

Greater gender equality associated with men eating meat more frequently than women, study finds

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Men tend to eat meat more frequently than women and the extent of the differences in meat consumption frequency between both genders tend to be greater within countries with higher levels of gender equality and social and economic development, according to a study [published](#) in *Scientific Reports*. The authors suggest that this could be due to individuals within these countries having greater opportunities to express food preferences.

Christopher Hopwood and colleagues investigated differences in [meat consumption](#) between men and women across countries with differing levels of social and economic development—as measured by [life expectancy](#), years of schooling, and gross national income—and gender equality—as measured by economic participation, [education levels](#), political empowerment, and health and survival.

They analyzed [survey data](#) collected in 2021 from 20,802 participants from 23 countries in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Participants reported their gender and how frequently they ate meat.

The authors found that—with the exception of China, India, and Indonesia—men tended to eat meat more frequently than women. The differences in meat consumption between men and women tended to be greater in countries with higher levels of gender equality and social and economic development, with the greatest differences observed in Germany, Argentina, Poland, and the UK.

They also found that men and women from countries with higher levels of gender equality and social and economic development tended to eat meat more often than those from countries with lower levels of social and economic development. Overall meat consumption was highest in Thailand, China, the U.S., and Spain.

The authors suggest that higher levels of gender equality and development may provide women with greater freedom to choose to eat meat less often and may also enable men to purchase and eat meat more often.

The findings also indicate that different strategies to encourage reduced meat consumption may be needed in countries with differing levels of social and [economic development](#) to reduce the environmental impacts of agriculture.

They propose that providing consumers with [greater opportunities](#) to consume plant-based meat alternatives or cultivated (lab-grown) meat may be more effective within countries with higher levels of development.

Providing incentives to produce plant-based meat alternatives or cultivated meat may be more effective within countries with lower levels of development.

More information: Christopher Hopwood, Paradoxical gender effects in meat consumption across cultures, *Scientific Reports* (2024). [DOI: 10.1038/s41598-024-62511-3](#).
www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-62511-3

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