

# Changing appetites on campus

## Sustainable, local, healthy approaches earn top grades

By Elizabeth Schuman, Contributing Writer

Mystery meat, soggy vegetables and cereal for dinner are but old-school memories at today's colleges and universities. Raised on the Food Network, Instagram-worthy food posts and a dizzying array of dining out options, Generation Z college students crave sustainable, locally-sourced, healthy fare, prepared in an environmentally-responsible manner. Fortunately, campus dining halls are delivering for students.

At Loyola University Maryland, a dining option dubbed "Traveling Tuesday" presents fare from the four corners of the world, with menu options such as falafel from the Middle East, beef bulbulgi from Korea and tres leche cake from Latin America. "We encourage students to try foods they know and then try foods they aren't familiar with," says Lindsay Winn, marketing manager, Parkhurst Dining/Loyola University Maryland Dining Services.

"It's an opportunity to educate students about the dish and broaden horizons about food," she says. "We want to indulge their hunger for new experiences." She adds that students who travel internationally are welcomed to suggest new menu items for on-campus chefs to prepare.

While dishes are global at Loyola, sourcing is local. Loyola commits to purchasing 20% of its food from local suppliers such as Roseda Farms beef, Zeke's Coffee, Cloverland Dairy, Sauder's eggs and Taharka ice cream. Many items are also available at Iggy's market, an on-campus shop, where local vendors also provide sampling and education about their product with students.

Beyond recipes, today's universities and colleges recognize students' dietary needs and restrictions. Local schools have earned high marks for vegan-friendly meals. PETA2, the youth division of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, reported Salisbury University, University of Maryland, Baltimore, and University of Maryland, College Park earned a 75% satisfaction rating in its 2018 Vegan Report Card survey. Salisbury scored even higher, making PETA2's "Dean's List" for its A-plus rating.

"Plant-based food is a positive trend with a positive impact on the environment and a reduction in greenhouse gases and the use of fossil fuels," said Susan Noah, assistant director of dining services at Salisbury. "People are extremely positive about trying new dishes such as vegan enchiladas and green bowls — eating your rainbow." Even students who are meat eaters can have plant-based twists. Salisbury's executive chef creates options that blend pure beef with ingredients such as mushrooms, reducing meat intake while adding flavor.



Photo courtesy of Loyola University Maryland

While food is an obvious aspect of sustainability, it's not the only component. The design and function of dining halls also contribute to sustainable living on campus. Salisbury University initiated recycling in 1980, adding recycling of cans and containers in its dining hall in the early 1990s. In 2016, the campus ditched traditional cafeteria trays, with hopes of reducing food waste and conserving water and energy.

The idea is to encourage students to be more mindful of their choices instead of filling every corner of an empty tray. "Students would take more than they could eat. Their eyes were bigger than their stomachs," says Noah.

Food waste is a societal problem with as much as 40% of all food produced in America going to waste, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group. Without trays, students choose items one plate at a time, returning for seconds. "Student behavior has changed because they now take only what they want to eat," says Noah.

Even something such as the location of silverware reaps environmental benefits. "Silverware was at the entrance to the marketplace and students would take a fork, knife and spoon automatically." Relocating utensils inside the dining

hall, closer to food stations, encourages students to select only the utensils they need. Fewer utensils being washed leads to reduced water and energy costs. Similarly, relocating napkins from the serving area to tables resulted in a 50% savings.

Salisbury University senior Kinan Aboussali espouses the value of alternative energy sources as he studies photovoltaics, the process of turning solar energy into electricity. Little wonder, then, that he is also committed to sustainability. A student assistant in the university's department of sustainability and environmental safety, he promotes environmental awareness at the Eastern Shore campus. He's part of the student team promoting a new campus-wide program, "Sea Gulls Leave Small Footprints," launched in September.

"This is an exciting time for sustainability efforts," says the chemistry major. "We have to take the initiative if changes are going to be made for a sustainable future." By taking small actions such as using a refillable water bottle, unplugging appliances, using cloth bags and turning off lights, students, faculty, and staff members can reduce their carbon footprint. "I've seen a positive reaction as students take their pledge. We hold each other to account."

### Not your '80s dining hall

At the University of Maryland College Park, students enter the dining hall with a wave of their hand at each of the three dining halls. Installed in August 2016, biometric hand readers allow users to place their hand above a touchless sensor to gain access. The readers use 3D fingerprint technology capable of scanning fingerprints and identifying people. Instant scanning allows for easier, faster entry at the university's dining hall.

Hand-in-hand with dramatic spaces featuring open, flexible seating areas and market-style food courts, campus dining halls are open around the clock. "Access decreases the incentive for overeating," said Hipple. "Students take smaller portions and return if they need a snack."

Dining halls are also about more than meals. Usually in a central location on a campus, today's dining halls are where students gather, socialize and study. At the University of Maryland, students enjoy chess games, Connect4 and performances. "It's a different experience than the dining hall of the past," said Hipple. •

**Left:** Loyola University Maryland has local and international food options, such as Hand Rolled Fresh Fruit Crepes for Traveling Tuesday to highlight France.

The campus-wide program unites the campus in making a public pledge to reduce their carbon footprint. The program has brought together departments ranging from dining services, horticulture, and the physical plant to the SGA, environmental studies, student activities and the garden club.

"Lessons learned in college go beyond these years; students incorporate them into their lives," said Noah. "As we commit together, we hope to make a huge impact."

### Emergency Precautions

Food allergies are nothing to sneeze at, especially for the 32 million Americans — one in 10 adults — who have them. Top allergens are fish, shellfish, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, soy and gluten. While not every allergy is life-threatening, the University of Maryland led statewide efforts to install EpiPens on college and university campuses. House Bill 1473 passed in October 2018, allowing universities to carry the lifesaving treatment.

At the University of Maryland, EpiPens are housed in glass cases at the three campus dining

**Campus dining, continued on page 8**

### Campus dining, from page 5

halls. When a student opens a case, an alarm alerts a staff member. In addition to administering an EpiPen, staff receive training in performing CPR, using an AED and recognizing signs of anaphylaxis. The EpiPens were installed in April.

"Students with food allergies have learned how to deal with it, but also may forget their EpiPens," says Bart Hipple, assistant director, marketing and communications, dining services. Even with years of knowledge, students are likely to panic if they have an attack. Having the EpiPen and people trained in administering them can be a lifesaver, believes Hipple.

While some students are forthcoming about allergies, others are not. "If we don't know, we can't help," says Hipple. Students with food allergies have access to a wealth of support, ranging from an appointment with the on-campus nutritionist and chef to specialized menus for more restrictive diets. Menu items feature counter cards listing all ingredients, useful for stu-

dents who have any type of dietary restriction or preference.

Parents are relieved. "Parents come to campus, worried about their child after they've spent a lifetime making sure their kids are safe," says Hipple. "After hearing about the precautions we take, including EpiPens, one mother said, 'Now I can relax.'" •