

Alt-Meat®

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CHANGING MINDS

Zach Vouga believes vegan burgers and shakes can change the world – and he may just be right



Great taste and texture

OUR TASTE TESTERS WERE PRETTY KEEN ON NOT CHICKEN PATTIES. WHILE SOME BALKED AT THE PRICE POINT, MOST WERE THRILLED WITH THE CRUNCHY TEXTURE.



NotCo

When perusing the frozen alt-meat category, there's something to be said about an in-your-face bright purple bag featuring a loaded "chicken" sandwich begging you to give it a try. That's exactly how we felt when we first spotted NOT Chicken Patties. These plant-based breaded patties boast 9g of protein per serving and 55% less saturated fat than a traditional chicken patty — and it says so prominently on the front of the pack. Let's see what our evaluators had to say about our latest find.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Several vegetarians, a vegan, several others who are cutting back on meat, some who have a keen interest in the alternative-meat category and those eating more mindfully, all taste-tested NOT Chicken Patties.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A vegan explained, "My first impression was great as I prefer breaded faux chicken patties that can afford to stand

on their own without additional sauce. The bag boasts 'non-GMO,' which I appreciate, and I like it when there is a count of four items in a bag. Any more tends to get freezer burned and any less is sort of a rip-off. I was curious about the bamboo fiber listed in the ingredients."

"The packaging was fun and colorful, but they could have given a perforated tear to rip the bag open rather than needing scissors," a male taster said.

An occasional alt-meat eater shared, "I started this alt-meat journey to cut back on meat, but then realized I don't eat that much meat now. So, my criteria has changed. I eat plant-based alt-meat foods to vary my diet and eat foods that I like. I liked that there's a comparison of this 'chicken patty versus a 'real' chicken patty on the front of the package."

A vegetarian commented, "I love the packaging! The purple really caught my attention. You don't see too many food items presented in that color. Also, the picture on the package inspired me to make a chicken sandwich on a nice bun

with lots of fixings! I would definitely try this based on the packaging and verbiage on it."

"Important nutrition facts were clearly listed on the front, which I liked, and the picture was appealing. I compared them to Alpha Crispy Chik'n Patties, which I had in my freezer, and the NOT patty had more calories, fat, way more sodium and less protein," noted a vegetarian. She added, "Opening the bag required scissors which could be avoided if they notched the bag. The patties were thinner than expected due to the enlarged photo on the front."

Another female vegetarian indicated, "I had never heard of this brand, so I was interested in trying these patties. They were pretty low calorie compared to other plant-based 'chicken' patties I've tried. For the size of the patty, there was a decent amount of protein, and the sodium and carbs weren't bad either."

APPEARANCE, FEEL, TASTE, TEXTURE

"They made the sandwich on the front look very good, but it was thicker than

Taste Test

the actual product,” one taster said. “I air-fried mine but a microwave option would make things quicker.”

“The product looked exactly like a real chicken patty, and I appreciated that I could enjoy a kinder meal choice,” a vegan said. “I cooked it in my toaster oven and this chicken, hands down, did a better job presenting as the real thing than other products I’ve tried. I don’t like when faux chicken attempts to imitate real chicken. A patty texture is more pleasing than the textures used to imitate dark, leg meat. The taste was incredibly pleasing.”

Another participant said, “I ate it on a salad with Ranch dressing and it could have very well been a ‘real’ chicken

patty — but I would not confuse it with a whole muscle cut.” She continued, “It had a savory flavor I liked and have not had in other faux chicken products. They are usually soybean-y. I air-fried it, and it tasted better than the [other] chicken patties I’ve had.”

A 20-something female exclaimed, “Very, very crunchy! Great texture and not mushy. With honey mustard it tastes like something I would get at Wendy’s. It tastes more like chicken than a chicken patty.”

“This patty has great crispness! I love the breading texture and I can hear the crunch,” a female taster said. “The inside looks spongy but doesn’t eat spongy. The crispness overrides any



textural issues. I had a few bites plain, then put it on a bun with mayo, lettuce and pickles. I was pleasantly surprised that the crunch still came through on the sandwich. I can’t say the patty had a lot of flavor, but the eating experience was unexpectedly good.”

