

Section 6 – Prepare to live independently



Cooking on a budget

Firstly, over the summer it's time to learn the basics - Have you ever used the washing machine, cooked your own dinner? If not you should definitely become familiar with these things before you begin Uni life. Learn to cook some easy meals that you can rotate; there are lots of great student recipes out there, so get cooking!

How to cook well on a budget

When buying food, most supermarkets have their own-brand items, often produced by big names, but cheaper as they are their "value" lines. Store-cupboard basics, such as tinned beans, tomatoes, rice, flour etc are safe bets, as are big bags of misshapen fruit and veg, but it's worth spending a bit more on fresh food such as meat, fish and cheese etc. Buying thriftier cuts, such as free-range chicken thighs, rather than bargain-basement chicken breasts, will also help keep costs down and taste better.

Follow a few basic rules

Anything exotic (avocados, out-of-season berries, tiger prawns) or premium (steak, lamb cutlets) is usually a no-no, unless there's a special offer on. But British seasonal produce, such as carrots, runner beans, apples and so on, or mince or stewing steak are always better value than a ready-meal. Use condiments such as soy sauce, chilli oil or mustard to keep things interesting.

Rice and pasta may seem to be the staples of every student recipe book, but there are other options. Couscous and rice noodles are far easier to cook and all you need is a kettle! Couscous is great with a spiced vegetable and chickpea stew or grilled meat or fish, while rice noodles can be tossed with lime juice, scrambled eggs, fish sauce, chilli and peanuts for a quick pad thai, and make a good base for any stir fry, Oriental curry or soup.

So remember:

- Use your Student Discount Card <https://www.totum.com/> it can save you so much money during the year. You'll be eligible for discounts in plenty of high street or online shops
- Share the kitchen essentials with your housemates, such as milk, bread, and condiments.
- Remember, you're a student! You cannot really afford to buy things that you maybe could have before you moved to university. When you go shopping and really like something, just ask yourself 'Do I really need this?' because you most likely won't.
- As annoying as loyalty cards are, they can get you a free coffee or meal. So don't throw them away!

- Some supermarkets will offer vouchers for new online customers. If this opportunity arises then take it because you'll be able to get money off your weekly shop.

Useful websites

Here are useful websites to start trying out your recipes:

[Top 10 basic student recipes](#)

[Best easy recipes for students](#)

[Student cooking basics](#)

[Tesco's student recipes](#)

[You Tube's cooking tutorials](#)

Happy cooking!