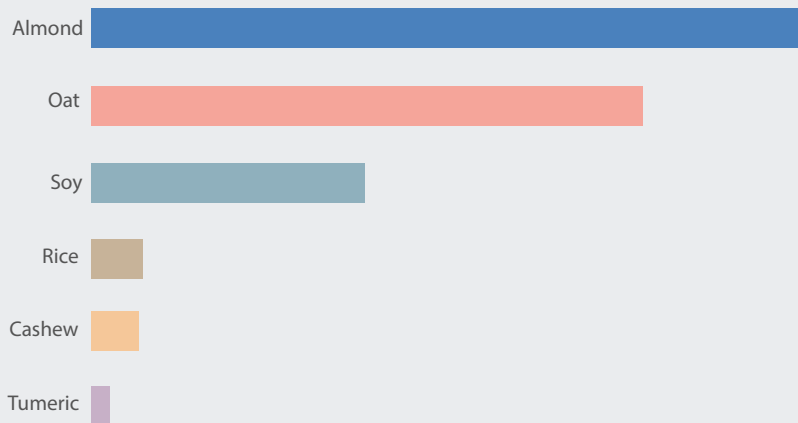


# Decoding the Alternative Milk Audience

What began as a barista quirk is now ubiquitous across supermarket shelves, with a broad, diverse audience discussing alternative milks online. Together with our partners at Audiense, we took a snapshot of the topics, brands, and moments in the alt milk conversation, and the audiences behind it.

## Which kind of Alt Milk?

'Alternative milk' was once synonymous with Soy and perhaps Rice drinks. But the onetime favorite has been overtaken by Almond and Oat, with Cashew and Turmeric starting to pick up in volume.

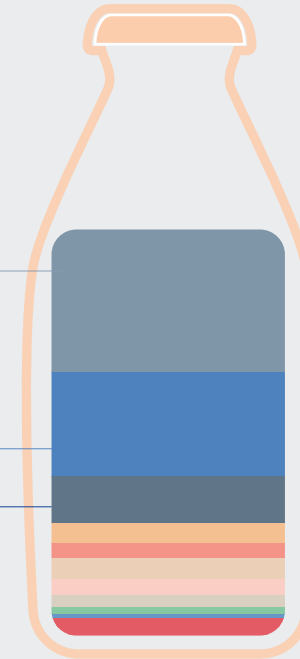


## The Brands driving the conversation

**Oatly 35.1%**  
Smart marketing. Origins in Swedish academia. Funding controversy.

**Silk 26%**  
Self-described 'OGs' of alt-milks. From Colorado. Now part of Danone.

**So Delicious 11.7%**  
A three decade-long pivot from desserts toward milks.



- ◆ Pacific 5.2%
- ◆ Almond Breeze 5.1%
- ◆ Ripple 3.9%
- ◆ Alpro 3.5%
- ◆ Califia 3%
- ◆ Minor Figures 1.6%
- ◆ Elmhurst 1.5%
- ◆ Forager 0.7%
- ◆ Good Karma 0.7%
- ◆ Mylk 0.6%
- ◆ Rice/Soy Dream 0.4%
- ◆ Plenish 0.2%
- ◆ Bonsoy 0.2%
- ◆ Rude Health 0.2%

## Alt Milk ≠ Milk?

In October, EU regulators backed a ban on any kind of reference to 'milk' or 'dairy' for any plant-based alternative. Online reaction was swift:

