



Letter to The Guardian of the UK in response to article “End of the Avocado” by Claire Finney

It was astonishing to see many of the myths about avocados alive and well in your recent article, End of the Avocado by Claire Finney. In addition to misleading your readers by using incorrect information, the article reduces the complex discussion of how we eat and consume sustainably to showcasing the greenwashing efforts of some restaurateurs who claim environmental responsibility by removing the avocado which takes on average 600 liters to produce a kilo (or 5 to 6 medium size avocados). Meanwhile the imitation guacamole is made from fava beans, which require roughly 5000 litres to produce a single kilo. And the misinformation does not stop with this recipe. Many of these restaurateurs are keeping dozens of ingredients with a far greater environmental footprint on their menus.

The critics also fail to offer a viable alternative to the avocado. Indeed as Clare Finney states in the article, “avocados are challenging to replace” but it’s not just in terms of flavour, texture and versatility but also in their nutritional content. It is without a doubt one of the healthiest superfoods you can eat and this is a fact. These misinformed restaurateurs should know that the avocado's water footprint is much lower than many of the products they serve as part of their menu. For example, their meat dishes not only take thousands and thousands of litres to produce, but livestock production is also the leading agricultural source of greenhouse gases in the world. Avocados, on the other hand, are grown on trees, and we all know that trees are considered the lungs of the earth because they turn carbon dioxide into clean oxygen.

And therein lies the crucial point that is overlooked in the article. Our bodies require certain nutrients, it’s not optional. What we need to do is follow a diet full of nutritious foods that have as small an impact on the environment as possible. And when it comes to reducing the environmental impact of our diet, there is no question that we need to reduce the consumption of products that are not environmentally friendly. Litre by litre of water that is used to produce one kilo of avocados results in one of the highest returns on nutrition for humans. This has to be integral to the conversation of eating sustainably.

Indeed the irreplaceable avocado is a vital component of a future-proof and sustainable diet that is already emerging. That's why the avocado is now one of the stars of the produce aisle. Conscientious consumers - and not misinformed restaurateurs who want to self-promote themselves by criticizing one of the world’s top superfoods - need to be mindful of what is in their foods, rather than the foods themselves. We have a collective responsibility to ensure sustainable and transparent supply chains across industries, to contribute to people’s health and protect the planet’s future. The avocado is doing its part and we hope that others will do the same.

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