



EATING HEALTHY IN RESIDENTIAL DINING

I do it every day and you can too!

LINDSEY PINE | nutrition X USC

For many of you, this is your first time eating on your own. It's time to fend for yourself without mom or dad doing the cooking. The initial idea of eating in a dining hall can be stressful, but once you get the hang of it, you'll be a pro! The healthy eating patterns that you develop now will stick with you for the rest of your life!

I get the following question often: "how do I eat healthfully in the dining halls". Believe me, it's totally possible to eat a healthful eating pattern in the dining halls. I know because I do it every day!

HERE ARE SOME OF MY TOP TIPS

GET TO KNOW THE LAYOUT OF THE DINING HALL

Walk around the dining hall at least once before deciding on your meal. Too often, students run straight to the pizza or dessert before checking out all of the other available and healthier options. Or, check out our online menus ahead of time. The top 8 allergens, gluten, sesame, pork, vegan and vegetarian status are even listed on there.

<http://hospitality.usc.edu/residential-dining-menus/>

EAT BREAKFAST

Have more sustained energy throughout the day by eating a balanced breakfast. All dining halls have great options such as made to order omelette stations, plain scrambled eggs, fruit, yogurt, and oatmeal. Jazz up your oatmeal by topping with blueberries and items such as pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, ground flax seed and shredded unsweetened coconut. And to clear up a common misconception, the frozen fruit does not contain any added sugar. In fact, frozen fruit is just as nutritious as fresh! (Bonus: Parkside has plain Greek yogurt!)

BE CONSCIOUS OF PORTION SIZES

It's not just about what you eat. How much you eat is just as important! You can eat pizza! Just stick to 1 slice and fill the rest of your plate with something healthy like veggies. Our serving spoons will give you about ½ cup of grains which is an appropriate serving size. Meat is portioned into 4 oz servings. Use butter pats, sauces and dressings sparingly.

DRINK WATER INSTEAD OF SUGARY DRINKS

The easiest way to gain weight is to guzzle soda and sports drinks! Stick with water. Add some lemon slices for more flavor or enjoy our spa water at Parkside and Everybody's Kitchen.

ALWAYS FILL ½ YOUR PLATE WITH VEGETABLES

This is a great way to eat healthfully without having to count calories! Plus, you'll nourish your body with tons of antioxidants, vitamins & minerals. Our freshly cooked vegetables are either steamed, roasted, braised, or sautéed. We do not use butter or a bunch of extra ingredients on our vegetable side dishes!

TRY A PLANT BASED STYLE OF EATING

You don't need to eat meat at every single meal. Mix it up and try a new plant based protein like tofu or tempeh. Beans and lentil count as protein too! I love making my own Buddha style bowls by mixing and matching veggies, beans/lentils, whole grains/sweet potatoes, nuts/seeds, and hummus.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR AMAZING SALAD AND DELI BARS

Not only do the salad bars come packed with many locally grown veggies, but they also have a variety of different proteins. Don't like the meat dishes that day on the hot line? We always have lean chicken breast, hard boiled eggs, beans, tofu & hummus. The deli bars have lean turkey and roast beef. I love to mix and match items from the hot line with items from the salad bar to create my own custom dish!

EAT MORE WHOLE GRAINS

Most college students don't eat enough fiber, which is super important for keeping your gut and immune system healthy! We often serve steamed quinoa, brown rice, rye berries, wheat berries, millet, and barley in addition to vitamin packed sweet potatoes. Choose those items more often than white rice, pasta, and French fries.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR OWN HEALTHY PLATE AT THE ACTION STATIONS

The dining halls have stations where YOU get to choose the ingredients. If you don't see an ingredient that you want, like veggies, grab some from the salad bar and ask the cook to incorporate into your dish.

BONUS!

REMEMBER, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE FOOD

BE SURE TO EXERCISE!!

Everyone blames the dreaded Freshman 15 on the food. That's just not fair! Lack of physical activity is a key component to weight gain. Many students stop being active once they get to college. Join an intramural sports team, sign up for a for-credit PE class, have regular dance parties with your roommate, walk/run around the campus, or take advantage of your FREE membership to the Lyon Center.

SLEEP

Lack of sleep can affect your hunger hormones which could lead to weight gain. Be sure to get around 8 hours of sleep each night.