**The Hashtag** #standupforplantbased

**The Platforms** Twitter & Reddit Communities (SubReddits) such as r/vegan and r/europe

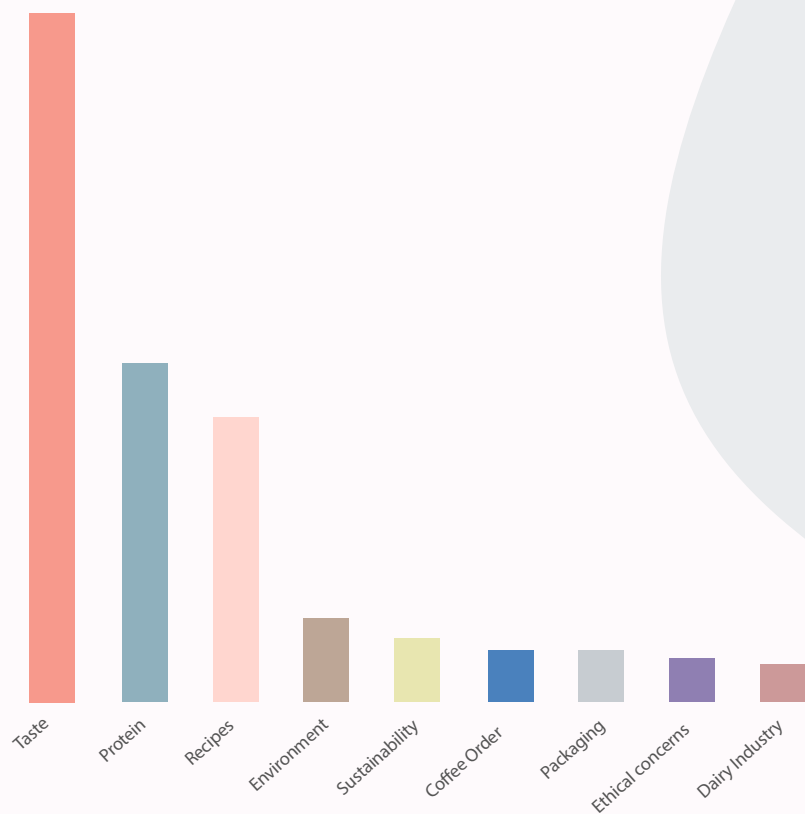
**The Topics** The 'dairy lobby'; comparison with alt meat terminology; almond milk's 15th century origins

To carry out this study, we used Communities, a Pulsar feature that blends social listening and audience segmentation into one tool. We tracked English language mentions of alt milks from August 1 - October 13, across Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Reddit, Amazon, Blogs, News Media & more.

## The behavior & habits behind the alt milk conversation

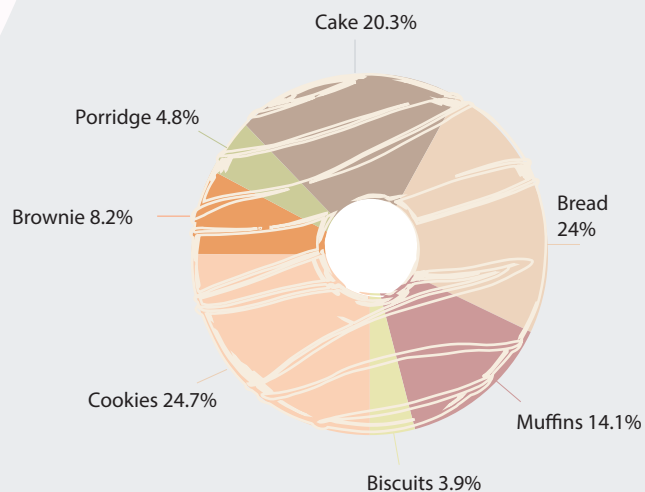
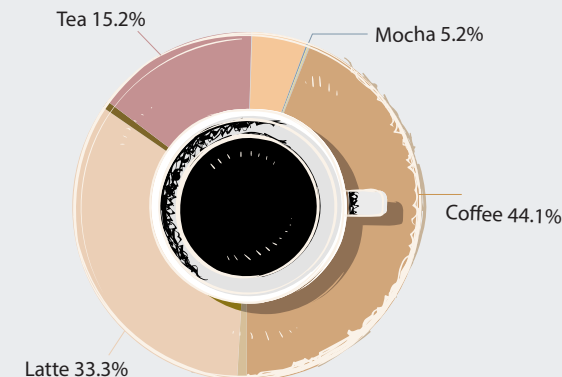
### What do people care about in their alt milk?

Taste and Protein were the two leading concerns around alt milks, attracting mostly positive posts, with Recipes following close behind. Values such as sustainability, the environment and ethical concerns over the production of dairy milk also came in high. This 'portfolio' of reasons why consumers discuss these products suggests alt milks are no longer perceived as 'new' and have become a mature food category with a complex set of motivations behind the purchase behavior.



### In what beverages?

Dial in on the alt milk-coffee conversation, and what is most striking is the emergence of the latte (or caffè latte) — a drink made up almost entirely of milk — as the conversation's preeminent drink.

