Sweetgreen's DC reviewers praise *the ingredients*; its low stars name rude staff and small bowls

> 10 of the 10 DC stores read rate under the best rival nearby, and 26% of their reviews read give one or two stars, to CAVA's 4%, Chopt's 4% and Just Salad's 6%. In those, rude staff leads (42%), then small portions (24%). Its food is praised in 34% of reviews with words, between CAVA's 32% and Just Salad's 39% (Chopt 36%); its staff in 27%, to 62%, 71% and 64%, though most of that rival praise names a worker (128 of CAVA's 243, 177 of Chopt's 232, 88 of Just Salad's 124; here 9 of 25). The opening is CAVA: its low reviews name wrong or incomplete orders (32%, to 21% here), though Sweetgreen's own reviews hold 8 such complaints to CAVA's 6.

Sweetgreen
against CAVA, Chopt, Just Salad

1,335 reviews read
Google Maps
dated 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026

849 of the 1,007 with words in a theme
sorted by a model, counted exactly

November 4, 2026
public reviews only; no reviewer names

THE SHORT VERSION

One or two stars in 26% of reviews read, to CAVA's 4%, Chopt's 4% and Just Salad's 6%

26%

of the Sweetgreen reviews read give one or two stars

CAVA 4%, Chopt 4%, Just Salad 6%

42%

of its one- and two-star reviews with words call the staff rude

CAVA 26%, Chopt 29%, Just Salad 15%

24%

of its one- and two-star reviews with words say the bowl came up short

CAVA 21%, Chopt 18%, Just Salad 8%

34%

of its reviews with words praise fresh, flavorful food

CAVA 32%, Chopt 36%, Just Salad 39%

01 **Rude staff is the first complaint**

16 reviews say it. In the one- and two-star reviews with words it is 42% here, to 26% at CAVA, 29% at Chopt and 15% at Just Salad.

02 **Bowls that come up short**

11 reviews say the portion was small or skimped. In the low reviews it is 24% here, close to CAVA's 21%, and 18% at Chopt and 8% at Just Salad.

03 **The food is the praise**

32 reviews praise fresh, tasty food, 34% of reviews with words, between CAVA's 32% and Just Salad's 39% (Chopt 36%).

Themes count the 1,007 reviews with words among the 1,335 we read on Google Maps, not of everyone who uses it. A share is of each brand's own reviews read. Themes are a model's sorting; the counts of that sorting are exact.

LOCATION BY LOCATION

10 of the 10 stores read rate under the best rival nearby

The District's 10 most-reviewed stores, each beside each rival's nearest (a few across the river). New is the last 90 days.

SWEETGREEN LOCATION	MOST-SAID COMPLAINT	GOOGLE ★, REVIEWS	NEW	NEW ★ (90 DAYS BEFORE)	REPLIES, 1-3★	NEAREST CAVA	NEAREST CHOPT	NEAREST JUST SALAD
221 Pennsylvania Ave. SE	rude staff (4 of 19)	**4.4★** · 584	12	3.67★ (4.53)	6/6	**4.5★, 92 new, 1.2 km**	**4.6★, 9 new, 1.2 km**	**4.8★, 34 new, 2.5 km**
1044 Wisconsin Ave NW	rude staff (3 of 10)	**4.0★** · 329	4	4★ (3.21)	5/7	**4.4★, 23 new, 1.2 km**	**4.5★, 5 new, 1.1 km**	**4.9★, 28 new, 1.6 km**
1512 Connecticut Ave NW HIGHEST RATED	wrong or incomplete orders or rude staff and others (1 each of 6)	**4.5★** · 313	5	4.4★ (4.29)	2/2	**4.5★, 69 new, 0.5 km**	**4.7★, 10 new, 0.7 km**	**4.9★, 23 new, 0.6 km**
1461 P St NW	rude staff (3 of 13)	**4.2★** · 286	9	3.22★ (3.57)	9/9	**4.5★, 69 new, 0.8 km**	**4.7★, 10 new, 1.0 km**	**4.9★, 23 new, 1.0 km**
1325 W St NW	small portions (3 of 9)	**4.2★** · 279	7	3★ (2)	8/8	**4.6★, 63 new, 1.1 km**	**4.7★, 10 new, 2.0 km**	**4.9★, 23 new, 1.9 km**
2221 I St NW LOWEST RATED	wrong or incomplete orders or small portions and others (1 each of 7)	**3.6★** · 276	4	4★ (3)	4/4	**4.8★, 100+ new, 0.0 km**	**4.7★, 10 new, 0.7 km**	**4.9★, 28 new, 0.5 km**
1212 4th St SE	wrong or incomplete orders or small portions (2 each of 8)	**4.1★** · 244	7	4.57★ (2.67)	3/5	**4.5★, 92 new, 0.6 km**	**4.5★, 18 new, 0.5 km**	**4.8★, 34 new, 3.5 km**
888 17th St NW Ste 104	rude staff (2 of 10)	**4.2★** · 220	6	4.17★ (4.08)	6/6	**4.5★, 69 new, 0.6 km**	**4.9★, 40 new, 0.2 km**	**4.9★, 28 new, 0.4 km**
2238 M St NW	small portions or rude staff and others (1 each of 3)	**4.1★** · 173	4	4.25★ (2)	3/3	**4.8★, 100+ new, 0.5 km**	**4.7★, 10 new, 0.5 km**	**4.9★, 23 new, 0.5 km**
624 E St NW	dirty tables (2 of 9)	**4.0★** · 131	5	4.4★ (4.4)	1/2	**4.7★, 100+ new, 1.2 km**	**4.5★, 2 new, 0.3 km, 7 read**	**4.8★, 34 new, 0.6 km**

