



Table de Concertation sur la Faim et le
Développement Social de l'Outaouais



A PUBLIC, FREE, AND
SHAREABLE GUIDE!

2025

EAT WELL, STUDY BETTER

A Food Guide for Post-Secondary Students



Tools For Eating Healthily
When Life Gets Busy



An initiative of the Aliment'Action Étudiante project





Who Are We?

The Table de Concertation sur la Faim et le Développement Social de l'Outaouais (TCFDSO) unites individuals, community organizations, and institutions that share knowledge and develop activities to reinforce food security and uphold the right to food in Outaouais.



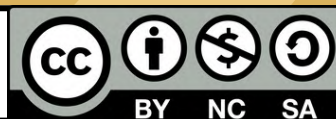
Acknowledgments

A special thank you to the editorial and review committee of this guide, without whom it would not have been possible. Thanks to the entire TCFDSO team, especially Audrey-Ann Morgan. Thanks also to all members of the organization who contributed their expertise to advance food security for post-secondary students—a group that is not currently a government priority. Additional thanks to everyone who provided feedback during the creation process, including students from UQO and Cégep de l'Outaouais. Your comments were valuable and heard. These types of initiatives help our social landscape evolve toward greater fairness. Looking forward to collaborating with you again!

Lauriane Pelchat, Project Manager

This document was created with a commitment to employing inclusive communication strategies throughout its language and visual presentation.

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What You'll Find in This Guide



This guide is organized into several sections, each addressing key aspects of nutrition, to serve as a comprehensive reference for students throughout their studies.

Happy eating and happy reading!

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Thank You to Our Partners

Introduction



Welcome to the Food Guide for Post-Secondary Students in Outaouais, a tool designed to help you navigate the food challenges you may face as a student.



Guide Objectives

The primary aim of this guide is to equip students with the **tools** they need to enhance their **food literacy**—the ability to understand and apply food information to make informed, healthy choices.

We know that **nutrition** not only plays a crucial role in a student's **physical and psychological well-being**, but in their **academic success** as well. In offering these tools to better manage your diet, we hope to improve your quality of life and help you excel in your studies.



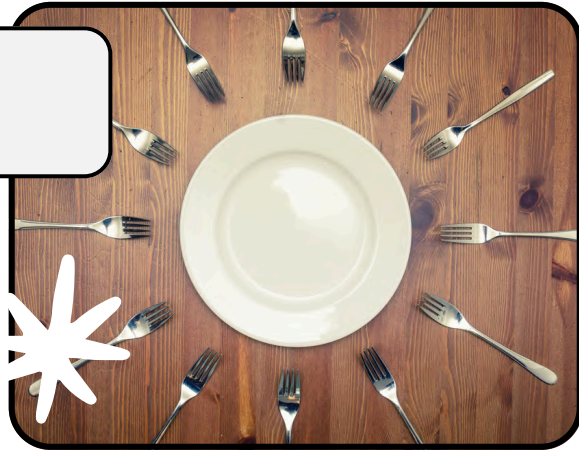
Why This Guide?

Studies show that many students—especially first years, international students, student parents or those with dependents, or students with limited financial resources—face **significant food challenges**.

Keeping up a healthy and balanced diet can be difficult, when juggling **soaring food prices, lack of time, and the change of habits due to the demands of post-secondary studies**, in addition to having **limited knowledge of the local products and resources available**. But there are ways to work around these obstacles!

Key Concepts

What Is Food Insecurity?



Food insecurity can take **several forms**, from skipping meals to not having enough money to buy food, or missing the products that align with your individual or cultural food preferences.

In other words, food insecurity refers to **limited or uncertain access to sufficient, nutritious food, and can be classified on a scale of severity from marginal to moderate or even severe** (Statistics Canada, 2024). Various factors may cause this situation, many of which are beyond a student's control, but it can have a **major impact** on their **academic success** and **overall health**.



Well-Being and Nutrition

While a student's diet and well-being are intricately linked, social and economic inequalities beyond their control may limit their access to sustainable food and increase the risk of food insecurity. It is possible, however, to increase one's **sense of mastery**, which is among the determinants for positive mental health according to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2023). Students who consciously take charge of their diet in a sustainable way not only improve their **physical and mental health**, but also their **autonomy**, by making informed food choices.

Sociability is another key dimension of well-being (McAll, 2020). Sharing meals and other group food practices strengthen social connections, foster a sense of belonging, and provide mutual support. These moments together, along with **specific eating habits** (routines and dining location choices), are also essential for **emotional and mental stability**, which contribute to students' overall well-being.

