

FRESHERS GO TO UNIVERSITY WITH BEST EVER A-LEVEL GRADES YET ARE NOT MAKING THE GRADE IN THE KITCHEN

Students currently at University spending less than 95p per meal – yet are looking for higher quality, healthy food products on a budget

Britain's Universities are bracing themselves for an intake of the brainiest freshers this September, hungry for a challenge but they are just not making the grade in the kitchen.

A survey conducted across England on behalf of the English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX) questioned over 1000 people (1274) and revealed that those heading off to University are just not equipped with the skills to look after themselves and even lack the basic skills needed to prepare food.

When it comes down to the weekly shop, today's students are less likely to be shopping for bargains and more likely to be buying for convenience than their parents' generation. Currently 40% of students actively search for bargain buys to stock up the fridge compared to 58% of students who studied 20 years ago. One in four students fill their basket with convenience foods. However, despite the move to convenience shopping there has also been a rise in the more health conscious shopper, with 28% opting for "healthy" foods compared to just 12% doing the same twenty years ago (1987).

Whilst there is a move towards healthy eating, of those currently studying, over 34% are spending an average of £20 or less per week on food, emphasising the importance of learning to eat healthy foods on a budget.

TV Chef and restaurateur Simon Rimmer feels students need to make the effort to eat healthily; "Cooking great dishes can be quick and easy if you just keep it simple and use staple, fresh ingredients. One of the fantastic things about Quality Standard beef mince is that it need not be time consuming. Whether you are looking for a quick and easy dish, a healthy square meal or a make your meals for the week - Quality Standard beef mince is the answer, plus it's good on the pocket as it goes a long way! It can be a daunting experience moving away from home for the first time and having to cope with University life and cooking your own meals, but cooking can be a very social and exciting experience; it's certainly important to maintain a healthy mind and body whilst studying. Check out some of my handy tips on [HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://www.saveourstomachs.co.uk>" www.saveourstomachs.co.uk."

Spag bol takes over beans and toast as student's favourite dish...

If you were at University 20 years ago you were most likely to be eating beans on toast fairly regularly, with nearly 50% of students saying it was the dish they cooked most frequently. However, although today's students look to the microwave to provide sustenance, 34% claim to regularly cook ready prepared microwave dishes, the spaghetti bolognese is top of the class with 48% of students saying it a dish they cook most often. Other mince favourites include 29% opting for shepherds/cottage pie, 27% going for chilli and 28% saying that lasagne is a key part of their diet.

Whilst the vast majority of students are relying on the microwave or the University canteen, one in four parents believe that the rise in TV cookery programmes and celebrity chefs has meant that their offspring are much better cooks than they were at their age. The recent study also revealed that 3% of parents feel that their children put them to shame with their cooking skills, which they describe as "cordon bleu".

More than half of those questioned (52%) admit to trying to cook for themselves daily. However, 8% admitted to never venturing into the kitchen, preferring to eat out for every meal. Today's students are more likely to eat out than their predecessors, with 52% claiming to eat out twice a week or more. The trend for healthy eating however looks set to increase with the rise in those cooking for themselves.

Jane Ritchie-Smith, Brand Manager of English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX) said, "This study shows the importance of giving young people the tools they need to understand the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle, particularly when they are studying. It's great to see that they are more aware of health benefits and the rise of such dishes as Spaghetti Bolognese and other dishes where the use of Quality Standard beef mince can not only be good for you health but also for your pocket too. University is not only about excelling academically, but also about learning to look after yourself. Cooking doesn't have to be a chore, follow Simon's handy tips and our online recipes to get inspired for a fun experience."

Using simple ingredients such as Quality Standard beef mince in cooking and looking out for the Quality Standard label can make all the difference. The label assures the quality of the meat and adding simple healthy ingredients will help students to maintain a balanced diet and not succumb to junk food.

For more of Simon's handy tips, advice and recommended recipes check out [HYPERLINK "http://www.saveourstomachs.co.uk" www.saveourstomachs.co.uk](http://www.saveourstomachs.co.uk)

EBLEX commissioned Tickbox.net to interview 1,274 people in August 2007. Further regional statistics are available on request.

The EBLEX "Student eating habit" study also reveals that:

Those in the South East are the biggest bargain hunters with 58% describing their shopping basket as a "bargain basket" and students in the North East are least concerned about a bargain with only 42% hunting one out whilst having the highest number of students, 5.3% opting for "green baskets"

London students are the most health conscious in the country, 8% shopping with healthy foods as a priority compared with less than 1% of Yorkshire based students opting for a healthy weekly shop just 0.9% . Londoners are also more likely to include the latest food trends and superfoods in their basket too (13.8%)

Students in the South East are the one's most likely to spend under £10 per week on their weekly shop (38%) with only 15.4% of students in the North West opting to do the same and 9.2% of London students spending £35 per week on groceries.

Whilst studying those in the South West are least likely to eat out with 62.5% claiming never to have any money

In contrast, students in the North West are 50% more likely to be eating out more than four times a week than other student across the country