

Listeria in 'Clean Food': Panera Bread Goes Full Chipotle



By Alex Berezow, PhD — January 30, 2018



Credit: Miosotis Jade/Wikipedia ^[1]

I am a prophet.

Last year, I wrote an article titled, "[Panera Bread Takes A Page From 'Food Babe's' Playbook](#) ^[2]."

The Food Babe is the unscientific guru who says that we shouldn't eat food that contains ingredients that we can't pronounce.

The bogus "[clean food](#) ^[3]" movement has seized upon that idea, and soon after joining the bandwagon, Panera Bread launched an advertising campaign mocking chemistry.



Panera Bread @panerabread

Artificial preservatives have a place. That place is not in your food.



Butylated
Hydroxyanisole
belongs in here.



Not in here.

0:04

Butylated hydroxyanisole, otherwise known as BHA, is a common food preservative. It's perfectly safe. But Panera Bread knows that many people don't know that, so they are whipping up some chemophobia to sell more food.

At the time, I warned against that strategy. Not only is it thoroughly anti-science, it's an unnecessary business gamble. Chipotle did something similar. They made a huge deal about giving up GMOs, only to have their reputation utterly destroyed by [outbreaks of *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Norovirus*](#) [4]. My advice to Panera Bread was:

"If and when a food poisoning outbreak happens at one of their restaurants, it's

going to make their 'clean food' campaign a target of derision."

If only they had listened to me. [CNN](#) [5] reports that Panera Bread has recalled cream cheese due to possible contamination with *Listeria*, a potentially deadly foodborne pathogen. The mockery came swiftly:



Kevin Folta @kevinfolta · Jan 29

Why are all of the "Clean Food" places the ones with dirty food?



ABC13 Houston @abc13houston

You'll need to pass on the Panera Bread cream cheese, for now. The company is recalling the item after listeria concerns. abc13.co/2FqHtGg



Foodborne illness happens. It's one of the hazards of eating. But when a company makes a concerted effort to claim that their food is holy and righteous while everybody else serves poison, they shouldn't be surprised when the public backlash is severe. It is entirely predictable, deserved, and self-inflicted.

However, if Panera Bread decides to continue with its marketing campaign, I humbly submit this for their consideration.



Panera Bread  @panerabread

Listeria has a place.
That place is not in your food.



Listeria
belongs
here.



Not in here.

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/01/30/listeria-clean-food-panera-bread-goes-full-chipotle-12503>

Links

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panera_Bread#/media/File:Panera_Bread.jpg

[2] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/07/13/panera-bread-takes-page-food-babes-playbook-11556>

[3] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/01/26/clean-eating-your-organic-food-still-contains-cockroaches-hair-poop-12481>

[4] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2015/12/09/2015-chipotles-year-from-hell-a-peno>

[5] <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/29/health/panera-bread-cream-cheese-recall/index.html>