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ACTION SHEET:
WRITING REVIEWS OF
RESTAURANTS ON HAPPY COW
AND OTHER APPS

Restaurant Campaign

Writing reviews on plant-based, oil-free-friendly restaurants is important for the growth of existing veg-friendly restaurants, as well as restaurants with only a few plant-based options. Good reviews assist diners searching for plant-based, oil-free meals, and show restaurant owners that more and more people are demanding these meals. This is a crucial step in the Restaurant Campaign. This Action Sheet offers suggestions on how to write a compelling, effective review from a health perspective on apps like HappyCow, and contains a list of other apps you can use to get the word out about plant-based, oil-free menu items.

How Pod Members Can Contribute:

- Download the HappyCow app (and others) and write supportive reviews.
- Submit a request to add Veg-friendly restaurants to HappyCow: Adding restaurants that are plant-based oil-free-friendly is crucial for growing the grassroots movement around plant-based eating. (Note: Restaurants are approved by HappyCow staff on a case-by-case situation. Refer to *Info Sheet: Maximizing Participation of a Restaurant in the Restaurant Campaign via Happy Cow* for listing requirements.)
- Talk to restaurants about HappyCow and the benefits of listing: Getting restaurant owners/managers involved may spark their interest in adding more plant-based options to their menu, or creating a separate vegan menu. Refer to *Info Sheet: Maximizing Participation of a Restaurant in the Restaurant Campaign via HappyCow* for more information on talking to restaurant owners about HappyCow.

Writing Reviews from a Health Perspective:

Optimal review length is 280-320 words, and it should include:

- A title (e.g., “Must Eat Here” “Plant-based” “Oil-free” “Healthy” “5-Star Vegan” “Delicious and Healthy Food served here”) and the number of stars. (Note: HappyCow only allows a “5” rating for 100% vegan restaurants, and disallows a “1” for vegan and vegetarian restaurants.)
- Provide information on the type of restaurant and its atmosphere, and how easy it is to order plant-based, oil-free meals there.
- Suggest some of your favorite dishes to order, and the modifications you typically make.
- Say something positive about the food you ate - it was colorful, fresh, tasty, spicy, abundant, delicious, etc.



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- Beyond your meal, if appropriate, mention items already on the menu that could be easily prepared plant-based and oil-free, broadening the range of options available.
- Consider including a short statement about the health benefits you have received (e.g., “I am so grateful that this delicious way of eating has lowered my blood pressure!”)
- Request an update to the listing on HappyCow - Go to the listing on HappyCow, scroll down to the bottom of the page (below reviews), click the “update info” button, fill out the form and in the comments section be sure to add: “Please add ‘Has oil-free options’ to the description.” The HappyCow staff will update this listing so users can find the restaurant by typing in “oil-free” as a keyword.

Other Apps/Websites:

- **Yelp:** Founded in 2004 to assist people in finding local businesses. There are 26 million (and climbing) unique visitors each month that have written over 127 million reviews. Business owners and managers can set up an account for free to post photos and respond to reviews. Similar to HappyCow, Yelp is a geo-specific app that allows users to browse local businesses in their area. Yelp has a “vegetarian” and “vegan” category for listings, and can be accessed via iPhone, Android and more.
- **Trip Advisor:** The world’s largest travel site. More than 500 million reviews have been written about over 7 million accommodations, airlines, attractions and restaurants. Trip Advisor provides travelers with the wisdom of the crowds to help them decide where to stay, how to fly, what to do and where to eat. The site has 390 million average unique visitors a month. Trip Advisor has a category “vegetarian friendly” and “vegan options” that diners can use to filter restaurants. The Trip Advisor app is free to download.
- **OpenTable:** Since 1998, OpenTable has helped restaurants grow and run their businesses, enabling diners to discover and book the perfect table every time they dine. OpenTable diners write over 850,000 reviews a month, the network connects with 40,000 restaurants worldwide, and it finds restaurants for more than 21 million diners every month. The geo-specific app is free to download and you can search for vegan friendly restaurants under “vegetarian/vegan cuisine.”
- **Vegman:** A community and a tool to make life for vegans and vegetarians throughout the world easier and even more delicious. Vegman helps you find veg-friendly restaurants in your area. Vegman is a newer app that is still growing in popularity. iPhone users can download the iOS app for free and an Android app is coming soon!
- **VeganXpress:** An on-the-run guide to what’s vegan at fast food and chain restaurants in the USA and beyond. iPhone users can purchase the app (\$1.99) to assist them in finding vegan options at restaurants like Chipotle, Olive Garden, Applebee’s and more!
- **Abillionveg:** A free app that promotes healthy, sustainable plant-based food choices at restaurants everywhere. Review the dish and share your experience with the world. You’ll be helping others make informed decisions about what to eat, and earn rewards for doing so. With this app you can read articles for guides on where to eat, plant-based recipes, perspectives and tips on living well and much more. Save reviews, dishes and restaurants so you can check them out later. Explore dishes and restaurants around the world and find something to eat!

We welcome your suggestions and ideas! Please send them to info@plantpurecommunities.org. This material may not be used out of context. Please refer to PPC’s terms and conditions for more information. Updated June 2018.