



★ FOODIE ★ UNIVERSITY

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Smoothie bowl photo by Giovanina Vancheri

How to Tackle Dining Hall Eating

by Giovanina Vancheri

Arguably the worst part about college living: the dreaded dining halls.

We all know that unless you hit the campus jackpot, school food is pretty much mediocre at best. Trying to eat healthy but having to rely on your campus' dining services for your meals, leaves you in a sticky situation. I've gathered up some of my best tips and tricks to eating healthy and filling meals in your school's dining hall.

Get to know the layout

One of the first things you can do to ensure you're making healthier choices is to get familiar with your dining hall. Often times, there will be hidden gems that are easy to overlook. Before I really got to know what my dining hall had to offer, there were definitely some good things I missed out on.

Look for alternative food options

Sometimes your best bet for finding healthy meals on campus is to look for the alternative diet options. Most schools have gluten free, vegetarian, or dairy free options. This is an easy way to ensure that you're making healthier choices. If you don't know where to locate your school's, do some research! My campus recently opened an all-vegan cafe, which I always stop at for a quick but healthy option when I'm on the go.

Channel your creativity

In order to create healthy meals that you won't get bored with, you'll probably have to use your imagination. I like to look on Pinterest for recipe ideas that I can recreate using the food in my school's dining hall. The more fun you have with campus food, the more excited you'll be to keep trying new things.

Mix and match different items

Although the food in the dining hall is typically organized by meal (for example, pasta bar, sandwich station, salad bar, and so on), don't think you have to stay within those limits. One of my favorite meals to put together is grilled chicken and rice with toppings from the taco station for a makeshift burrito bowl.

Don't be afraid to ask!

If you can't find the healthier alternatives you're looking for, chances are there is someone who will be able to help you. Don't be afraid to ask for help finding options that would better suit your needs. You might even discover that your dining hall has more to offer than you thought!



Grilled chicken, rice, quinoa, and veggie bowl by Giovanina Vancheri

Healthy Food Substitutes

by Giovanina Vancheri

It really is the little things that matter most.

When you're trying to adopt a healthy lifestyle, doing everything all at once can seem like a big feat, and will probably set you back even further. I've found that taking little steps here and there will make your journey so much smoother. Here are some easy substitutes you won't even miss and will make your new lifestyle even easier.

Mayo --> Avocado

I used to put mayo on just about every sandwich and burger I ate. Using mashed avocado as a spread instead is a serious game changer. The texture is the same so your sandwich won't feel dry. Avocado is loaded with healthy fats that are much more satisfying than fatty mayo. It tastes delicious and enhances the flavor of every sandwich or burger. So amazing and healthy!



Avocado spread original by Lisa Fotios

Lettuce --> Spinach

Yes, lettuce is good for you, and yes, it's a good calorie burner. However, spinach is even better for you. When it comes to greens, the darker the color is, the better it is for you. Spinach has twice as many nutrients and health benefits as lettuce. It also has more fiber and lowers cholesterol. The mild taste will hardly make a difference on your sandwiches or salads. Try to swap out your regular lettuce for fresh baby spinach and you'll be giving your body so much more.

Ice cream --> Frozen banana

In the summer, it's so hard to not crave ice cream. But all the sugar and dairy really adds up and can make you feel sick and sluggish. Frozen blended banana is your new best friend. It tastes just like ice cream but is totally healthy! Just add your favorite flavors like cocoa, peanut butter, or strawberry, and the creamy smoothie tastes exactly like ice cream (even better to me).



Cinnamon coffee original by Brian Burgos

Sugar --> Cinnamon

Sugar is so horrible for your body, and cinnamon is a great replacement for white sugar. You can put it in everything from cereal, oatmeal, coffee, and fruit for some sweetness and extra flavor. Cinnamon also has amazing health benefits and helps you way more than it hurts you: it's full of antioxidants and it is anti-inflammatory food, which not only helps your gut but prevents a number of diseases. I've started putting cinnamon on everything and I love with the taste it adds. Try putting cinnamon in your coffee instead of your usual sweetener! I promise once you try it you won't go back.

Your favorite condiment --> Sriracha

If you couldn't already tell, I'm literally obsessed with sriracha, which is just a hot sauce made from chillies. I love spicy food, and this hot sauce goes with just about everything. Not only that, but it's made from all simple ingredients and it's low in calories. These days I've replaced all my old favorite condiments like ranch, ketchup, and mayo with sriracha, and I don't even miss them. I put it on all my sandwiches and burgers, dip my veggies in it, top my eggs with it, and more. It's that good.