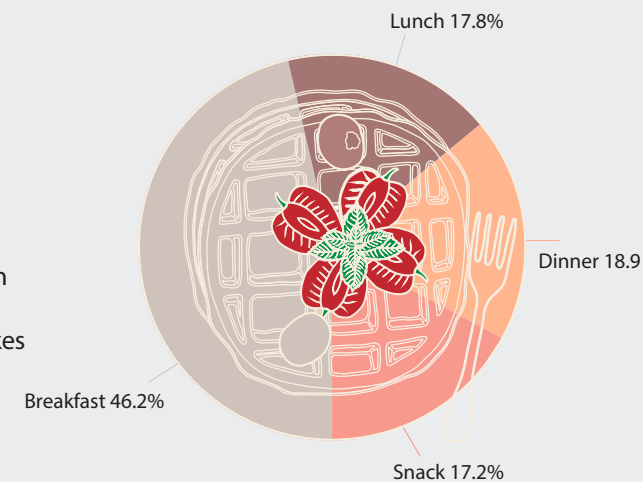


### In which recipes?

Alternative milks are still not being used in recipes with the same regularity that conventional milk is. As the 'breads' are almost entirely sweet, meaning that savoury recipes are decidedly

### In which meals?

Similar to dairy products, alternative milks are most commonly associated with breakfast, with a large proportion of the dinner conversation revolving around jokes and pop culture references.



# Different alt milks have different audiences

## Oat Milk

### ◆ Gamers

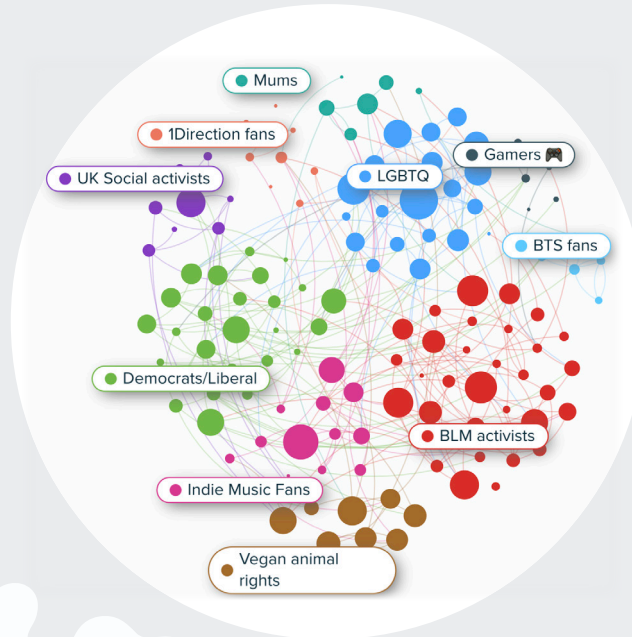
This audience is largely female, with a vested interest in gaming platforms, social activism and YouTube, on which they are 250% more likely to have a presence on than the wider audience. They celebrated Dunkin' Donuts adding oat milk to their menu options in August.

### ◆ BLM Supporters 19.1%

Prone to disparaging both dairy and almond milks at the expense of oat, BLM supporters are socially conscious, and 3.3 times more likely to have an active TikTok presence. The group is mainly centred around US urban hubs like Chicago, Atlanta and New York.

### ◆ Vegan Animal Rights

Another community that vocally approved of Dunkin' adding oat milk to the menu. Members of this community tend to follow influential voices such as PETA and activist Harry Frasier. They are also disproportionately likely to share recipes made using non-dairy milks.



### Latte-watch - Oat edition

Remove the catch-all term 'coffee' and latte accounts for a staggering 69.3% of conversation among oat milk conversations. The oat latte is the 2020 coffee drink par excellence.

## Oatlygate

Brand-of-the-moment Oatly came under fire in August when it raised \$200M from a consortium of investors that included Blackstone, a fund with links to Trump and a controversial deforestation project.

