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**It's Official - Beanz Meanz Hugz  
- Scientists crack the comfort food code -**

As the nights grow darker and the British winter sets in, you wouldn't be alone in craving a bit of TLC. According to research, 1 in 3 Brits turn to food over a chat with their partner for an instant comfort boost, with 5.3 million of us turning to beans on toast.

It may look like the work of Einstein, but scientists at Mindlab under the watchful eye of Dr David Lewis, have created a new Comfort Index formula (C.I) to calculate the comfort factor of food dishes when we are feeling less than our best.

$$C.I = \frac{\log(M + 1)}{7.2} [4.9P + STA + 4e^{w-1} + 2.1] + (1 + F)2^{R-2}$$

Researchers used eight factors to measure our Comfort Index including texture, temperature, aroma, taste, simplicity of flavours, how filling it was, ease of preparation and whether it brought back any nostalgic childhood memories\*.

Heinz Beanz on toast topped the polls with the highest C.I score at 3.3. The magic behind this classic was revealed to be its simple aroma and flavour profile compared to other more complex dishes such as chicken curry and Spaghetti Bolognese. It also brought back the strongest memories of childhood – triggering 'nurturing' emotions.

According to the study, dishes that don't deliver on the comfort factor include, chicken curry and chicken and mushroom pie. Commenting on why this is Dr David Lewis, Director of Research at Mindlab said: "The simpler the aroma the more easily it can be interpreted and memorised, consequently the response and emotion towards it is more powerful and immediate. We can see this clearly in the findings that the types of smells people find comforting are simple ones associated with home cooking."

Heinz Cream of Tomato soup received the second highest score alongside sausage and mash at 2.11, with the secret behind why 400,000<sup>1</sup> people turn to Heinz Cream of Tomato soup at lunchtime being its appealing appearance.

Dr Lewis comments: “The appearance of foods is as central to our enjoyment of it as is the taste. Indeed, research has shown that when food looks wrong it can influence our taste judgement. The overall appearance of the Heinz Cream of Tomato soup triggers an instant and pleasurable memory of previous enjoyment, while the colour itself creates a sense of psychological warmth unlike dishes such as chicken curry or Spaghetti Bolognese whose appearance can vary greatly depending on the spices and meat you use, resulting in disjointed emotional responses.”

He adds: “Foods such as Heinz Banz on toast and Heinz Cream of Tomato soup trigger upbeat memories of being comforted and cared for. We seek to recreate that feeling of safety when we are much older. As a result we go back to our favourites when we are feeling a bit down. What sets these Heinz dishes apart is the trigger of memories brought about by the aroma and visual stimulus of the iconic Heinz Banz and Heinz Cream of Tomato can, which is enough to make us begin to feel comforted before we even start to eat.”

Heinz spokesperson Nigel Dickie said: “For generations, mums have served up Heinz Banz on toast<sup>2</sup> and Heinz Cream of Tomato soup. Now the science shows exactly why we keep coming back to our favourites, and, why ‘It Has To Be Heinz’, the premise of our new TV advert, which celebrates those moments in life when only Heinz will do.”

**\* The Comfort Index Formula**

$$C.I = \frac{\log(M + 1)}{7.2} [4.9P + STA + 4e^{w-1} + 2.1] + (1 + F)2^{R-2}$$

**Comfort Index Key**

<b>R</b>	<b>RICH</b>	<b>How <u>Rich</u> is the food?</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>PREPARE</b>	<b>How easy is the food to <u>Prepare</u>?</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>WARMING</b>	<b>How <u>Warming</u> is the food?</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>AROMA</b>	<b>How appealing is the <u>Aroma</u>?</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>MEMORIES</b>	<b>Do you have positive <u>Memories</u> of eating this food in the past?</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>FILLING</b>	<b>Is the food <u>Filling</u>?</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>SIMPLE</b>	<b>How <u>Simple</u> are the flavours?</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>TEXTURE</b>	<b>How much do you enjoy the textures</b>

## ENDS

**For further information or to arrange an interview with Dr Lewis please contact either Delilah Pollard or Gloria Trapezaris at Cow PR on (T) 020 7234 9150 or email [ithastobe@cowpr.com](mailto:ithastobe@cowpr.com)**

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>400,000 people eat Heinz Cream of Tomato soup for their lunch everyday (based on TNS Worldpanel Usage data 52w/e May 2009).
- <sup>2</sup>Last year 842 million meals occasions of Heinz Beanz were devoured at dinner tables in the UK (based on TNS Worldpanel Usage data 52w/e May 2009). Thirteen cans per second of Heinz Beanz are sold each year (data based on The Nielsen Company, Nielsen Scantrack MAT to September 2009).

### Notes to editors

- The Comfort Index study was conducted by Mindlab International Ltd, at the Sussex Innovation Centre, based at the University of Sussex. A national survey of 1,000 UK adults was conducted to determine which foods are considered the nation's top comfort foods of choice. The results of the survey contributed to a list of top savoury hot foods, which was submitted for analysis in the laboratory. Sixteen volunteers aged 24 – 64 (even m/f split) took part in the scientific analysis. All participants were wired-up to record the EEG signals from their brains with sensors attached to their non-writing hand to record EDA.
- The Comfort Index Formula was derived using analysis data to find out the relative importance of each property of the food in respect of how comforting it is felt to be.
- The formula is subjective in so much as it takes an individual's personal preference into consideration. Different people may score the same foods differently.
- A national survey was carried out by Opiniom, polling 1,000 UK adults on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009, the survey revealed the following list of top ten savoury dishes: Cream of Tomato soup, cheese on toast, English fry-up, baked beans on toast, fish and chips, curry, traditional roast, chip butty with ketchup, baked potato with baked beans and cheese, Spaghetti Bolognese.