Grain Bowls: Your New

Holy Grail Dinner

grain bowls original by Williams and Sonoma

by Giovanina Vancheri

Grain bowls are what I like to call my something-out-of-nothing meal, because I came up with it when I had only leftovers in my house. I wanted it to include nutrients from every food group--carbs, veggies, proteins, and fats--and be super tasty and filling. There are endless ways to fashion a grain bowl leaving you with countless delicious dinners that will never disappoint. This dish can be made totally from scratch or completely from leftover ingredients, so it's perfect for any day of the week; plus, it's a great option for meal prepping. I could eat this meal every day and not get bored, and I guarantee once you find your favorite ingredients, you'll feel the same!

Step 1: Pick Your Base

My go-to is rice because that's something I always have in the house and it's easy to find anywhere. Brown or long-grain is my favorite and the healthiest! You can also use quinoa or cauliflower rice for an even healthier option. Start with a serving of your favorite grain at the bottom of your bowl. I never overdo it with grains because for dinner, I'd rather get most of my calories from veggies or protein. On days I've eaten lots of carbs already or I'm just in the mood for something lighter, I like to make more of a salad bowl using greens as a base instead of grains. Pro-tip: Leftover or even Minute Rice works great with this recipe.

Step 2: Load Up on Veggies

This is the fun part: pretty much all vegetables work well together, so it's fun to experiment, whether it's with mixing your favorite veggies or just using what you have leftover. Some of my favorites are broccoli, brussels sprouts, zucchini, squash, and cauliflower (to name a few). Even if you're not big on veggies, it's very easy to blend in the flavors. Make your bowl as colorful as possible! Pro-tip: Don't skip out on seasoning. No one wants to eat bland vegetables. I always add some Goya Adobo seasoning (salt, garlic powder, oregano, black pepper, and cumin) while I'm cooking and maybe some chili powder or red pepper flakes for extra spice.

Step 3: Add Some Protein

Protein is an essential to not only fill you up more, but to help with fat loss and recovery after exercise. Don't forget your protein, no matter what form it's in! I eat mostly lean proteins, and my favorite to use in a bowl is egg. I like to either top it off with one or two fried or poached eggs, or scramble in some egg whites with my grains. I also like to use chicken or fish, especially when I have some leftover. If you're vegan or vegetarian, beans are an amazing plant-based protein that I like to include in almost all of my bowls.

Step 4: Healthy Fats

Fats are not something to be afraid of when you're doing them right. If you include lots of healthy, plant-based fats in your diet, you won't crave the unhealthy fat. I love using beans for both plant-based protein and healthy fat! Plus, they're super filling and will keep you fuller longer. Another amazing source of fat is avocado, and I like to use that as a topping or dressing.

Step 5: Fresh Toppings & Dressing

On top of all the cooked ingredients, I love adding some fresh veggies as well. You can never go wrong with some fresh tomato and avocado. Sometimes when I'm craving even more nutrients, I'll add fresh greens like baby spinach and arugula. If you season your ingredients while cooking, you shouldn't need any dressing, but I love my food spicy, so I always top my bowl with my favorite, Sriracha. You can also make a healthy dressing by blending avocado, olive oil, and your favorite herbs if you need some more flavor!



What's In My Fridge

College Edition

by Giovanina Vancheri

Even though you're a college student, your fridge doesn't have to be home to just white bread and beer.

College can be such a busy time for students, and oftentimes this means that a healthy lifestyle goes out the window. Although things have been super hectic for me, I still try to make sure that I'm keeping up with my healthy eating habits. Now that I have my own kitchen, I've been pretty much sticking to a few basic staples that both fill me up and make me feel healthy. Here are my favorite staples that I've been keeping in my fridge this semester to help me put together quick and healthy meals!

Bananas: Bananas are healthy, filling, and very versatile. I like to keep a bag of cut up bananas in my freezer at all times. That way, I can just grab a handful when I need to add them to a meal. This is perfect for smoothies because it cuts down prep time by a lot. Sometimes I let them defrost and add them to my oatmeal or cereal in the morning. This is great for an on-the-go college student because it keeps the fruit fresher for much longer and helps prevent waste.

Eggs: Eggs are my main source of protein because not only do they taste good, they're super versatile and a good source of protein. I tend to use eggs as a protein substitute for meat. I use them as the main protein source in my meals or add them in for a more filling meal. I like to use them for breakfast wraps, pastas, and rice bowls.



