



COURSERA
IBM APPLIED DATA SCIENCE
CAPSTONE PROJECT

The vegan/ vegetarian lifestyle

Problem statement

BACKGROUND

An omnivorous diet may have negative impacts on a person's health, on the environment and on animal welfare. More people are switching to vegan, vegetarian or plant-based diets that may be healthier, more sustainable, and more ethical.

THE HISTORY OF VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN DIETS

Vegans don't eat anything that comes from or includes an animal, i.e. meat, eggs, milk, cheese, mayonnaise, honey, whey or gelatin. According to www.time.com in their article "A brief history of veganism", veganism can be traced back to ancient Indian and eastern Mediterranean societies. Vegetarianism (slightly less strict than veganism - they generally exclude meat from their diets) is first mentioned by the well-known Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras around 500 BCE. Vegetarianism was advocated by followers of Buddhism and Hinduism.

In November 1944, a British woodworker named Donald Watson created the term "vegan" to describe people who, apart from not eating meat, also don't eat dairy and eggs. By 2005, there were at least 250 000 vegans in Britain and 2 million in the U.S. The figure for the UK has since increased to around 542 000.

The vegan lifestyle is strongly advocated by young people: About 42% of vegans are between 15 and 34 years old, whereas only 14% are over 65. According to a systematic review of how consumers shift to plant-based diets published on the website of The Vegan Society, vegan consumers are more likely to be female, highly educated, from the middle or upper-middle social class, have a high IQ, and rate high on physical and spiritual well-being.

VEGAN / VEGETARIAN RESTAURANTS

Due to the increased popularity of vegan and vegetarian lifestyles, it makes perfectly sense that a new wave of vegan restaurants has sprung up across the globe to satisfy the appetite for plant based foods.

According to Italian chain restaurant Zizzi, businesses respond when consumers want something. This chain has rolled out extensive vegan menus. *“That was a big undertaking for a non-vegan restaurant and it’s all been driven by people saying they want it. The business savvy follows the money, which is why [the restaurant chains] are investing in developing vegan offerings. They know money comes in when they do it.” (Bronte, G. 2017)*

THE CLIENT

Two friends are contemplating opening a vegan restaurant in Sandton, South Africa. They are unsure if vegan eating is a fad that will quickly blow over, or if it is something that will become increasingly popular. They want to benchmark it with an international metropolis that is as multicultural as Sandton.

Sandton

Due to the urban decay of downtown Johannesburg, many corporate offices moved to Sandton, a suburb close to Johannesburg, during the 1990s. Sandton has since become the financial district of South Africa. It boasts several large shopping centers as well as various 5-star hotels. It also has some of the finest restaurants.

Toronto

Toronto, Canada, is a multicultural metropolis with an amazing culinary scene. It offers you a trip around the world every time you go to eat out. Not only will you find Chinese, Korean, Italian, Portuguese and Indian cuisine, there are also many vegan and vegetarian restaurants. This is a perfect city to benchmark the restaurants of Sandton against.

QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ANSWERED

With regards to plant based restaurants, how does Sandton, South Africa compare to Toronto, Canada?

Are the ratios of plant based restaurants versus other restaurants similar in the two cities?

Will it be worthwhile to open a new vegan restaurant in Sandton?

PROPOSED METHOD

Use Foursquare to collect data on restaurants in Sandton and in Toronto.

Compare the cuisines with one another to determine if there are similarities and if they differ greatly.

Compare the ratios of plant based versus other restaurants for the two cities.

Make recommendations based on the results obtained.

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