



*Your Ultimate Guide to*

# **COLLEGE STUDENT NUTRITION**

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# Guide to College Nutrition

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## Why is nutrition important?

Imagine this: you head off to college, reveling in newfound freedom to stay up late and indulge in cookies before dinner. However, after a semester, you realize your clothes are snug, you feel lethargic, and struggle to concentrate in class. This is a typical situation, and making some simple adjustments to your nutrition habits can quickly get you back on track.

## What will this guide cover?

This guide aims to assist college students in overcoming typical hurdles associated with maintaining a healthy diet during this new chapter of life. It includes tips on stocking your dorm room with nutritious snacks, navigating the dining hall with ease, and grocery shopping for healthy food while on a budget.



# Stock Your Dorm Room

Stocking your dorm room with healthy snacks is crucial for maintaining your energy levels between meals. Having nutritious snacks readily available can help prevent overeating during meal times. Here are some items you can have on hand to create a well-rounded and nourishing snack:

**Fresh Fruit** | apples, bananas, clementines, berries



**Whole grain crackers** | rice cakes, seed crackers



**Nut or seed butter** | grab the portable individual packets!



**Popcorn kernels** | + brown paper lunch bags to prepare



**Grain and nut mix** | trail mix, granola



**Protein bars**



# Stock Your Refrigerator

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## mini-fridge | must have combos

Plain yogurt (or lightly sweetened yogurt) + fruit



Pre-chopped vegetables + hummus



Salsa + veggies or tortilla chips



Cheese sticks or cubes + crackers



## No time to eat breakfast before class?

Get a protein bar, an apple, and a cheese stick.



## Need a portable snack to throw in your backpack for later?

Have a snack with two clementines and a small portion of trail mix.



## Craving something salty while studying?

Place 2 tablespoons of popcorn kernels into a brown paper lunch bag and fold the top over twice. Lay the bag on its side and microwave for two minutes. Season according to your taste.



# 5 Tips for Eating in the Dining Hall with Confidence

## Follow the Plate Method

Try following the Plate Method (depicted in MyPlate) for a simple visual guide on incorporating your favorite foods while maintaining a nutrient-rich meal.



Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables. This aids in meeting your fiber and micronutrient requirements, while helping you feel satisfied with fewer calories.

- Allocate one quarter of your plate to lean protein sources like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, or plant-based options such as beans, legumes, and soy.
- Dedicate another quarter of your plate to high-fiber whole grains or starchy vegetables like corn, squash, or potatoes.

Utilize dairy products like cheese to enhance flavor or to boost protein and calcium content in your meal when necessary.

## Start with a Salad

Many dining halls offer a wide variety of options at the salad bar, making it easy to fulfill your fruit and vegetable requirements.



Make it a routine to kick off your dinner with a salad. Here are some popular choices that you can easily find:



- Dark leafy greens provide vitamin K and folate.
- Tomatoes offer vitamin C and the antioxidant lycopene.
- Carrots are a good source of vitamin A.
- Avocados contain heart-healthy fats, fiber, and potassium.
- Nuts and seeds are rich in magnesium (they can be used instead of croutons for added crunch).
- When selecting a dressing, opt for one that you like rather than feeling pressured to choose the "healthiest" option. Remember to use a moderate amount to enhance the flavor.

## Skip Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

- Nowadays, there is a wide variety of juices, sweetened milk, and soft drinks readily accessible all the time, making it tempting to incorporate them into your meals without much consideration. However, this habit can lead to consuming an additional 300-600 calories daily, without the satiety that comes from eating solid food.
- Reserve these beverages for special events and opt for water, coffee, or unsweetened tea for your regular meals.





## Be Choosy with Dessert

One of the biggest adjustments college students have to make is exposure to unlimited desserts. Dining halls usually have indulgent treats available at every meal so it can be tricky to navigate. Here are a few simple tips:



- Pass on anything you don't love. In other words, just because it's "there" doesn't mean you have to take it.
- If you do indulge, make sure you have 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 you get a taste without overdoing it on sugar.

## 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 lunch break but do the best you can to avoid rushing through meals most of the time.



# Healthy Grocery Shopping on a Budget

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When you move out of the dorms, grocery shopping is 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:

## Incorporate meatless proteins sources



Meat & 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.

## Stock up during sales



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

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

## Batch cook if possible

Batch cooking is a great way to make the most of your cooking time. Scaling up the recipe usually takes a similar amount of time.



To make a larger batch, simply double the recipe and freeze the extra portions for busier days when you crave a homemade meal.

Recipe ideas:

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

## Closing

College is a thrilling and enjoyable phase in your life! Make sure to focus on good nutrition to stay on track, achieve your health and fitness objectives, and maintain high energy levels throughout this journey.





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