

# Peppermint

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## EAT YOUR GREENS



*The cafes created quite a stir the first few days after opening - we installed both machines at night and when people saw them the next morning, they were pretty amazed*

## OUT OF THE BOX

### WHAT WAS THE LAST THING YOU PURCHASED FROM A VENDING MACHINE?

*A bag of chips? A can of soft drink? Or a beautiful salad packed with local, organic produce? That last option might sound like an epicurean pipe dream, but three passionate Brisbane-based foodies are making it a reality. All Real Food's vending machines (otherwise known as self-service cafes) are dispensing freshly prepared meals in 100% recyclable containers to hungry, health-conscious customers in Queensland's capital. The response has been overwhelming - and thanks to a smart, sustainable business model and waste-free approach to leftovers, this talented trio is pioneering the future of fast food.*

BY WARDY CLIVER, PHOTOS BY EVA CARTER

It all started - like many great ideas - with a conversation about cheese. All Real Food co-founders Daniela Stralung and Mark Woodhead had worked together in the IT industry for years - when Mark left his job back in 2013, the pair caught up for a farewell lunch and got chatting about their shared foodie aspirations. "We were talking about - or possibly eating - cheese," Daniela remembers. "I love goats and goat cheese, and we thought it would be fun to have a farm one day." This idea was short-lived - "There are no witchery stores near goat farms that I've heard of," jokes Daniela - but it prompted a more serious discussion about starting a fun business that made healthy eating easy, and that "made a difference in people's lives."

Daniela's always been into food that ticks those two all important boxes - healthy and tasty - and she explains that while Mark feels the same, "he's always been confused by the abundance of information available and the confusion with what is actually healthy and what isn't." This is surely a familiar feeling for many in today's food-obsessed society, and Daniela and Mark saw their business as an opportunity to help resolve it. "We wanted to make healthy, delicious food readily available and educate people about healthy eating," says Daniela.

The combination of Daniela and Mark's enthusiasm, curiosity and technical know-how quickly led to a smart and original business idea that relied on a food delivery system many of us associate with artery-

clogging snacks: a vending machine. Of course, when you take the bad stuff out of the machine, you're left with an undeniably smart and efficient way to sell something that's better. "After lots of research, we decided the self-service cafe vending machine business model would have the greatest reach, particularly to universities, schools and hospitals, and also be the easiest to duplicate across the state and internationally," says Daniela, referring to All Real Food's sleek touch-screen units that are about twice the size of a regular vending machine.

Once their ideas were in place, Daniela and Mark set about turning them into reality. "We spent about six months working from home creating the brand, identifying our food philosophy, designing the self-service cafe and locating the kitchen and office," Daniela recalls. By 2014, they had an office, and by March 2015, they had a kitchen ready and waiting for a talented chef. King Murray, the third member of the All Real Food trio, "was our first applicant and the only person we needed to interview - he brought over 20 years of experience working with the finest Australian chefs together with a passion for healthy food and living that makes our products what they are."

The food on offer from All Real Food's self-service cafes (which are currently in two inner-city Brisbane locations and one northside suburb with many more cafes in the pipeline) wouldn't look out of place in a trendy organic farm-to-table cafe. Paleo, vegetarian and gluten-free

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diets are catered for with a range of options to get you through the day. Grab a Paleo Breakfast Trifle or Chia Pudding for breakfast, tuck into a tasty Tex Mex or Beetroot Bliss salad for lunch and satisfy that snack craving with Cheesy Nachos or Hickory Smoked Nuts. Just make sure there's room for dessert – sweet options include the Choc Raspberry Chia Pot, Superseed Energy Bar and Apple Cinnamon Donut. You can check the ingredients and nutritional information for any item on the menu, and bypass table waiting times and the lunchtime rush by purchasing what you want at the touch of a button. Everything comes packaged in BPA-free screw-top jars that you can keep and re-use, and you'll even be supplied with 100% recyclable eating utensils.

And, of course, just because you're buying this food from a vending machine doesn't mean it isn't fresh – far from it. Daily food preparation and packaging takes place in the All Real Food kitchen at the talented hands of Murray and two other chefs, Mark Eldred and Isaac Capitt-Campbell. The self-service cafes are fully stocked every 24 hours, and any food left over at the day's end is donated to Oshover.

While the process of buying an All Real Food meal is blissfully quick and effortless for customers, the thought and preparation that went into it took up most of Daniela and Mark's time in 2015 while they were designing and testing their menu and machines, which were custom-made to unique specifications.

Daniela and Mark wanted their All Real Food products to reflect their food philosophy – a belief in the importance of local, organic produce – and be 100% gluten free. Better yet, everything you see in an All Real Food cafe is sourced from within Australia and New Zealand – most of it, says Daniela, as local as possible and as natural as can be. "Sourcing simple things like mustard, mayonnaise and gluten-free pasta that don't have any additives, preservatives, colours or flavours proved to be quite challenging," she admits. "We won some of these battles by finding and working with great Australian suppliers like Olive Green Organics and Spiral Foods, but in some cases we gave up. We now make our own mustard in house, which is extremely tasty, and we pasteurise organic eggs and make our own mayonnaise using cold-pressed, organic sunflower oil rather than other highly processed vegetable oils."

The recipe-testing process – which lasted for around three months in 2015 – yielded some interesting challenges, like finding a way to cook chicken and beef so that it would "still be tender and juicy when served cold." Years of making her own raw desserts meant that many of Daniela's own recipes have made it into the All Real Food repertoire, but the decadent Triple Choc Pot, she reveals, was a deliciously happy accident: "We were trying to thicken our coconut yoghurt with psyllium husks and ended up with an amazing textured coconut mousse that just needed some chocolate and honey."

Daniela and Mark's IT background stood them in good stead for designing their machines, which all feature a sophisticated touchscreen ordering interface. Customers can also register for a handy key tag that gives them access to special offers, discounts and loyalty bonuses.



"It's important to us that our systems are user-friendly, look great and make the business as efficient as possible," Daniela explains. Part of this was scouting for the best self-service cafe locations – thanks to the positive media coverage that greeted the business launch in late 2015, they were able to install their first two machines in Brisbane's CBD and trendy inner-city Fortitude Valley areas, and a third at the Prince Charles Hospital in January 2016. "We'd also like to have cafes in a variety of different locations, including [more] hospitals, universities, office buildings, airports and other retail precincts," says Daniela.

The overwhelming response All Real Food has received so far means that their aspirations are soon likely to become reality. "The cafes created quite a stir in the first few days after opening – we installed both machines at night and when people saw them the next morning, they were pretty amazed," Daniela enthuses. "We've had lots of enquiries for both machines and franchises interstate and internationally. We'd like to expand the business through a partnership model where we have partners operating the business. This is the next big project once we have the Brisbane cafes all up and running."

For now, Daniela, Mark and the rest of the All Real Food team are enjoying the pleasure of seeing how much people are enjoying their easy, uncomplicated approach to healthy eating – because easy and uncomplicated is exactly the way it should be. "There are so many places where you can't get food, never mind healthy options, at any time," Daniela ponders, "but particularly after hours and at weekends. We'd like for everyone to have access to healthy food that caters to all dietary requirements in every hospital, university and airport in the next few years." Thanks to All Real Food, the future looks tasty indeed.

[allrealfood.com.au](http://allrealfood.com.au)