

Accessibility and Affordability of Caribbean food in East Flatbush

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INTRODUCTION

East Flatbush has higher death rates than Brooklyn as a whole. Diabetes, stroke and heart disease are diet related diseases contributing to this mortality rate (NYC Community Health Profile, 2003). We investigated types of food are available in the area. A large portion of the population in the area are Caribbean people who eat Caribbean food. The foods of the Caribbean consist of a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, meats, and spices. Used in many dishes are fruits you can pick off of a tree to put in salads and sauces and vegetables grown in a garden to make soups and other dishes. They can be found very easily and adapted to any dish of the islands (Diet of Caribbean Islanders, 2009). To test if part of the reason for high diet related diseases is related to a lack of Caribbean food we looks at the availability and price of Caribbean food.

METHODS

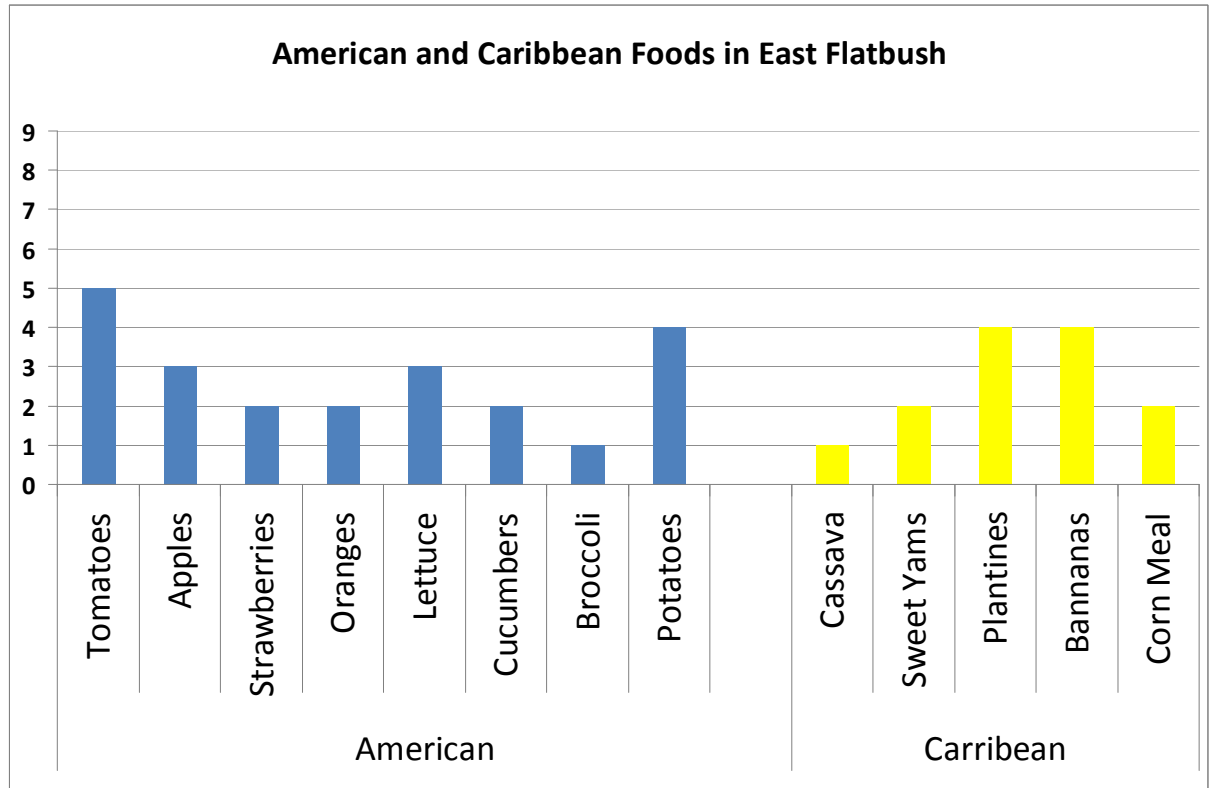
We went to restaurants, takeout restaurants, supermarkets, neighborhood markets, corner stores, specialty stores and fast food places to collect data. We collected information on the fruits and vegetables common in the United States as well as the Caribbean. We entered every store we passed and tried to include as wide an area as we could. We then entered the data into a data base and analyzed it.

RESULTS

We expected supermarkets, neighborhood markets and convenience stores to carry fruits and vegetables. Of the 9 places we look at, that fell into these categories, 6 of them carried at least one vegetable and 4 of them carried at least one Caribbean item. The graph shows how many stores had each food item. To look at cost we averaged the price per pound of American items and Caribbean items. We found the average cost for American vegetables is \$1.62 and the average cost of Caribbean items is \$1.89.



American and Caribbean Foods in East Flatbush



CONCLUSION

Caribbean food in East Flatbush is more expensive than American fruits and vegetables but many stores have them. From our data you could say that a lack of Caribbean food is probably not contributing to the high disease rates in East Flatbush. It is possible that the price of Caribbean food affects what people buy, but more research would need to be done to know for sure. Only four stores that sell fruits and/or vegetables, which then makes it difficult to access the items necessary to make the foods the Caribbean population normally cooks because they cannot obtain it as easily. We didn't go to many different locations either so we only have a small sample. This means we should only talk about the places we sampled and not all of East Flatbush.

REFERENCES

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