CLAIMS

1. A food component comprising cells of at least one bacterium, said cells comprising a crude protein concentration of at least 60wt% of a total dry weight of said cells and a nucleic acid concentration of less than about 5wt% of a total dry weight of said cells, wherein at least 50% of a total number of said cells are dead cells.

2. The food component of Claim 1, wherein said at least one bacterium is an anaerobic bacterium.

3. The food component of Claim 1, said cells comprising at least one selected from the group consisting of: (i) essential amino acids at a concentration of at least 20wt% of a total dry weight of said cells; (ii) branched-chain amino acids at a concentration of at least 10wt% of a total dry weight of said cells; (iii) at least one mineral selected from the group consisting of calcium, iron, zinc, copper, manganese, molybdenum, selenium and combinations thereof; (iv) Vitamin B12 at a concentration of from about 1 to about 20 microgram per 100 gram dry weight of said cells; (iv) peptidoglycan at a concentration of from about 0.1 to about 10wt% of a total dry weight of said cells; and (vi) butyric acid concentration of from about 0.001wt% to about 1wt% of the total dry weight of the food component.

4. The food component of Claim 1, characterized by at least one selected from the group consisting of: (i) having protease activity of about 1 milli Anson Unit; (ii) being in the form of a powder having particle size of from about 1 to about 150 microns; (iii) having a fat concentration of less than about 1wt% of the total dry weight of said cells; (iv) having a pH of greater than about 6.7; (v) comprising less than 0.1wt% casein of the total dry weight of the food component; and (vi) said bacterium being a naturally occurring bacterium.

5. A food or beverage comprising the food component of Claim 1.

6. The food or beverage of Claim 5, being a dairy analogue.

7. The food or beverage of Claim 6, wherein said dairy analogue is an analogue of a dairy product selected from the group consisting of a cheese, a milk beverage, a yoghurt, a cream, a whipped cream, an ice-cream, dessert and a butter.

8. The food or beverage of Claim 6, wherein said dairy analogue has a protein concentration of at least 2wt% of the total weight of the dairy analogue.

9. The food or beverage of Claim 5, further comprising at least one selected from the group consisting of: (i) a flavorant; (ii) a fruit; (iii) a fat at a concentration of from about 0.5wt% to about 30wt% of the total weight of the food or beverage; (iv) a carbohydrate at a concentration of from about 5wt% to about 20wt% of the total weight of the food or beverage; (v) at least one amino acid; (vi) at least 0.05wt% of butyrate and/or butyrin; and (vii) a plant protein at a concentration of from about 20wt% to about 80wt% of the weight of the total protein content.

10. The food or beverage of Claim 5, characterized by at least one selected from the group consisting of: (i) comprising an oil-in-water emulsion, wherein said protein stabilizes said emulsion on the interface of oil droplets; (ii) being a homogenized product; (iii) comprising an edible oil; (iv) comprising a foam; (v) comprising dispersed particles of said bacterium; (vi) having a pH of greater than about 6.7; (vii) being a meat or fish analogue; (viii) being an extruded meat product; and (ix) having a protein concentration of at least 5wt% of the total weight of the food.

11. A method for the manufacture of the food component Claim 1, comprising culturing said cells of at least one bacterium in a fermentation medium to obtain a fermentation medium comprising a biomass; separating said biomass from said fermentation medium containing said biomass to obtain separated biomass; and killing at least 50% of cells of said separated biomass.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein said separating comprises microfiltration.

13. The method of Claim 11, further comprising heating said separated biomass to a temperature of at least 135ºC for a period of at least 2 seconds.

14. The method of Claim 11, further comprising drying said separated biomass to provide a dry biomass having a water content of no greater than 5wt%.

15. A method of preparing a beverage, comprising blending the food component of claim 1with a plant-based milk to form a blend and optionally homogenizing said blend.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein said plant-based milk is selected from the group consisting of oat milk and almond milk.

17. A food binder comprising the food component of Claim 1.

18. A meat analogue comprising the food binder of Claim 17.

19. The meat analogue of Claim 18, having a methyl cellulose content of less than about 1wt%.