Google's stars and counts are lifetime. New, new ★ and replies are from the 1,335 newest reviews we read, up to 100 a place: new = last 90 days, + = read stopped short of that; replies = owner replies to 1-3★ reviews. The 1,007 with words carry the themes.

SIDE BY SIDE

In Sweetgreen's low reviews rude staff leads at 42%, to 26% at CAVA; its food is praised in 34%

Each cell is the share of that chain's reviews with words that say the theme; over the weeks all four were read, Chopt's staff share is 64%. Sorted by a model.

SHARE OF EACH BRAND'S REVIEWS READ THAT SAY IT · REVIEWS IN BRACKETS

THEMES SORTED BY A MODEL (GEMINI) · COUNTS EXACT

WHAT REVIEWERS SAY	SWEETGREEN	CAVA	CHOPT	JUST SALAD
PRAISE friendly staff	27% (25)	62% (243)	71% (232)	64% (124)
PRAISE fresh, tasty food	34% (32)	32% (126)	36% (118)	39% (76)
PRAISE fast service	5% (5)	8% (31)	10% (32)	12% (24)
PRAISE clean space	7% (7)	9% (36)	8% (26)	8% (16)
COMPLAINT rude staff	17% (16)	1% (5)	2% (6)	1% (2)
PRAISE generous portions	4% (4)	2% (8)	2% (5)	5% (9)
COMPLAINT small portions	12% (11)	1% (4)	1% (4)	1% (2)
COMPLAINT wrong or incomplete orders	9% (8)	2% (6)	1% (3)	1% (2)
COMPLAINT long waits	3% (3)	1% (5)	1% (3)	2% (4)

Other themes: help with diets (39); dirty tables (10); ingredients run out (10). 849 of the 1,007 reviews are in a theme; of the 158 that are not, 121 are a few words of four- or five-star praise and 17 give one or two stars. Every review is listed in the HTML version.

A model (Gemini) named one set of themes for every brand and marked which each review says (up to three); we count its sorting. Base per brand: Sweetgreen 94 reviews; CAVA 392 reviews; Chopt 327 reviews; Just Salad 194 reviews.

WHAT SWEETGREEN'S REVIEWERS COMPLAIN ABOUT

Sweetgreen's complaints: rude staff (16 reviews), small portions (11), wrong orders (8)

Sweetgreen's staff, portion and order complaints, with each rival's share.

rude staff

share of reviews, then of low stars: Sweetgreen 17%, 42% · CAVA 1%, 26% · Chopt 2%, 29% · Just Salad 1%, 15%

"The staff are extremely rude!"

1★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · Sep 2026

"The cashier was very rude and aggressive. Honestly, it makes you wonder whether we're the customers buying food or they're doing us a favor by selling it. The attitude and behavior were really disrespectful, and it was a very unpleasant experience."

1★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · May 2026

small portions

share of reviews, then of low stars: Sweetgreen 12%, 24% · CAVA 1%, 21% · Chopt 1%, 18% · Just Salad 1%, 8%

"The harvest bowl was okay, yet the server seemed to give less of the ingredients than I have experienced at other locations. I did not finish my bowl, so unfortunately, I would say it was a below average Sweetgreen."

