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## Future foods: What will we be eating in 20 years' time?

By Denise Winterman  
BBC News Magazine



Volatile food prices and a growing population mean we have to rethink what we eat, say food futurologists. So what might we be serving up in 20 years' time?

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Algae might be at the bottom of the food chain but it could provide a solution to some of the world's most complex problems, including food shortages.

It can feed humans and animals and can be grown in the **ocean**, a big bonus with land and fresh water in increasingly short supply, say researchers. Many scientists also say the biofuel derived from algae could help reduce the need for fossil fuels.

Some in the sustainable food industry predict algae farming could become the world's biggest cropping industry. It has long been a staple in Asia and countries including Japan have huge farms. Currently there is no large-scale, commercial farm in the UK, says Dr Craig Rose, executive director of the Seaweed Health Foundation.

"Such farms could easily work in the UK and be very successful. The great thing about seaweed is it grows at a phenomenal rate, it's the fastest growing plant on earth. Its use in the UK is going to rise dramatically."

Like insects, it could be worked into our diet without us really knowing. Scientists at Sheffield Hallam University used seaweed granules to replace salt in bread and processed foods. The granules provide a strong flavour but were low in salt, which is blamed for high blood pressure, strokes and early deaths. They believe the granules could be used to replace salt in supermarket ready meals, sausages and even cheese.

"It's multi-functional," says Gaye. "And many of its properties are only just being explored. It's such a big resource that we really haven't tapped into yet."

With 10,000 types of seaweed in the world, including 630 in the UK alone, the taste of each can vary a lot, says Rose.

### Seaweed



- There are 10,000 types in the world
- UK waters hold about 630 species, but only around 35 have been used in cooking
- Worldwide 145 species of red, brown or green seaweed are used as food

Source: Seaweed Health Foundation

**Try out some seaweed recipes**

**Should people eat more seaweed?**

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