An occasional alt-meat eater said, “It tastes perfect. My mouth is saying

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PRODUCT:

NOT Chicken Patties

PRICE:

\$6.99-9.99/12 oz.
(4 patties)

NUTRITION PER SERVING:

Calories 220, Total Fat 16g, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Cholesterol 0mg,
Sodium 620mg, Total Carbohydrate 11g, Protein 9g.

by Anna Marie Cesario
and Jennifer Vahalik, U&I
Collaboration, LLC.

Food product development and consumer research veterans, Anna Marie Cesario and Jennifer Vahalik, join Alt-Meat magazine as contributors to our regular “Taste Test” column. Here’s how the program works: The alternative meat item is distributed to consumers, including the core demographic, for preparation in their own homes. No instructions are provided to the consumer, other than to write their overall impressions of the product, as well as to evaluate the flavor, texture, packaging and ease of use. Cesario and Vahalik look for common threads by using Getting It!®, a system developed to listen to consumers about products. The sample of people is not intended to be a “taste test” in a controlled setting, nor is it intended to simulate a focus group. Others are doing both. Rather, the intent is to interpret the response of the people who might purchase a product like this and use it, simply based on their encounters with the product in their individual, unique home environment. That is how U&I has been developing cutting-edge product and people understanding since 1999.

‘more please’. It tastes more like chicken than a chicken patty.” Looking at the ingredients, she added, “Back the truck up: This contains peach powder? I love peaches. No wonder I like it!”

“It was greasier than I was expecting, but overall wasn’t bad. These looked, smelled and tasted great and were crunchy, which is nice. It tasted similar to Perdue patties, which are actual chicken. I ate one plain and one in a wrap with some hot sauce,” said a male taster.

A vegetarian taster shared, “I air-fried them and there seemed to be a lot of oil coming out of the patty, which was slightly off-putting. It took close to 20 minutes, which is longer than I’d like for an air-fried burger. I tried one plain and had some on a roll with chipotle sauce. The breading had a good crunchy texture, and the inside had a soft, meaty texture with no weird rubbery parts. I enjoyed the taste, and it didn’t leave me thirsty despite the crazy amount of sodium in it.”

Another vegetarian observed, “The patty looked similar to a fast-food-type ‘chicken’ but was a lot thinner than similar products. I prepared it in the oven and ate it on a roll with some BBQ sauce. The patty didn’t have much flavor on its own.”

“I cooked it in the air fryer, but I thought the patty would’ve been bigger or thicker since it’s competing with quite a few others out there. It smelled and looked great,” a vegetarian said. She continued, “The texture was nice — not chewy or slimy. I liked the patty but wouldn’t say I was over the moon about it. I did get a hint more saltiness than other patties I’ve tried.”

CONCLUSION

“If I saw this for the first time for \$6.99, I would try it since it’s a new product I haven’t seen

before. But at \$9.99, I wouldn’t buy it for the first time,” a vegetarian said. “Now that I’ve tried it and I like it, I wouldn’t buy it again largely based on the nutrition facts. It wasn’t significantly better than other ‘chicken’ burgers on the market that have a similar or lower price point and better nutrition facts.”

“I have zero bad things to say about these, and they are probably going to become my new go-to for chicken patties,” concluded a male taster.

“I definitely would buy this product,” our vegetarian told us. She added, “Although I don’t prefer to eat soy protein isolates, if I need to bring something as my dinner option to a family dinner or if I just want a snack, this would be a great choice. This had a great taste and texture that truly imitated the real thing.”

Another vegetarian concluded, “I probably would not buy this based on price and taste. There are some other plant-based ‘chicken’ patties I prefer for a sandwich.”

“I would buy this if it was on sale or if I had a coupon for that price,” said another vegetarian.

Another female taster surmised, “I’ll probably keep these on-hand for lunch, especially since I really couldn’t even tell it was an alt-meat! I often find that callouts on the front of a package aren’t true, but this one says ‘crispy,’ and these patties truly are.”

Overall, it seems that NOT Chicken Patties did a pretty good job getting the taste and texture right for a variety of alt-meat consumers. It was also the first time we didn’t hear an alt-meat product described as “processed,” which we found intriguing. The price may be a pain point for some, yet for those who appreciate a “new find,” it may not discourage them.