The backlash originated in Sweden, amongst the activist community

🐦 Suddenly enter Blackstone. A company evicting people on a global scale, also huge investors in the soja trade in Brazil. Burning down Amazonas. 587 RT 823 ❤️

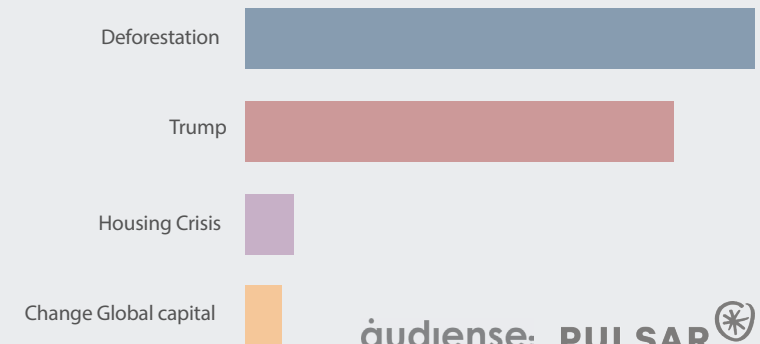
It was then transmitted to the english-speaking world via a climate activist micro-influencer...

🐦 @oatly has partnered with Blackstone - an investment company who part own companies who are responsible for Amazon deforestation. 2.5K RT 3.8K ❤️

...and The Guardian, which spread the story to the United States, Kenya and back to Scandinavia

🐦 Activists sour on Oatly vegan milk after stake sold to Trump-linked Blackstone 45 RT 114 ❤️

The conversation was predominately driven by mentions of both deforestation and Trump, with the group's troublesome housing business practices making less of an impact. A counter-argument rooted in making global capital more 'ethical', meanwhile, failed to attract traction beyond Oatly's own channels.



The different communities talking about alt-milks

## Almond Milk

### ◆ Healthy food lovers: 7.3%

This segment is very visually-oriented, posting numerous pictures that depict almond milk recipes. They are hugely influenced by friends and family, as well seven times more likely to use Pinterest. Their ethical affinity often remains an unspoken fact, with the reasons for buying leaning more towards taste.

### ◆ Gamers 5.1%

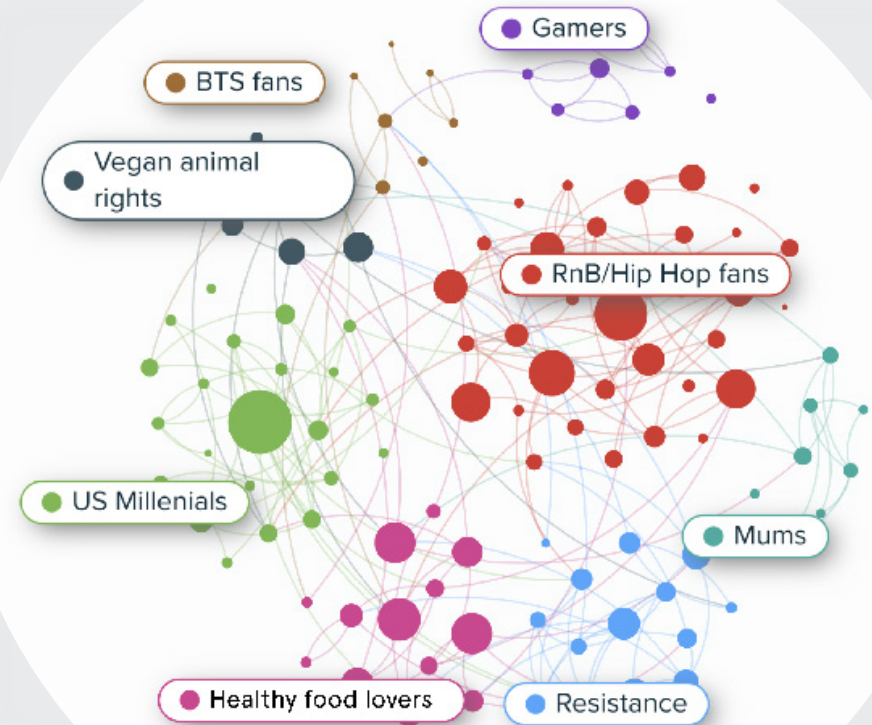
This community largely hinges on the sharing of one popular piece of content in which a gaming streamer admits he doesn't know the milk's origins. More than an insight, a window into how familiar youth demographics are expected to be with the product.

