



schouten specialist in
plant-based protein

Consumer Insights >> meat substitutes

Q2 2026 – The role of fiber



Why fiber matters now for food professionals

- Many consumers consistently do not get enough fiber
- Interest in fiber is growing rapidly
- Plant-based offers a natural fiber advantage
- This creates opportunities for food providers



In this update:

- Which trends are driving the growing focus on fiber intake?
- What role does fiber play in a healthy diet?
- What role do plant-based meat alternatives play in fiber intake?
- Strategic insights for you as a food professional
- Opportunities for product development and marketing



Trends 2026

On fiber and meat alternatives



These two trends partly explain the growing attention to fiber



A close-up photograph of a person's hands resting on their abdomen, symbolizing gut health. The person is wearing a white ribbed top and blue athletic wear. The background is softly blurred, and there are colorful abstract shapes in the corners: a yellow and purple shape in the top right, a green shape in the bottom left, and a teal shape in the bottom right.

#2 Gut Health Hub

Trend 2: The power of a healthy gut

Good digestion is increasingly seen as the foundation of overall wellbeing.

Products with probiotics and prebiotics are gaining ground, especially when they clearly explain how they work and the benefits they offer.

Less bloating, more energy, and a stronger immune system are benefits consumers readily recognize.

Fiber supports gut health

Some dietary fibers have a prebiotic effect:

- ✓ They nourish beneficial gut bacteria
- ✓ They stimulate the growth of these bacteria
- ✓ They support healthy digestion

Fiber therefore plays an important role in gut health.

Source: Netherlands Nutrition Centre



Many people do not get enough fiber

According to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), **a minimum of 25 grams of fiber per day** is recommended for adults.

In Europe, the average fiber intake is lower:

- Men: around **20 grams per day**
- Women: around **18 grams per day**

This means that a large part of the population falls **below the recommended intake**.



Meat alternatives have a natural fiber advantage

Many commonly used ingredients in meat alternatives naturally contain fiber.

Examples:

- **Soy**
- **Pea protein**
- **Fava beans**
- **Wheat gluten**
- **Mycoprotein**

This is in contrast to meat, which naturally contains no fiber.



Practical example: ground beef vs. plant-based mince

A 100 g serving of mince in a pasta meal:



0 grams of fiber



6,7 grams of fiber

With this **simple switch**, consumers get over **25% of the recommended daily intake**.



Fiber promotes a feeling of fullness and can contribute to weight loss

High-fiber foods provide a longer-lasting feeling of fullness.

