

Charlotte Greens' Vegan Tofu Pho Bowl

UNC Charlotte - Charlotte Greens

Essay:

Charlotte Greens is a popular dining location for UNC Charlotte students, operating as a mobile order-only venue run by international graduate students under Chef Jeanette's supervision. Opened in Fall 2021, its purpose is to provide a delicious, allergen-friendly dining option. The menu is entirely gluten-free and prepared in a dedicated kitchen, serving 650-700 students per meal period. Throughout the year, Charlotte Greens offers several Limited Time Menu Offers to introduce new and exciting dishes.

For the fall semester, Chef Jeanette developed the Vegan Tofu Pho Bowl, a nutrient-dense, flavorful dish that meets gluten-free and vegan dietary needs while being widely appealing. After researching student food preferences, pho emerged as a favorite. The dish is made without eight of the nine major allergens and features fresh, nutrient-rich ingredients. Vietnamese rice noodles serve as a gluten-free carbohydrate base, complemented by a savory broth infused with fresh herbs, vegetables, and spices. Fresh Thai basil, grown in-house using hydroponic towers, highlights sustainability and innovation.

To create a rich and aromatic broth, vegetable broth was used as a base, enhanced with shiitake mushrooms, celery, green onions, ginger, and toasted spices for depth of flavor. Lemongrass was incorporated for its digestive health benefits. Roasted tofu, lightly seasoned, provides plant-based protein. Carrots and Napa cabbage contribute beta-carotene and immune-boosting antioxidants. The dish is topped with fresh jalapeños, lime wedges, and a light Sriracha drizzle, creating a balanced and comforting meal.


Cost efficiency was maintained by preparing everything in-house, with tofu serving as an affordable, sustainable protein source. The dish quickly gained popularity, averaging 120 bowls ordered per night, representing approximately 20% of guests.

To promote the launch, an interactive tabling event was held inside Charlotte Greens, where our registered dietitian and student nutrition interns collaborated with the Marketing team. Students sampled the dish before purchasing, and a QR code linked to a Google form survey gathered feedback. Results showed 90% of respondents were “likely” or “very likely” to recommend the dish, with high praise for the broth, spice level, and flavor. Some requested a spicier option, while others preferred no changes. Additionally, 60% reported they were highly likely to order the pho bowl again, and 100% agreed it had strong visual appeal.

A robust digital marketing strategy amplified awareness. A dedicated Instagram post introduced the Pho Bowl, emphasizing its fresh ingredients and dietary benefits. University food blogger Hang Le conducted a taste test, shared an authentic review, and interviewed Chef Jeanette about the dish’s inspiration. Professional food photography captured the vibrant presentation, with images displayed on digital screens and menus to entice customers.

By integrating interactive events, social media promotion, and high-impact visuals, the Pho Bowl was successfully introduced as a nutritious and flavorful menu option. This comprehensive approach generated immediate interest and fostered long-term appreciation for globally inspired, health-conscious cuisine. Through thoughtful ingredient selection, innovative marketing, and student engagement, we reinforced our commitment to offering inclusive, high-quality meals that enhance both health and satisfaction on campus.


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[Scaled Recipe an...](#) 91 KiB




[Tofu Pho Bowl P...](#) 2.7 MiB



[Pho Bowl with T...](#) 4.1 MiB



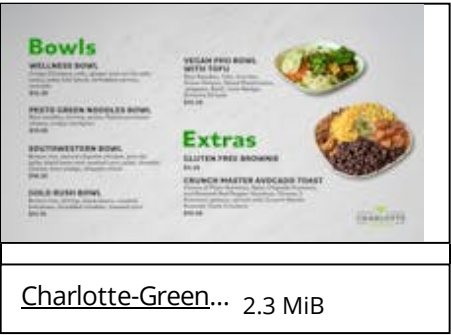
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Pho Bowl Proces... 1.8 MiB



Pho Bowl Proces... 2.4 MiB



Vegan Tofu Bowl... 3.9 MiB



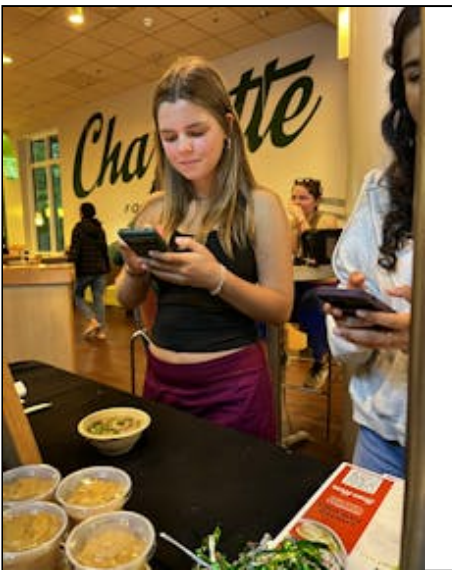
pho noodles.jpeg 2.6 MiB



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Amaya engaging... 3.7 MiB



Students taking... 2.3 MiB



Thai Basil.JPG 192 KiB

	
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