### ◆ Mums 4.8%

Unusually for the wider audience, the conversation within this segment was driven by an advert that featured almond milk as a perfume ingredient. This led to an understandable affinity for Fragrance Direct, the company responsible.

#### Latte-watch - Almond edition

The RnB & Hip Hop fan community became very excited in September when a Philadelphia Starbucks released the WAP latte, inspired by rap icons Cardi B and Meg Thee Stallion, made up of (W)hite mocha, (A)lmond milk, and (P)umpkin spice



The different communities talking about alt-milks

## Soy Milk

### ◆ Animal Rights 25.1%

This group shows a strong affinity for veganism, either self-identifying within their bios or else following prominent vegans. They tend towards text-based platforms like Twitter or Medium, and talk almost as much about oat milks as they do about soy.

### ◆ BTS fans 19.9%

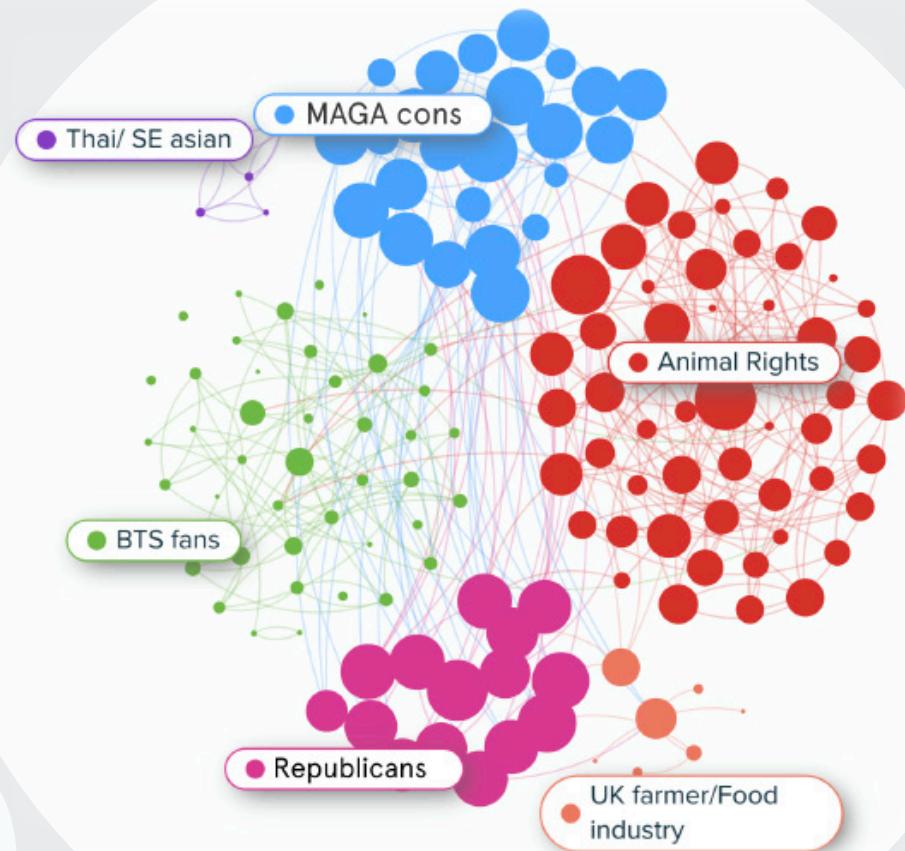
Once again, a single shareable video clip drives conversation amongst this enormous K-pop community — but it's augmented by members sharing their opinions on the ethics and perceptions that surround soy milk consumption.

### ◆ MAGA Conservatives 11.2%

The Conservative community doesn't seem to be a huge consumer of soymilk itself, but rather tends to use words related to soy, including soymilk, as slurs to describe the stereotype of a high-estrogen liberal.

#### Latte-watch - Soy edition

If soy has become for the Conservative Community a generic slur for effete liberals, then the soy latte adds a class spin to it, suggesting a high-priced drink consumed leisurely by the aggressively woke.





# audiense:

A person is shown in profile, drinking from a glass. The image is overlaid with a blue-tinted network of glowing green nodes and lines, suggesting data or social connections. The background is a dark blue gradient.

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