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Hunter's Vegan Cooking

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Abstract

This is a project that provides recipes for foods that are nationally loved, but in a plant-based way. I have been vegan for two and a half years now and I have an extensive background in cooking, as I worked in some very fast-paced kitchens throughout Boise as a young adult. These recipes are designed to not only provide recipes for those who already follow a plant-based lifestyle, but also maybe urge others who have no dietary restrictions to give vegan meals a shot. These recipes could also be a saving grace for those who have food allergens and just want to eat the foods they might miss!

Keywords: Vegan, Cooking, Persuasive

Hunter's Vegan Cooking

As mentioned previously, I have several years of experience in fast-paced kitchens throughout the Boise area and have always had an affinity for cooking. Growing up, my parents were both incredibly proficient cooks and liked to make innovative meals that would continually expand my palate. Using this food knowledge I've been exposed to my whole life now, I wanted to create recipes and share ideas with people who wanted to learn about different takes on food. Of course, the main thing about these recipes is that they are all plant-based. About 7 years ago I stopped eating meat, and about 4 years after that I stopped eating dairy and eggs. Living in a smaller city like Boise, there are very few options for vegan meals compared to a larger city, so I had always had the idea to make a vegan food truck, or a vegan sandwich pop-up and sell what I could to the treasure valley. Unfortunately, that can be a very big burden as there are several underlying costs and hoops that you need to jump through that come with selling food to the public. "The average cost to start a food truck can be anywhere between \$70,000 to \$130,000. Depending on legal fees, customization, state, and niche, a food truck owner can end up paying as little as \$10,000 for their business or as much as \$250,000" (WebstaurantStore, 2021). The next best thing was to create visual recipes that could get vegan foods in front of people.

Using my passion for cooking and humanitarian efforts, I thought that this capstone project would be the perfect outlet for a combination of these two things. So I thought about which recipes would be the most effective, tested them on friends and

family, then created videos that would make creating the meals a streamlined and easy process.

Elements Coming Together

Cooking videos are a dime a dozen on the internet, there is very little room for innovation when it comes to the recipes and the video creation themselves, especially since there are cooking channels that can afford thousands and thousands of dollars in equipment to make the best possible product. This meant I had to separate myself from the crowd in a different way. A thing that I felt like I could use to separate myself was to put myself in the shoes of those who might have an aversion to veganism or might be turned off of it because of something that happened in their life with vegan foods that left a bad taste (literally). I did my best to bring together differing perspectives and think in a more gray area rather than using a black or white lens, and by doing so I think I used appropriate emotional intelligence to be aware of others and consider my audience.

Being vegan myself, I can honestly say that more often than not, there can be a very preachy undertone to those who advocate for those to switch to veganism, which can work in its own way, but could also turn someone completely off to the idea of going plant-based. I thought about the ways I could appeal to someone who maybe hasn't given the time of day to a plant-based diet. When the average person thinks of vegan food, they think bland, and one-dimensional foods. People mostly find value in the food they consume by the flavor it provides, so I decided to provide that value to my foods for people. It's proven a vegan diet can help reverse the disastrous effects of climate change. "Studies have found that if everyone went vegan, emissions contributing to global

warming would be cut by 70%, enough to stop and reverse the harmful effects of climate change including rising sea levels, floods, melting glaciers, and droughts” (Future Kind, 2020). My mission is to consider my audience and create vegan food that doesn't sacrifice any flavor whatsoever and show people that food can be environmentally responsible as well as flavorful.

Since my reasoning for being vegan is purely humanitarian, I still miss the textures and flavors that certain meats and dairy products would provide. So using a creative framework, I thought of ways to replicate dishes that people could be craving but in a plant-based way. I consider this a unique approach because there is a very strong emphasis on “health” in most vegan cooking. While this is very important, people seem to be content with sacrificing flavor for the sake of making a meal plant-based, and I am here to show everyone that you can have one without sacrificing the other! I thought of comfort foods that people such as myself might miss after switching to a plant-based diet, so I sought out to create recipes that made it so you wouldn't have to miss those foods anymore.

