

Mycoprotein



What is mycoprotein?

Mycoprotein is a protein-rich, high fibre food made from a type of fungus that naturally occurs in the soil. The fungus (*Fusarium venenatum*) was discovered in the 1960s in Buckinghamshire (UK) when food scientists were tasked with identifying alternative, sustainable protein sources to help feed the growing global population. Mycoprotein-based foods are suitable for vegetarians, and some are also suitable for vegans.

How is mycoprotein made?

The fungus used to produce mycoprotein is grown in large air-lift fermenters along with a range of nutrients that it uses for growth (fermentation is a natural process whereby microorganisms break down nutrients such as carbohydrates into by-products; this process is used to produce some foods and drinks.) Egg (or plant protein for vegan foods) and seasoning are then added, before steam-cooking, chilling and freezing to create the final ingredient. This can then be used to make foods like meat-free mince and pieces (e.g. Quorn products).

Healthy, sustainable diets

We should all be aiming to consume a healthy, balanced and varied plant-rich diet to improve our health and the health of the planet. An important part of this approach is to vary our protein sources. This includes eating pulses, nuts, seeds and other alternative protein sources (such as soya- or mycoprotein-based foods) that are not high in saturated fat or salt. A plant-rich diet can also include some lean meat, dairy foods, fish and eggs, depending on your dietary choices.

Mycoprotein is:

- High in protein
- High in fibre
- Low in fat
- Low in saturated fat
- A source of riboflavin and high in folate, phosphorus, zinc and manganese

How can mycoprotein-based foods be eaten?

Mycoprotein comes in many different forms and can be used in dishes in the same way as other protein-rich foods, such as meat, fish and pulses, but preparation methods can differ so on-pack instructions should be checked. Mycoprotein-based foods are convenient, suitable for all the family and can be used in meals such as sandwiches, pasta dishes, curries and stir fries.