2★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · May 2026

"Delicious but inconsistent portions. One day they'll hook you up by actually giving you an adult sized salad, other days they won't and will give you a side salad portion."

4★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · Aug 2026

wrong or incomplete orders

share of reviews, then of low stars: Sweetgreen 9%, 21% · CAVA 2%, 32% · Chopt 1%, 18% · Just Salad 1%, 15%

"Whoever completed the order, missed some ingredients"

4★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · Jun 2026

"Noise was so loud that it was comical to get my build your own meal put together/ there was no clear communication . Less than half of my meal came out as asked. Didn't matter, the core item - the protein - was inedible (rubbery) so I tossed the entire bowl after a few bites. So much for trying healthy."

1★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · Jun 2026

The themes here hold 22 of Sweetgreen's 33 one- and two-star reviews with words; 5 are in other themes and 6 in no theme. Quoted as written, whole, without reviewer names; each quote is an example, the share beside the theme the evidence.

WHAT THE RIVALS' REVIEWERS SAY

Where CAVA's reviewers complain: wrong orders and long waits

CAVA's low reviews name wrong or incomplete orders (32%, to 21% here) and long waits, in line or for pickup (26% to 6%). Over all reviews Sweetgreen's shares are higher (9% to 2%; 3% to 1%), as more of its reviews are low.

wrong or incomplete orders

share of reviews, then of low stars: Sweetgreen 9%, 21% · CAVA 2%, 32% · Chopt 1%, 18% · Just Salad 1%, 15%

"They forget something every time that I order from them and the app doesn't allow you to leave a note to remind them not to forget things. Disappointing."

2★ · CAVA, 1222 Connecticut Ave NW · Jul 2026

"Staff id not aware of SOPs. Each bowl is a surprise and not the kind you'd want"

1★ · CAVA, 50 Massachusetts Ave NE · Nov 2026

long waits

share of reviews, then of low stars: Sweetgreen 3%, 6% · CAVA 1%, 26% · Chopt 1%, 18% · Just Salad 2%, 31%

"Food is great, but they need to find a way to adjust the online ordering system to show accurate times! 20+ people piled up today waiting on online orders that were late by an average of 30 minutes."

2★ · CAVA, 52 M St SE · Oct 2026

"Whew, one must get their mind right to enter this store. They need more help at the counter. The cashier should not be making bowls when the line is this long. Where is the manager? Note: this is not a one off, this is a frequent problem."

2★ · CAVA, 52 M St SE · Aug 2026

Quoted as written, whole, without reviewer names. Each quote is one review: an example of its theme; the shares beside the theme are the evidence.

YOUR BEST AND LOWEST LOCATION

Connecticut Ave's reviews praise the food; 4 of I St's 7 with words give one or two stars

Connecticut Ave (4.5) and I St (3.6), the highest- and lowest-rated stores read. I St's low reviews name an ingredient run out, a bowl made with only greens, the store closed in posted hours, and a delivery order that wasn't made. Small reads: a store's count is an example.

TOP AND LOWEST RATED OF THE LOCATIONS READ, BY THEME SORTED BY A MODEL

SHARE OF REVIEWS WITH WORDS	1512 CONNECTICUT AVE NW (6)	2221 I ST NW (7)	RIVAL PLACES (913)
fresh, tasty food	50% (3)	29% (2)	35% (320)
friendly staff	33% (2)	14% (1)	66% (599)
clean space	17% (1)	29% (2)	8% (78)

fresh, tasty food

Sweetgreen 34% · CAVA 32% · Chopt 36% · Just Salad 39%

> “Ingredients are always so fresh. Delivery is reliable. Customizing orders is easy!”
>
> 5★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · Oct 2026

> “Sweetgreen offers fresh, flavorful meals with high-quality ingredients and plenty of healthy options. The salads and bowls are thoughtfully crafted, with creative combinations that are both satisfying and delicious. The service is friendly, the atmosphere is modern and welcoming, and it’s a great choice for a quick, nutritious meal while exploring the city.”
>
> 5★ · sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls · Jul 2026

Quoted as written, whole, without reviewer names. Each quote is one review: an example of its theme; the shares beside the theme are the evidence.

THEIR WORDS, AND THREE MOVES

Three things to do: a counter standard, the portion on the checklist, the ingredients near CAVA

Phrases diners repeat, with how many are Sweetgreen's, and three lines to use: in staff training, on a shift checklist, and in local ads.