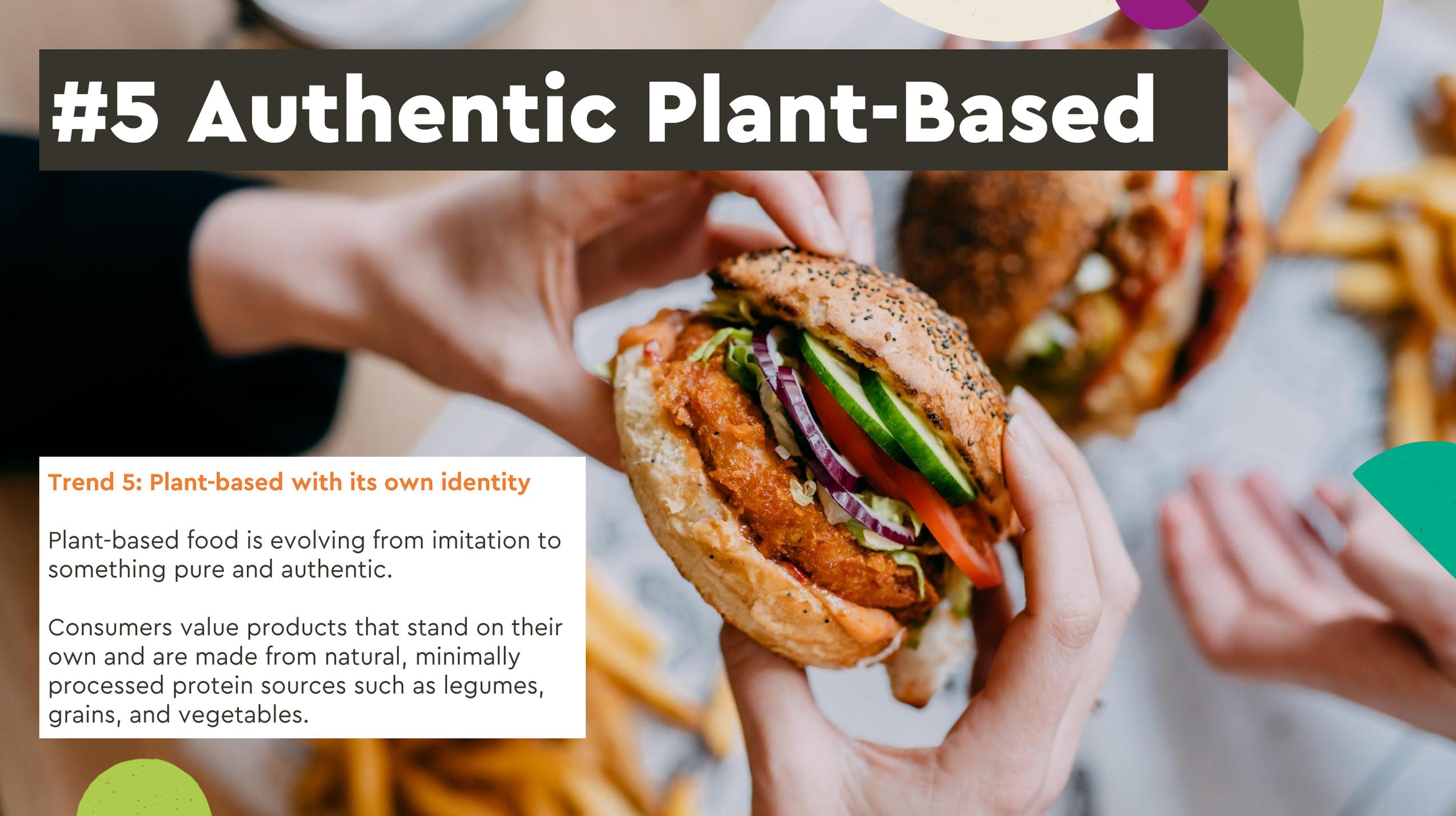
63% agrees



Bron: Mintel – Attitudes towards Healthy Eating – UK – 2025



#5 Authentic Plant-Based



Trend 5: Plant-based with its own identity

Plant-based food is evolving from imitation to something pure and authentic.

Consumers value products that stand on their own and are made from natural, minimally processed protein sources such as legumes, grains, and vegetables.

These types of products often contain even more fiber

- **Non-meat-like products** with visible legumes and vegetables naturally often **contain even more fiber** than meat-like products based on protein isolates or texturates.
- Meat naturally contains no fiber.
- In some processed meat products, small amounts of fiber may be present due to added ingredients.
- The differences are shown alongside.

Vegetable and legume concepts

Classic meat alternatives

Meat



Mexican Burger
5.4 g of fiber per 100 g



Hamburger
3.4 g of fiber per 100 g



Beef burger
0.3 g of fiber per 100 g



Vegetable bites
4,5 g of fiber per 100 g



Nuggets
4,2 g of fiber per 100 g



Chicken nuggets
0,2 g of fiber per 100 g



Falafel Harissa
4,4 g of fiber per 100 g



Snack Balls
3,2 g of fiber per 100 g



Meatballs
0,2 g of fiber per 100 g

The number of claims, awareness, and consumer interest is increasing

Fiber claims on packaging

(Europe, CAGR 2020-2025)

+5,4%

% of consumers highly interested in fiber:

39%

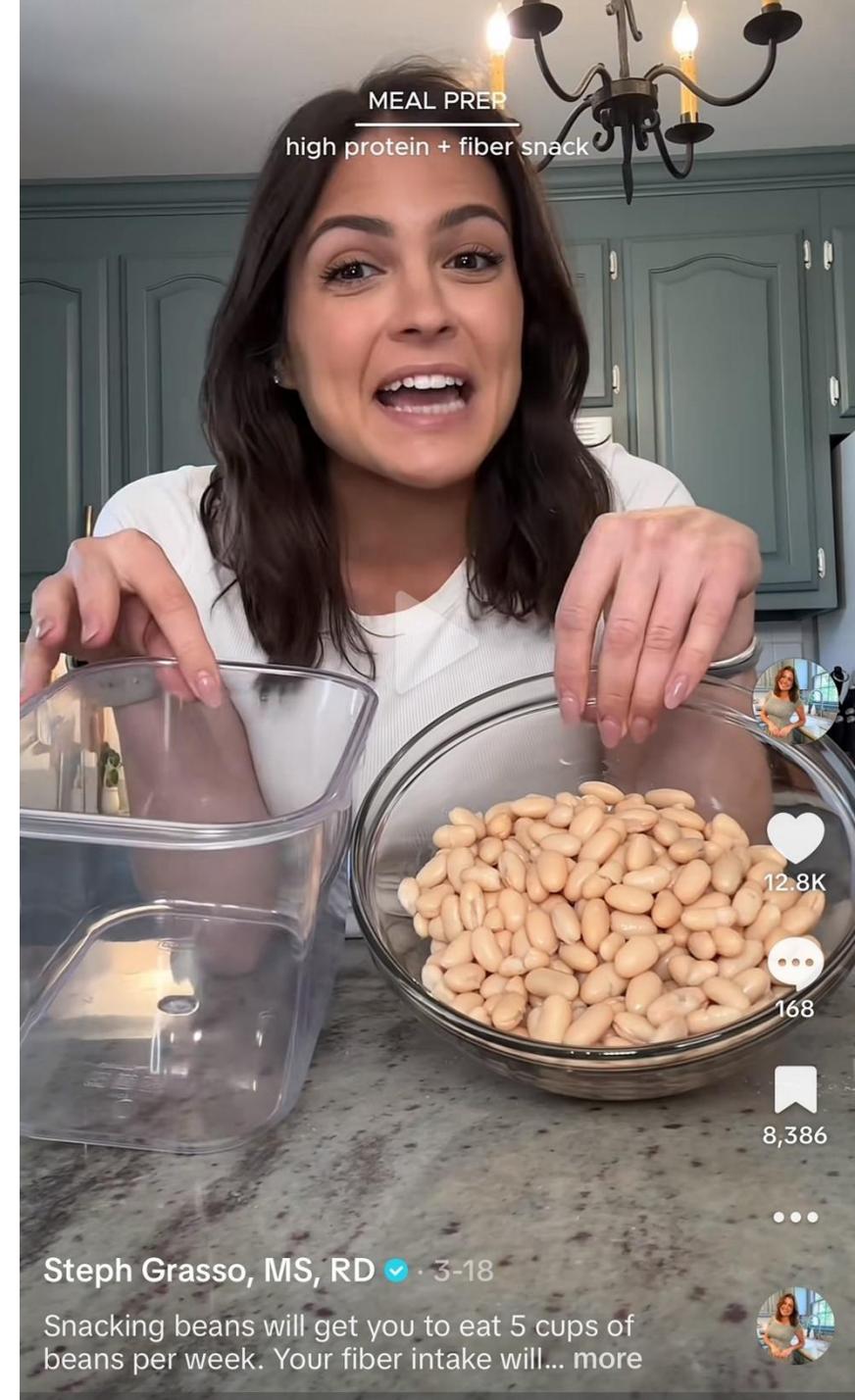


Source: Innova Market Insights



Resulting in the social media trend "Fibermaxxing"

- Fibermaxxing means consciously **eating a lot of fiber-rich plant-based foods** to improve your health and gut microbiome.
- A younger target group is driving this trend.
- Social media is accelerating awareness around fiber.
- This creates an opportunity for brands to respond with communication and claims.





fiber and R&D

Functional and recognizable

Fiber improves structure and bite

Fiber also plays **a functional role in the development of meat alternatives.**

fiber contribute to:

- ✓ Structure and juiciness
- ✓ Mouthfeel and bite
- ✓ Product stability

This helps make meat alternatives even more appealing to a broad target audience.

Sources:

- [MDPI review over dietary fiber in meat & meat analogues](#)
- [Food science review over vezels in plant-based meat](#)
- [ScienceDirect studie over structuur van meat analogues](#)





Fiber aligns with the demand for recognizable ingredients

- Consumers are increasingly looking for **recognizable ingredients**.
- Fiber-rich plant-based raw materials fit well within this expectation.
- They support a clean label approach and strengthen the story around plant-based food.

Sources:

- [Review over plant-based ingrediënten en voedingsvezels](#)
- [Food science review over toepassing van vezels in vleesvervangers](#)





Key fiber takeaways

Strategy, R&D and marketing

Key fiber takeaways 1/2

Strategic insights

- **Fiber is an important part of health-related communication**

Consumers directly associate fiber with gut health, energy, and overall wellbeing.

- **Plant-based has a clear nutritional advantage**

Plant-based products naturally contain fiber, whereas meat does not.

- **Consumers look at overall nutritional value**

Not only protein, but also fiber and ingredients shape the perception of health.

- **Fiber strengthens the relevance of meat alternatives**

They make products a full-fledged part of a healthy diet.



Key fiber takeaways 2/2

Opportunities for R&D and marketing

- **Combine protein and fiber in one product**

Meet the demand for nutritious and functional food.

- **Actively position fibers in your proposition**

Make fibers visible in communication and claims.

- **Use fibers as a distinguishing factor**

Strengthen your product without compromising on taste or experience.

- **Translate fibers into concrete consumer benefits**

Think about satiety, energy, and gut health.



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Questions? Please feel free to contact me

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