

## Polytechnic University will be the first Russian university to introduce a vegetarian menu

Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University became the first Russian university to implement a balanced plant-based menu that meets the nutritional needs of all students and reduces the carbon footprint.



St. Petersburg Polytechnic University signed an agreement on September 27th to implement a completely plant-based menu, supporting the «Food for the Mind» project implemented by the «Voices for Animals» non-governmental organization in cooperation with the Green Universities of Russia Association and the Healthy Nutrition Research Center. At Polytechnic University, the initiative was implemented thanks to the active work of the student environmental association ReGreen and the students' trade union organization.

We gladly supported the initiative of the student environmental association ReGreen and thanks to the team of the project 'Food for the Mind' with the participation of chef Arturas Vaičius, we are the first in Russia to introduce a plant-based menu in the canteens of Polytechnic University. The development of the social and living environment in the university is the main function of our management, and we strive to organize a comfortable environment for gaining

knowledge. The future belongs to those who choose an active lifestyle and wholesome healthy meals, believes Zarina NAUMOVA, Head of the Social and Welfare and Logistics Department of SPbPU.



Minestrone, Finnish soup, spinach cream soup, borscht or Indian dal, rice with chickpeas and curry, bulgur with mushrooms, or green mashed potatoes with sausage. Ten options for set lunches, five different bowls, hot snacks, and baked goods of all kinds. All of this is plant-based and will now be available to students and faculty at Polytechnic. This should please those who, for one reason or another, do not consume animal products, including people with lactose intolerance, vegetarians, and vegans.

Experienced chefs, technologists, and medical experts worked on the menu. According to experts, a balanced vegetable diet reduces the risk of arterial hypertension, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, heart attack, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and cancer. And the introduction of such a menu meets the goals of sustainable development of the UN and the Paris agreement on climate change because it reduces the rate of livestock production, one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. According to calculations by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), this industry accounts for 14.5% of emissions.

Interestingly, Cambridge University's catering service replaced red meat with plant-based products four years ago to reduce carbon emissions from the food



purchased by the university. Today more than a third of UK universities have opened specialized vegetarian and vegan cafés. Other countries are following the same path.



The launch of Green Meals at Polytechnic University is a great example of how a student at our university can dream of introducing a balanced plant-based meal in the dining halls, but also through student government to implement such an initiative from the ground up. Special thanks to the Office of Social Welfare and Logistics for coming to our aid. Cases like this show that any of us can make our university better, says Nikita CHUBUR, chairman of the trade union organization of students at SPbPU.

Anna ZIV, coordinator of the Food for the Mind project, is convinced that plant-based options on the menu are not only a big step towards the greening of the university but also an indicator of the university's open position that gives students and faculty a choice: Every visitor to the canteen will be able to make an informed choice by familiarizing themselves with information on the composition of dishes, their nutritional value, the impact of food production on the environment. It is important to note that due to the introduction of plant-based options, the range is expanding. That is, those who want to buy a meat cutlet will still have that option, but now they can try a chickpea cutlet or other plant-based protein products that are just as tasty and nutritious as animal products. I truly believe that students and faculty will be more likely to choose plant-based alternatives and

that other universities will pick up the baton from Polytechnic University.

«Food for the Mind» is a nonprofit project of Voices for Animals, an NGO. Project specialists help universities incorporate plant-based menus into canteens step by step, providing full informational support. If necessary, they hold training workshops with menu authors and nutrition experts, as well as other events that introduce students to the topic of the impact of diet on the environment and human health. All services are free for universities. Other institutions of higher education in the country can also implement the menu. Step-by-step instructions on how to do this can be found on the project website [foodft.ru](http://foodft.ru).

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