Cut-up bananas to freeze by Giovanina Vancheri

Spinach: As a full-time student, it's probably somewhat difficult to keep fresh produce on hand all the time. That being said, I like to pick one or two of my favorite vegetables to keep in my fridge that I can use in a wide range of recipes. My favorite vegetable is spinach, since I can incorporate it into any meal of the day! I find myself adding it to just about every meal I make so it doesn't go to waste. I use it in my morning smoothies, scramble it into some eggs, or add it to my pasta. I find it adds some natural energy to my day, and adding a little green to your meals never hurts.



Eggs original by Alexander Talbot

Fruit: Aside from my frozen bananas, I like to keep at least one or two kinds of fruits in my fridge all the time. I usually try to get whatever is in season, so maybe a bag of apples in the fall or clementines in the winter. They're one of my biggest go-to snacks that I just throw in my backpack and snack on while I'm on campus. It's a great alternative to buying campus food which isn't quite as healthy.

Almond milk: Almond milk is something I always like to have in my apartment because it can be hard to find dairy substitutes on campus. I use it in my oatmeal, cereal, smoothies, and coffee. I always get the unsweetened kind because then it can be used in savory recipes as well!

These are the main staples I like to keep in my fridge all the time. Just having these ingredients on hand has really helped me make healthier eating choices this semester. I'm here to tell you you CAN be a full-time student and make healthy meals for yourself!

The healthy smoothie that's guaranteed to satisfy your sweet tooth

by Giovanna Vancheri

Say goodbye to ice cream and hello to “nice” cream.

Since the summer, I've been working on cutting dairy out of my diet. I would say I've done pretty well, but one thing my family loves in the summer: ice cream. Although I do allow myself to indulge in the sweet treat once in a while, I've been trying to come up with healthier and dairy-free alternatives.

When I just need to eat something sweet, my go-to is a smoothie. I figured out a way to make one of my favorite breakfast staples into a dessert treat as well. Not only does it taste exactly like ice cream, but it contains zero bad ingredients. What's better than being able to satisfy your sweet tooth with delicious, all-natural, whole foods? Literally nothing. Here's my favorite yummy smoothie recipe that has changed my life. I promise it will change yours too.

The key to making an ice cream-like smoothie is frozen banana. When blended, it becomes extra creamy and gives it that thicker consistency. I throw all of these ingredients into my Nutribullet and blend it up. Make sure to start out with very little almond milk and only add more if it is needed, since you want it really thick and creamy. If it is difficult to blend, then add a little more at a time.

Once it's all blended, you can add your favorite toppings or eat it plain. I like to top it with more fruit like banana slices or berries, or granola and nuts if I'm craving more carbs or eating it earlier in the day.

Healthy Vegan “Ice Cream” Recipe

1 frozen banana
1/2 cup frozen avocado
1/2 cup frozen black cherries
1 cup fresh baby spinach
1-2 tablespoons natural peanut or almond butter
1/2-1 tablespoon natural cocoa (a little goes a long way)
1/4-1/2 cup vanilla unsweetened almond milk
Cinnamon to taste
Substitute: replace vanilla unsweetened almond milk and cocoa powder with pre-made chocolate almond milk if you want it a little sweeter

Voila! There you have it: a sweet, indulgent, and all-natural treat for those hot summer nights when you just need a treat!



Smoothie bowl original by @eatingbyelaine



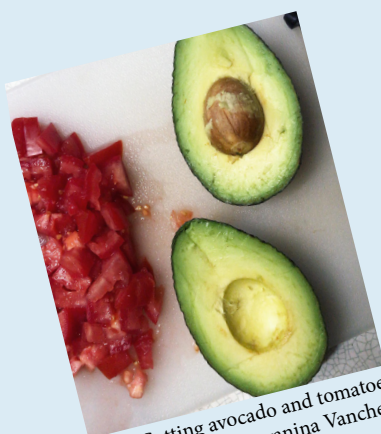
Berry smoothie bowl by Giovanina Vancheri



Egg and arugula wrap by Giovanina Vancheri

About

I'm Giovanina, a third-year college student. I have always loved eating healthy foods, and I definitely consider myself a "foodie." One of my favorite things to do is look at pictures of aesthetically pleasing meals on social media platforms like Pinterest and Instagram and try to recreate them. As a college student, it can be hard to maintain a healthy diet, let alone think about making your food look good. I created Foodie University because I wanted to help other college students like myself realize that they can still eat food that both looks good and makes them feel good. I've included some of my favorite recipes along with some helpful tips and tricks for getting the most out of campus eating. I hope you enjoy!



Cutting avocado and tomatoes by Giovanina Vancheri



PB & J Oatmeal by Giovanina Vancheri