PHRASES 4+ REVIEWS WROTE · REVIEWS, SWEETGREEN'S OF THEM

- customer service 45 Sweetgreen 5
- great food 25 Sweetgreen 0
- friendly staff 11 Sweetgreen 0
- fresh food 6 Sweetgreen 1
- healthy options 5 Sweetgreen 3
- online orders 5 Sweetgreen 1
- great salads 5 Sweetgreen 1
- harvest bowl 5 Sweetgreen 4

Counted, not chosen by a model: runs of 2 to 4 words that 4 or more of the reviews we read wrote, names left out; 8 of the 40 counted.

TRAINING FOR THE COUNTER STAFF AT EVERY STORE READ · FRIENDLY STAFF

Set the counter standard at every store

IN REVIEWERS' WORDS

“the staff working were so polite and attentive”

16 reviews call the staff rude: 42% of the low reviews here, to 26% at CAVA, 29% at Chopt and 15% at Just Salad.

From reviews: #34 (Sweetgreen), #4 (Sweetgreen)

SHIFT CHECKLIST AT EVERY STORE READ · GENEROUS PORTIONS

Put the portion on the shift checklist

IN REVIEWERS' WORDS

“It was a generous portion”

11 reviews say the bowl came up short: 24% of the low reviews here, to 21% at CAVA, 18% at Chopt and 8% at Just Salad.

From reviews: #7 (Sweetgreen), #11 (Sweetgreen)

LOCAL ADS NEAR CAVA'S DC STORES · FRESH, TASTY FOOD

Near CAVA, put the ingredients first

IN REVIEWERS' WORDS

“Ingredients are always so fresh”

CAVA's low reviews name wrong or incomplete orders (32% to 21% here), but Sweetgreen has more such reviews (8 to 6), so lead on the food: praised 34% here to CAVA's 32%.

From reviews: #29 (Sweetgreen), #37 (Sweetgreen)

Each line takes a run of 3 or more words from the first review named; the others are on the same subject (#n = its number in the HTML list). Built on reviewers' words, with a few of our own where a reply needs them: match it to Sweetgreen's own voice before using it.

HOW WE READ IT

What we read, how it was sorted, and what it cannot tell you

What was asked. “sweetgreen.com”: we read it as Sweetgreen (salad restaurant). The rivals were picked for this sample.

The reviews. Per place, Google's own rating, count and star split from a Google Maps search, and its newest reviews, up to 100 from the last 180 days, in the language each was written. 10 of the 14 Sweetgreen locations Google Maps listed for Washington, DC were read, the ones in the District itself with the most Google reviews; not read: sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls, 575 12th Rd S Ste B2; sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls, 1800 N Lynn St; sweetgreen - Healthy Salads, Wraps, and Bowls, 1304 4th St NE and others; each rival place is the nearest of that chain to a location, within 8 km. Owner replies (the owner's response Google returns with each review) to the 1-3★ and the 4-5★ reviews read: Sweetgreen 47 of 52 and 81 of 95; CAVA 22 of 25 and 138 of 509; Chopt 18 of 20 and 241 of 402; Just Salad 13 of 14 and 213 of 218. Reviewer names and owners' replies are not kept, only whether a reply exists.

Dates. Sweetgreen on Google Maps 8 May 2026 to 31 Oct 2026; CAVA on Google Maps 3 Jun 2026 to 4 Nov 2026; Chopt on Google Maps 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026; Just Salad on Google Maps 8 May 2026 to 4 Nov 2026; read November 4, 2026.

The themes. A model (Gemini) named one set of themes from a sample of the reviews, added themes for reviews it left out, then read each of the 1,007 reviews and marked the themes it says, up to three; a second pass reread each against its theme and kept only those that say it. 849 of the 1,007 reviews are in a theme. The counts are exact tallies of that sorting; the sorting is a reading, not a measurement.

The quotes. Every quote is one review, stored as written and shown whole. No reviewer names. Reviews that name an account, carry a link, or name or describe a private person are counted but never quoted (470 left out for naming a person).

What it cannot tell you. Google reviews come from people who chose to write one; 25% of those we read give stars and no words, so themes rest on the ones with words. Google removes some reviews and can't show visits. A share is of the reviews with words we read, not of customers.

The evidence. The HTML version of this report lists every review we read, by theme, with a link to the place on Google Maps.