



## Double Discourse: ‘Clean EatZ,’ we’re food critics now

BY: ELLA BARRY AND OLIVIA NORDYKE / ON: MARCH 14, 2024 / IN: FEATURES

With three movie reviews and one play review completed in our Double Discourse format, we switched it up to channel our inner Anton Ego, the broody food critic from “Ratatouille.”

The new Colorado Springs Clean EatZ location, which opened in University Village last year, focuses on health and wellness, their website advertising their “macro-friendly” meals.

The restaurant also offers weekly meal plans, convenient for college students who might not be interested in the on-campus meal plans. There are multiple plans to choose from, the lowest option starting at \$6.52 per meal.

We each ordered different meals and shared a Tropical Bliss protein smoothie.

### Olivia’s Review

1.5 out of 5 stars

I went into this experience blind and starving after a long day. I was expecting something like Modern Market, a place that prioritized organic foods — not a restaurant that feels like GNC and the school cafeteria had a baby.

I recently wrote about my experience with disordered eating habits, and how calorie counting became an extremely restrictive obsession for me. Places that have calorie counts plastered before the item prices aren’t really my haunt.

Lacking variety, Clean EatZ serves burgers, wraps, flatbreads and melts. They seem to use the same ingredients in different fonts to fit the caloric limitation on each item (all flatbreads are advertised to be 400 calories or less). Most options are made with a base of cubed chicken breast or shredded beef.

I ordered the “Meat and Taterz” wrap, which comes with a side. A customer standing next to me recommended trying the apples and peanut butter. I asked why she praised them so highly, and the friendly cashier told me they add yogurt and honey to the peanut butter mix.

I paid \$14.90 for my meal, which was the wrap and included side for \$9.99, plus a drink. If you plan on trying Clean EatZ, my advice is bring your own beverage.

It makes sense for an establishment advertising lean meals not to offer sugary drinks, but the “Lifestyle Water” lemonade I drank tasted like citrusy chemicals. The tropical bliss smoothie was hardly reminiscent of the tropics, unless we’re counting tropical flavored Tums.

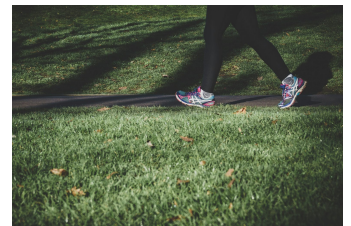
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My meal was less disappointing than Ella's, which I suspect was mostly because Clean Eatz depends on meat to be the star of the dish. I had low expectations for the flavor, but it was seasoned more than I anticipated. Despite the queso and chipotle ranch in the wrap, it was dry, and I wished my water bottle wasn't still in the car.

The apples and peanut butter were good. The peanut butter was sweetened with honey and didn't taste as artificial as everything else. However, there were only about six apple slices included, not enough to use the 2 oz. container of peanut butter sauce on the side. I don't think it's a huge win for a restaurant if apples and peanut butter are the best part of the meal.

### Ella's Review

1 out of 5 stars

As a vegetarian, I was excited for Clean Eatz, expecting it to have more vegetarian and vegan options, like other self-proclaimed "healthy" restaurants. However, other than the sides, snacks and smoothies, there were only two entree items that were vegetarian, or the option to swap a regular burger for a black bean burger.

I ordered one Clean Eatz black bean burger, hold the bacon, with a side of sweet potato fries. The burger had lettuce, tomato and cheese on a bun, and I added some ketchup and mustard.

For a place that prides itself on freshness, the lettuce was disappointingly old and limp. The black bean patty was fine, though it tasted just like a grocery store black bean burger, and not one of the better ones.

As a whole, the burger was dry. Not unusual with vegetarian burgers, but it wasn't just the patty, the thick bun was part of the problem too. Even with my added ketchup and mustard, I was having to sip from the smoothie after every bite.

The smoothie wasn't great, either — I could taste the whey protein more than I would have liked. The smoothie flavor of mango and peach was good, but it was so strongly overpowered by the protein powder that I couldn't focus on the fruit.

Now, if healthy eating and wellness is your thing, maybe you'd like Clean Eatz, especially if you try something other than the black bean burger. But I can't ignore the fact that this restaurant screams "unhealthy food restriction."

Every item on the menu has the calorie count listed in bold next to the name, and they are surprisingly low numbers. That alone isn't really an issue, but Clean Eatz is definitely catering to a calorie-watching audience. They stray from being "health conscious" to promoting unhealthy eating habits with menu items named things like "watch your waist."

I would not recommend Clean Eatz to anyone unless they had very specific dietary needs, or they were training for a triathlon.

*Photo from [locations.cleaneatz.com](https://locations.cleaneatz.com).*

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