



The Tattooed Chef

'Fine' flavor

Frozen foods are hot, with consumers frequently searching the freezer aisles for convenient, tasty and exciting better-for-you options. While scouring the aisles ourselves, we spotted an 8.5-oz. single-serve Plant Based Beef Burrito Bowl from Tattooed Chef. Made with plant-based beef, roasted corn and black beans tossed in a jalapeno crèma, this quick-to-make entrée is from a brand that is “growing + making plant-based foods for people who give a crop.”

DEMOGRAPHICS

A range of people taste-tested Tattooed Chef Burrito Bowl, including a vegetarian, a pescatarian, a vegetarian who describes herself as a “plant-based-only eater,” and several others who incorporate plant-based foods into their diet.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

“The picture on the package looked really good, so I was excited to try it,” shared a vegetarian. “The description sounded delicious, and I was happy that there was 15g protein advertised right on the front, along with the fact that it was vegan and gluten-free.”

Another commented, “This is another example of plant-based foods having anything but a

clean ingredient statement. Shouldn't this be healthy? Why coconut oil?”

“Visually, it looked a little skimpy,” said our pescatarian.

“The package looks high-end and trendy,” noted a male taster.

“The yellow corn kernels add brightness to the dish, and I like the grill marks on some of them,” said another.

APPEARANCE, FEEL, TASTE AND TEXTURE

A few taste-testers curiously noted, “It doesn't look like the picture on the front of the package. What is the ‘orange stuff’ on the package? We didn't see any in the bowl.” (The “orange stuff” shown on the packaging is cheese.)

Our plant-based-only taster said, “I tried the chicken version of this, and I didn't like it, so I was pleasantly surprised. I really liked the sauce! As I was cooking, the smell was amazing. And the meal was much more appetizing than the picture on the box. I didn't find it too spicy, and it was full of flavor.”

Our pescatarian added, “I didn't detect any specific ‘meat’ flavor, which was a good thing for me. The sauce was flavorful but a little too spicy for me so I added some mild salsa to cut it.”

OUR TASTE TESTERS WERE UNDERWHELMED BY TATTOOED CHEF PLANT BASED BEEF BURRITO BOWL. TASTE AND TEXTURE WERE FINE, BUT NOT INSPIRING, WHILE NUTRITION DETAILS GOT A THUMBS-DOWN.

Taste Test



PRODUCT:

Tattooded Chef Plant Based
Beef Burrito Bowl

PRICE:

\$4.99-7.27/1 bowl (8.5-oz.
package)

NUTRITION PER SERVING:

Calories 310, Total Fat 14g, Saturated Fat 11g, Cholesterol
0mg, Sodium 520mg, Total Carbohydrate 32g, Protein 15g.

An adventurous taster pointed out, “The meat pieces are a bit spongy. The spicy flavor builds. Perhaps it should say something about the spiciness on the packaging.”

One female participant said, “The ‘beef’ is chewy and has a weird taste. There’s a lot less ‘beef’ than in the picture or it’s broken up. It’s hard to tell.”

Another taster said, “I feel the texture of melted cheese, but I certainly don’t taste it. If the ‘beef’ had some umami flavor, it could have added depth of flavor.” (The ingredients list includes “cheddar cheese alternative” and “vegan cream cheese.”)

An open-minded young guy explained, “I didn’t think of it as a beef burrito bowl because I didn’t get any beef flavor. It’s more like a veggie burrito bowl with seasoned rice. But it was filling and tasted good.”

Our vegetarian described, “Once cooked, the bowl didn’t exactly look like the package but microwave meals rarely do. The portion was a little small, but it was pretty filling. There was a nice mix of rice, riced cauliflower, corn, beans and ‘meat.’ The ‘meat’ had the texture

of ground beef and the flavor was good — no weird aftertaste.”

A couple tried this, and the wife said, “The plant-based bits look unappetizing, but the flavor was fine.” Her husband described it as, “mush food with beans and corn adding some texture. There’s absolutely no reason to eat this and waste 53% of your daily value of saturated fat or 23% of your daily value for sodium!”

Another taster shared, “It’s easy to heat in the microwave. The jalapeno crema has a little kick to it. It’s actually very flavorful. The plant-based beef was a little chewy. The riced cauliflower, cilantro and black beans were good, but there is a little too much corn in the mix.”

CONCLUSION

“I would definitely purchase this product again,” our plant-based-only taster told us. “I may add guacamole or sliced avocado and a tortilla.”

Our pescatarian said, “I wouldn’t buy this because it is too spicy for me. But I might try another Tattooded Chef option.”

A male taster told us, “Even though it looks better on the box than in person, I would have it again.”

“This was a tasty, quick meal, but based on the price, I would skip it unless it was on sale,” our vegetarian said. “The sodium content and saturated fat were also much higher than I would like.”

One taster and her son concluded, “A veggie bowl at Chipotle is much better because it’s fresh and not frozen.”

“This was insanely expensive for poor quality,” our couple decided.

Another taster said, “If I didn’t know what the product was, I’d think I just ate a bean and rice bowl.”

Most are willing to try new offerings in still-growing plant-based categories. But it’s especially important for plant-based companies to get it right because that may be their only chance to get into the mouths of potential customers.

In this case, the majority of our taste-testers found Tattooded Chef Plant Based Beef Burrito Bowl to be “OK.” A number had issues with the quality, appearance, taste and price. But we believe Tattooded Chef’s Burrito Bowl could improve its score with a little tweaking. Value pricing, “cheesier cheese” delivery and perhaps a “beefier beef” note could be all that’s needed.

by **Anna Marie Cesario and Jennifer Vahalik, U&I Collaboration, LLC.**

Food product development and consumer research veterans, Anna Marie Cesario and Jennifer Vahalik, join *Alt-Meat* magazine as contributors to our regular “Taste Test” column. Here’s how the program works: The alternative meat item is distributed to consumers, including the core demographic, for preparation in their own homes. No instructions are provided to the consumer, other than to write their overall impressions of the product, as well as to evaluate the flavor, texture, packaging and ease of use. Cesario and Vahalik look for common threads by using Getting It!®, a system developed to listen to consumers about products. The sample of people is not intended to be a “taste test” in a controlled setting, nor is it intended to simulate a focus group. Others are doing both. Rather, the intent is to interpret the response of the people who might purchase a product like this and use it, simply based on their encounters with the product in their individual, unique home environment. That is how U&I has been developing cutting-edge product and people understanding since 1999.