



**EATING AT SU**

**A COMPREHENSIVE  
GUIDE TO YOUR  
COLLEGE  
NUTRITION**



# GUIDE TO COLLEGE NUTRITION

## WHY IS NUTRITION IMPORTANT?

Picture this: you leave for college and for the first time feel free as a bird to stay up and eat as many cookies before dinner as your heart desires. But one semester in, you notice that your clothes are starting to fit tighter, you feel sluggish most days, your stomach feels bloated, and you're having a hard time staying focused in class. This is a common scenario, and usually changing a few key nutrition behaviors can get you feeling back to normal in no time.

## WHAT DOES THIS GUIDE COVER?

This guide is designed to help college students navigate some of the most common challenges that come with eating well in this new phase of life. It covers how to stock your dorm room with healthy snacks, how to navigate the dining hall with confidence, and how to grocery shop for healthy food on a budget.







# STOCKING YOUR DORM ROOM

Stocking your dorm room with healthy snacks is key to keeping your energy levels up between meals. You'll also be less likely to overeat at meals if you aren't famished when you sit down to eat. Here are a few things you can keep handy to build a balanced and nourishing snack:

**Fresh  
Fruit**



**Whole  
Grain  
Crackers**



**Nut or  
Seed  
Butter**



**Popcorn**



**Grain &  
Nut Mix**



**Protein  
Bars**



# STOCKING YOUR FRIDGE



**Plain Yogurt (or  
Lightly Sweetened  
Yogurt) & Fruit**

**Pre-Chopped  
Vegetables &  
Hummus**

**Salsa &  
Veggie/Tortilla  
Chips**

**Cheese Sticks &  
Crackers**

## NO TIME FOR BREAKFAST?

Grab a protein bar, apple, & cheese stick.



## NEED A SNACK FOR LATER?

Try two clementines & a small container of trail mix.



## CRAVING A STUDY SNACK?

Add 2 tablespoons of popcorn kernels to a brown paper lunch bag & fold over the top twice. Lay it on its side for two minutes. Season per preference.





# **TIPS FOR EATING AT THE DINING HALL**

## **FOLLOW THE PLATE METHOD**

Follow the Plate Method for an easy-to-remember visual of how to fit in your favorites & still ensure a nutrient-dense meal:

- Fill half of your plate with fruits & vegetables - this helps you meet your fiber & micronutrient needs while keeping you full on fewer calories. Choose a variety of colors. Explore & try something new!
- Make one quarter of your plate lean protein - this can come from meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, or plant-based options like soy, beans, & other legumes.
- Make the other quarter of your plate high-fiber whole grains, or starchy vegetables such as corn, squash, or potatoes.
- Use dairy as a flavor enhancer or to add protein & calcium to your meal as needed.

# TIPS FOR EATING AT THE DINING HALL

## START WITH A SALAD

Take advantage of Commons Dining's abundant salad bar selections to meet your fruit and vegetable needs. Aim for 2-4 different colors of vegetables - layer in seeds, olives, or gourmet oils for healthy fats, flavor, & crunch.

Make it a habit to start your dinner with a salad. Some of the best options available in the Commons include:

- Dark leafy greens - vitamin K, folate
- Tomatoes - vitamin C, the antioxidant lycopene
- Carrots - vitamin A
- Broccoli & Cauliflower - antioxidants including sulforaphane, vitamin C, & fiber
- Avocado - heart-healthy fats, fiber, & potassium
- Edamame - fiber, antioxidants, vitamin K
- Nuts & Seeds - magnesium (use them instead of croutons for crunch)
- When it comes to dressing, choose just enough to enhance the flavor.



# **TIPS FOR EATING AT THE DINING HALL**

## **SKIP SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES**

With a plethora of juices, sweetened milk, & soft drinks now available at all times, it's easy to start adding them to your meals without thinking twice. The problem is that this can easily add 300-600 extra calories daily without the satisfaction that chewing food provides. These beverages also contain artificial flavors & colors, as well as large amounts of added sugar, none of which does our body any favors.

Save these beverages for special occasions & instead rely on water, coffee, or unsweetened tea for everyday meals. These beverages give us the hydration and phytonutrients that support our good health.



# TIPS FOR EATING AT THE DINING HALL

## BE CHOOSEY WITH DESSERT

One of the biggest adjustments college students have to make is the exposure to unlimited desserts. The dining hall has indulgent treats available at every meal, so it can be tricky to navigate. Here are a few simple tricks:

- Pass on anything that you don't love. In other words, just because it's there doesn't mean you have to take it.
- When you do indulge, make sure you have the time to really enjoy it. If you're in a hurry, it's probably not the best time for dessert.
- Split it with friends. If you see something that you would love to try, ask friends if they want to share so that you get a taste without overdoing it on sugar.

# TIPS FOR EATING AT THE DINING HALL

## **SLOW DOWN**

Slow down to stay satisfied. Allow yourself time to feel full to prevent overeating. Many people are inherently fast eaters and go from starving to stuffed in a matter of minutes. Keep in mind that there are many hormones in your digestive tract communicating with each other as a meal is consumed. Research suggests that if you eat too quickly, you aren't providing enough time for those hormones to tell you "I'm full." Clearly, we don't always have the luxury of a long lunch break, but do the best you can to avoid rushing through meals most of the time.



# HEALTHY GROCERY SHOPPING ON A BUDGET



When you move out of the dorms, grocery shopping is still quite possibly a new endeavor. How do you know what to buy? How can you get the most bang for your buck at the store? What are the healthiest convenience foods?

The trick is striking a balance between eating well and staying within your allotted food budget. Here are some of the best ways to do so:

Meat and fish can be pricey when it's not on sale, so experiment with using plant proteins like beans, lentils, and tofu, which are much more affordable.

Be on the lookout for your favorite non-perishable staple items. When you see a good price, stock up to take advantage of a good deal!

For perishable items, freeze once home from the store or incorporate them into meals that can be frozen later.

# **HEALTHY GROCERY SHOPPING ON A BUDGET**

Batch cooking helps you maximize the time you spend cooking. It takes about the same amount of time to scale up a recipe that it does to make the standard batch. So, double up & freeze extra portions for days when you're short on time but still want a home-cooked meal.

Suggestions include:

- Chilis, soups, & stews
- Curries
- Shredded chicken for using in tacos, burritos, salads, & casseroles

SU has a student-run pantry by the bookstore in the Commons building. This is a great place to build your pantry.



# CLOSING

College can be a fun and exciting time in your life! Take the time to prioritize good nutrition so you can stay focused, meet your health and fitness goals, and keep your energy levels up along the way.

Salisbury University Dining Services offers individual and group nutrition counseling sessions free of charge to students, staff and faculty. Contact university dietitian Terry Passano RDN to make an appointment.



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