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Ethnic Restaurant Paper

When Ruby's Café first debuted on Mulberry Street in 2003, it filled another need in the New York dining scene: Australian food. Ruby's was one of the first Australian restaurants in New York.

a. How were you addressed when you entered into the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated? How was this experience different due to COVID? Did you have to show your vaccinations card?

One would expect to be greeted with a “g’day, mate,” but that was not the case when entering the restaurant. Instead, the waiters greeted customers upon entering with a friendly smile and told them to take a seat wherever they wanted, as a reservation was not required. Outdoor dining in the Winter is something the average person would not want to do, but one can sit indoors as long as they have proof of vaccination.

b. What are the cultural differences you notice? (Use class notes and cite in APA 8th ed) Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five-senses in this cultural experience. Be sure to write in third person...one will or would see, smell, etc....

At first glance, the restaurant looked like a typical All-American restaurant, from the decor to the music played. There were no kangaroo, emu, koala, or wombat decorations anywhere, and customers could hear no didgeridoos or the constant playing of Down Under by Men At Work. One would begin to question if this was even an Australian restaurant in the first place, but that is when the smells started to kick in. The scent of lemon myrtle, mountain pepper, and wattleseed would make anyone feel like they are in the middle of Sydney or Brisbane.

c. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu? How does this relate to cultural geography? Be sure to use and cite lecture notes appropriately in APA 8th ed.

Ruby's Cafe offers various foods, from a brekkie (breakfast) menu to salads and bowls, pasta, burgers, booze, bebies (beverages), and coffee and tea. Many of the menu items were just standard, run-of-the-mill, cafe foods with a couple of exceptions, such as vegemite on toast, their

pumpkin salad, and the Bondi burger. The restaurant described the ingredients on the menu, so customers were not taking shots in the dark trying to figure out what they were eating. Items that one might be interested in could be their:

- Chia Muesli: chia, rhubarb compote, shredded apple, granola, cranberries, dates, blueberries, yogurt & honey
- Breakfast Bowl: prosciutto, poached eggs, whipped ricotta, peas, edamame, avo, sprouts, lemon, sourdough
- Crispy Grain Bowl: freekah, farro, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, avocado, radish, snap peas, baby kale, feta cheese, red wine vinaigrette
- Kale Salad: pear, pumpkin seeds, pecorino, crispy quinoa, sunflower tahini dressing
- Shrimp Pasta: grilled shrimp, spaghetti, tomatoes, arugula, lemon, cream, crushed red pepper, breadcrumbs
- Pesto Pasta: spaghetti, zucchini, baby peas, snap peas, kale, parmesan & creamy pumpkin seed pesto
- Bronte Burger: premium ground beef, tomato, lettuce, sweet chili, mayo & cheese
- Fried Chicken Burger: buttermilk marinated chicken & coleslaw on a sesame seed bun

While all of that sounds tempting, one would want to capture the essence of Australia and order themselves some vegemite on toast, a pumpkin salad, and a Whaleys burger. Although one might expect some aboriginal language on the menu, it was surprisingly all English, probably because English is the most spoken language in Australia.

d. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like? Describe the ingredients as well.

If one were to ask the restaurant what a traditional Australian salad is, they would tell you that it is the pumpkin salad. The slightly sweet taste of the spinach with the tangy, slightly salty flavor of the feta cheese, topped off with the earthy sweet taste of the pumpkin, is enough to make anyone feel like they are in the middle of the Gold Coast. On the other hand, the bread department lacks variety because the restaurant served the food on/with sourdough bread beside the burgers. Coffee and tea play a big part in the Australian culture, so the restaurant offers a variety of them. The long black and flat white (or as the Americans say, "americano" and "cappuccino") and English brekkie tea are drinks that make Australians rejoice.

e. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant? Be sure to address what is different in the menu.