My goal for this was to create simple and to-the-point videos that anybody could follow along with. I researched and found how to make cooking videos on a budget, and learned to “include the “money shot” that will have your viewers' taste buds stimulated without tasting the food. This involves catching a satisfying moment that will cause a reaction in your foodie audience” (Yumc, 2021). An innovative approach that I took to the videos themselves was to start with the most basic videos I could, then theoretically, over time I could create more complex videos for those who would want to follow along.

For instance, my two videos that I created for my capstone project are for both Mac & Cheese and “Egg” Scramble. The Mac & Cheese recipe shows how to make a basic cheese sauce that anybody could use for any other number of dishes. They could make a broccoli and cheese dish, a vegan Philly cheesesteak, or even use the cheese sauce as a dipping sauce for nachos. The egg dish could be the cornerstone of several breakfast dishes, such as vegan eggs benedict, breakfast burritos, or even something unique like chilaquiles. Using these videos as the foundation, I could make more complex recipe videos for a vegan Philly cheesesteak, or a vegan eggs benedict and a viewer already has the recipe they need in order to create a more intermediate dish.

Results

The impact I measured for this project was mostly internal, i.e. my personal friends and family rather than complete strangers on the internet. The reason for this being the metric I used to measure impact is because I had a last minute emergency that required me to go out of town which made it so I couldn't create my videos and upload them in a timely manner, so I had to work with what I could. I sent the recipes themselves to different friends and family. I deliberately made sure to send a video to a friend that I knew was vehemently anti-vegan, but they promised to give the recipe a shot as a favor to me. I also sent the recipe to my dad who is not vegan, but is very open-minded to creating new recipes and trying new foods, vegan or not. Next, I sent the recipes to a friend who has just recently transitioned to veganism and has been missing their favorite foods, mac & cheese being one of them. Lastly, I sent the recipe to a friend who has been

vegan for 13 years of her life and has also worked in the restaurant industry for at least the same amount of time, if not longer.

The benefits to the stakeholders is that regardless of if each stakeholder is open to vegan cooking and a plant-based diet, they now have recipes they can use for any occasion that might call for it. If someone has an involuntary dietary restriction like a dairy allergy or an egg allergy, these recipes would work all the same.

The actual benefits of the stakeholders are unfortunately unable to be recorded since I couldn't release the videos to the public in a reasonable amount of time. However, if you asked me the same question in six months time, I could give you a definitive answer. The actual benefits of the stakeholders I did give the recipes to was mostly positive. My two friends who were vegan both loved the recipe and have even asked if they have permission to share it with others around them, which means the sphere of influence for these recipes is growing! My friend who was vehemently anti-vegan said that he could tell the difference between the vegan mac & cheese that I provided and the non-vegan mac & cheese he usually eats, but, I think my next step would be to make the mac & cheese for him rather than just giving him the recipe to ensure that the recipe was followed and executed in a way that i had envisioned. Lastly, my dad who is not vegan, but is open to new dishes, said he couldn't taste the difference and that he was more than happy to eat the plant-based mac & cheese over the regular dairy-based mac & cheese (hopefully he's not biased). Based on the small results I've recorded just within my personal circle, the actual benefits to external stakeholders could be overwhelmingly positive.

Conclusion

The reality is that I've been sharing these recipes with my friends and family for years now and I knew that people had liked them, which ultimately gave me the confidence to be able to create these videos and share them with the public. The results I anticipated were mostly positive and the actual results aligned neatly with that. I didn't expect everyone to completely love the recipes, as food ultimately is subjective and taste-buds differ from person to person.

If I could do something differently, I would create different variations of the same recipe to see if it could satiate those who didn't like the first iteration. I would also get the videos released well in advance so I could collect data across a long reasonable period of time. These two recipe videos are also just a small taste of how good vegan cooking can be, and if the capstone project was over a longer period of time, I would have created even more videos to give several options for people looking to eat plant-based!

Appendix

[Hunter's Vegan Cooking - YouTube](#)

References

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