in the dark and unable to make informed choices?'



Sandwiches are an iconic staple of the British diet: last year we bought an incredible 4bn ready-made sandwiches, at a cost of £8bn. [76% of consumers buy lunch to eat out of home for an everyday occasion.](#) [48% of people in the UK are willing or already committed to cutting down or cutting out meat.](#) Movement by retailers to support these consumers when shopping in this massive category would have the potential for a big health, environment and animal welfare impact.