The restaurant offered classic beverages such as Coke, Diet Coke, and Sprite. They kept it local with some of their selections, including Montauk Pilsner, Bronx Brewery IPA, and Five Boroughs Summer Ale, but could not leave out Aussie classics such as Coopers Pale Ale and

Foster's Beer. Still, they also threw in Australia's Bundaberg Ginger Beer, not actual beer, and what Australian restaurant would be complete without an alcohol menu?

f. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (Use class lecture notes)? (i.e., spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known. Be sure to relate the geography with the country's food. Include a map. Be very detailed.

Cultural geography and economic geography play a big part in the success of a country, but what exactly do they mean? Cultural geography demonstrates how people live their lives in different regions of the world or countries (Adomaitis, 2022), which could not be any clearer in Australia. Most of the population lives on either the east or west coast of the country because inland Australia is practically uninhabitable. The outback is dry and harsh terrain where it is unbearably hot during the day and unbearably cold during the night. Most of the agricultural work and farming takes place on either coast, where their love of fruits and vegetables comes from, and seafood plays a significant role in their eating habits because the Australian coasts are close to water.

On the other hand, economic geography demonstrates the distribution of industrialization or wealth within a country (Adomaitis, 2022). Australia is one of the most industrialized countries globally, with enough wealth to classify it as a first-world country. The influence they have gained from a world power such as Great Britain is hard to overlook and why they rule the Oceania region. Their abundant resources are enough to keep them self-sufficient for now, and why their culture has no problem spreading through borders.

g. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? Please use Eicher-Roacher-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately. Be sure to use all five senses in each description.

The dress of an individual is an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body using all five senses (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1992). The waiters at the restaurant had a similar dress to the average American waiter with a couple of differences. One could see the waiters all had on black dress shirts with black slacks and black dress shoes. The shoe's heel clicked and clacked with every step they took, and their Australian accents were hard to miss but easy to decipher. There is no distinct Australian smell, but the waiters all had on some nice colognes, and one could smell a hint of Blue De Chanel, Versace Eros, or Dior Sauvage. The touch of the waiters was gentle with the way they placed the food down on each table even though their hands were beat-up because the restaurant business took a toll on them. Lastly, unfortunately, one cannot taste the waiters because of COVID restrictions or something.

h. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the LA Times or Houston Chronicle). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality and price and should range from A-F ("A" being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.

When one thinks about Australian-centered food, many things come to mind, such as "is that even a thing?" Well, Ruby's Cafe is here to prove anyone otherwise. Although their décor gets a D because there is a lack of Australian identity and not enough boomerangs, Ugg boots, or Akubra hats, they make up in their service, which gets a solid A for their warm and welcoming hospitality. The cleanliness of the restaurant also gets an A because everyone kept their masks on, sanitized every table before anyone sat down, and provided hand sanitizer for everyone. The authenticity and quality of the food get another A because anyone can run the menu by an Australian person and get the green light. The price for the meal receives an A as well because the restaurant is in the city, and they tend to be expensive, but this place does not charge an arm and leg. Although one would think they have been poisoned by the restaurant when they first try the Vegemite on toast, the pumpkin salad makes up for it with its perfect balance of sweet and salty, but the Whaley's burger killed the meal. Who puts pineapple on a burger? First pizza and now burgers? That sin alone gives Ruby's Cafe an F for taste, but it is subjective because some people enjoy pineapple on their food. Overall, Ruby's Cafe gets a B grade, as it would have anyone saying Aussie Aussie Aussie Oi Oi Oi by the end of the meal.

i. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?

One could learn a lot by visiting a restaurant of a different culture and realizing a slight change is good. No matter the culture, one can see that everyone is similar in their way. It is good to step out of one's comfort zone and experience new things, even just trying another type of food.

References

Adomaitis, A. (2022, February). *Fashion Economics An Introduction*. [Lecture Notes, PowerPoint Slides 2-3]. CityTech.CUNY.edu

Roach-Higgins, M. E., & Eicher, J. B. (1992). Dress and Identity. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 10(4), 1–8.