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Need Some Spice in Your Life?

The battle between new and upcoming businesses has been raging for hundreds of years in all fields ranging from clothing brands to coffee shops. However, there has always been a head to head competition between Baja Fresh and Chipotle, two of the most popular fast-food Mexican restaurants today. Although they do have similarities, such as their freshness and equipment used, Baja Fresh and Chipotle's differences, including everything from food variety to success rates, are what make it so hard for customers to choose which one to pick when craving that extra exotic spice in their lives.

To begin with, Baja Fresh and Chipotle have matching opinions about preparation standards. Beginning with the basics, both are obviously serving and preparing authentic Mexican food. These two industries have a continuous goal in mind: to keep their service fast without the typical "fast-food" stereotype, a rare quality to find in the present-day dining industry ("Corporate Profile," Chipotle). When most people think of "fast-food," they automatically conclude they are about to consume an unhealthy meal. These two eateries prove this preconceived notion to be incorrect through their banning of microwaves, can openers, freezers, lard, and M.S.G. ("The Baja Fresh Story"). The equipment used, or more accurately, not used, is just the beginning. The ingredients found in both restaurants' food come from naturally raised pork, beef, chicken, and shrimp, along with produce grown organically ("Corporate Profile," Chipotle). A blatant

superiority, this trait is a guarantee to attract hungry customers. Although hearing these facts may seem unimportant and too technical, the significance will be soon realized in taking a mouth-watering bite from either a Chipotle burrito or a Baja Fresh taco.

Their similarities are what differentiate the two restaurants from other fast-food joints; however, when contrasted more specifically to just an assessment of the two, their distinctions are apparent. The most evident factor first stirred would be the food being offered. Baja Fresh is known to have more variety, while Chipotle sticks to the basics. Keeping it simple with their burritos, bowls, tacos, and salads, Chipotles menu limits customers' choices. We all know this will not keep them happy 100 percent of the time ("Corporate Profile," [Chipotle](#)). Chipotle lacks the extra dessert and soup options along with an alternative of fish in addition to the ordinary choice of chicken, steak, pork, and barbacoa, a type of shredded beef. Baja Fresh designates a separate stand for a salsa bar while at Chipotle salsa must be requested and comes with a price. Baja Fresh also includes chips as a must have with every dish ordered. Customers must buy chips separately at Chipotle. Personally, my cravings vary with every hour of the day. This has a huge impact on why I would most likely visit Baja Fresh over Chipotle; hands down their variety meets my every desire. Excluding my personal preferences, the analyses of the two so far have leaned towards Baja Fresh more. Unlike Baja Fresh's set menu, Chipotle has a twist with their preparation method: buffet style, with all ingredients in front of you, allowing the customer in more control of what exactly they are eating. This definitely adds a factor of fun and creativity to any eating experience. In addition to the typical fountain sodas, Chipotle also has stocks of varying alcoholic beverages, including

beer and margaritas, which is always a plus. Another plus Chipotle offers is that every student identification card is awarded a free drink. Who could resist anything free?

Looking at the variation in statistics, buyers can use the number of restaurants opened in the United States to help show the actual success of the two franchises. Baja Fresh opened for the first time in 1990 of August, approximately three years before the first Chipotle building was erected (“The Baja Fresh Story”). It planned to open 550 units by 2005, which was an ambitious aspiration that was successfully fulfilled and surpassed (“Corporate Profile” [The List](#)). Chipotle has accomplished opening more than 670 restaurants in the 14 years of business which is yet continuing and growing (“Corporate Profile,” [Chipotle](#)). Both restaurants being impressive and productive leave critics with a challenging job because of their evident success rates. It is hard to decipher which one is more successful, but Baja Fresh has always caught my eye or should I say mouth? With so many available locations, it makes it the much easier to get to that much needed flavor in my life.

If it were not for the substantial differences which were illustrated, there would be no point in having two Mexican restaurants because they would just be the same. Each one is unique in their own ways, offering new innovations rather than the typical and traditional thoughts with everything from their décor to their buffet style service. With “fresh” in its name, Baja Fresh does not need a taste to know that it only uses natural materials. Chipotle, however does require a hands on experience to prove its authenticity, which most do not mind anyway. However, when it comes down to it, I must say Baja Fresh has left a greater impact on my taste buds; I remember the excitement I felt when I

was little and my mom told me we were eating Mexican. It automatically meant Baja Fresh. The selection, the smells, the service was all too much to resist.

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