

FOOD & WINE

'Nonfood' Wants to Sell You Green Algae Bars

By Mike Pomranz

October 2, 2017



Janine Petereit / EyeEm / Getty Images

The founder is a former artist who used to work at Soylent.

Soylent launched with a simple idea: Why eat food when you can get all the nutrition you need from a scientifically-crafted ready-to-drink beverage? Again, it was a "simple" idea, not necessarily an "accessible" idea. Though seemingly not as far out as Soylent, a company founded by a former Soylent employee is walking that same line. "Nonfood" is hoping to get people to eat "radically sustainable algae-based foods to drastically reduce agriculture's resource and carbon footprint." And the brand's first product arrives next month: "Nonbar" is a green bar that looks a bit like an alien's take on a Klondike.

Sean Raspet, the former artist behind Nonfood, admitted that the company name is "a bit jokey" in a conversation with FoodNavigator-USA. "The name is in part because we're an upstart company, and we want people to raise an eyebrow," Raspet said. "But [the Nonfood] name is also designed to make people think again about algae as food." Nonfood's first product, Nonbar, is described as a low sugar, protein- and fiber-rich bar made from spirulina, lemna, algae oil and a binder syrup. Admittedly, it's not the world's most appetizing ingredients list. "I think right now, a lot of people still think of it as pond scum," he told FoodNavigator about algae, "and we want to start a conversation about the fact that algae is actually a great food source, a future food staple, the most ecologically efficient food source. It sounds kind of grandiose, but we want to rethink what 'food' is, what it could be."

All that thinking isn't cheap. The first bar is said to be just 80 grams, featuring 20 grams of protein and 20 to 25 grams of fiber at a retail price of about \$5. However, if you're looking to commit to green algae bars as part of a pre-order, you can currently get a five pack for \$15 on Nonfood's website. But then again, Raspert admits his target audience isn't people looking for a cheap snack, but instead those willing to buy into the overall sustainability concept. "I think early adopters will be people that are into innovation," he explained, "people that are looking for the next new thing in all areas of their life from tech to food." Because diehard algae fans just aren't a big enough market yet. Yet!