

## Cedarlane tops list of humble frozen burritos

Amanda Gold

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It might be the foodstuff of late-night college binges, but don't discount the frozen burrito.

Supporters will tell you that it's a compact meal that's easy to prepare, filling and incorporates most of the essential food groups.

As the Taster's Choice panel has learned from past experience, however, frozen meals are often unsuccessful - panelists have plowed through lasagna, garlic bread and a variety of vegetables without much luck.

We decided to try out the humble burrito this time, selecting only those that contained beans, rice and cheese.

It was a surprise when, after serving the tasters microwaved burritos (we figured that's how most people prepare the meal), they didn't mind two of the brands. One even scored quite well.

That brand, in first place, was **Cedarlane** (\$2.99/burrito at Andronico's). Tasters enjoyed the "good bean, rice and cheese filling" and "nice seasoning," and called it "chewy but tasty." "Good tortilla to filling balance," said one panelist; others called the flavors "tomato-y" and "cumin-y." Four would buy these burritos and one might.

**Amy's** burritos (\$2.79/burrito at Andronico's) took the second-place slot. They were wrapped in "whole wheat tortillas" and had a "simple bean flavor." "Don't like the texture of the whole wheat," said one, "but the filling is OK." Others called the burritos "doughy." Two would buy these, two might and one would not.

From there, things went drastically downhill.

In third place, the burritos from Whole Foods' **365** brand (\$1.59/burrito) had "almost no seasoning or character" and were "very dry and gummy." One did say that the "spiciness is nice," but also said there was "too much tortilla" and a "very mushy filling." One might buy this brand and four would not.

Fourth went to **Evol** (\$2.59/burrito at Rainbow Grocery), which looked more like Love spelled backward on the package. Sadly, the tasters did not love it. One said the tortillas were "nice looking," but that it was "too bad" it didn't "taste like a burrito." Another said there was "lots of tortilla," and "lots of rice" but "not much flavor." None of the tasters would buy these.

Finally, the last spot went to **Helen's Kitchen** (\$2.50/burrito at Andronico's), which tasters felt had a "processed onion flavor" and a "whole wheat burrito wrapping." "Does not have any bean flavor," said



one, and even though it was labeled as a bean, rice and cheese burrito, it had "frozen vegetables" scattered throughout. None of the tasters would buy this product.

## **Frozen bean, rice and cheese burritos**

**Cedarlane 73**

**Amy's 52**

**365 25**

**Evol 20**

**Helen's Kitchen 15**

*Panelists were Marc Halperin, director, Center for Culinary Development; Shelly Handler, consultant, San Francisco; Rosemary Mark, recipe developer, Walnut Creek; Roland Passot, chef-owner, La Folie and three Left Banks; and Molly Watson, food writer, San Francisco. All products are tasted blind; a perfect score would be 100. Prices listed are the lowest found, but products may be available at other stores.*

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