Ultimately, a **student's relationship with food can be a powerful driver of change, positively influencing every dimension of their well-being.**



Food Literacy

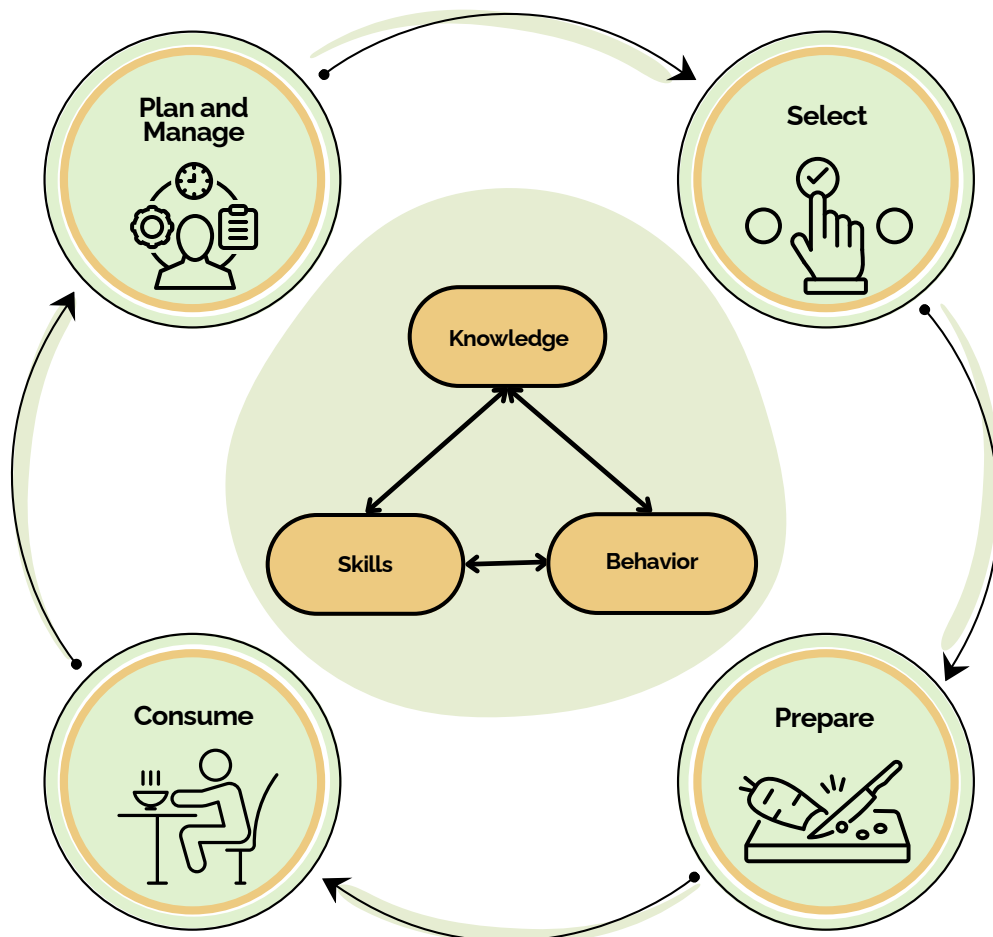


With good **food literacy** students can use their food-related **knowledge, behaviors,** and **skills** as a major asset for success.

Food literacy promotes a **healthier and more balanced lifestyle** with choices guided by informed decision-making. On top of eating healthily, it also paves the way for **better budget management**, supporting both your **academic journey** and **overall well-being**. It also strengthens your **autonomy** in terms of **planning** and **preparation**, while **reducing your ecological footprint** thanks to environmentally friendly practices.

Ultimately, good food literacy allows you to **take control of your diet and make smarter, more responsible choices**.

It's the key to a future nourished with success and well-being.



Note. Inspired by Vidgen et Gallegos (2014).

Practical Tips for Saving Money and Eating Healthily During Studies

Eating healthily on a limited budget challenging for many Quebecers, including students. With proper planning and a few tricks, however, it is possible to eat well without spending a fortune. This section aims to presents and endorses new approaches to address the food challenges you may face during your studies.

Some options are widely recognized, while others may be less familiar. Some require digital tools or basic computer skills, while others are accessible without them. Icons will be used throughout to help you quickly spot resources that align with your needs.

Legend



Computer



No Computer



Smartphone



No Smartphone



Refrigerator and/or Freezer



No Refrigerator and/or Freezer



Storage Space



Limited Storage Space



Stove



No Stove



Quick



Time Management Required



Establishing a Food Budget



Setting a food budget is essential to effectively manage your expenses and ensure a balanced diet without compromising finances. This is especially important in a context where expenses can quickly add up and food spending is often the first area to make cuts.



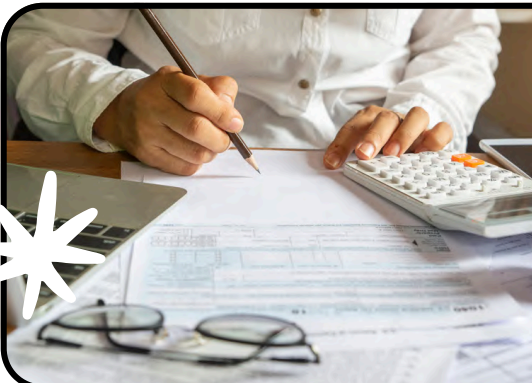
Start by defining a realistic monthly food budget.



Create Your Own Budget

You can create an **Excel file**, or use the one provided below, to list your monthly income as well as all your expenses, including those related to food, rent and transportation, and other planned expenses such as hygiene, tuition, and school supplies.

Click here to access an Excel template with columns for each expense category. Formulas are already included for easy use and a clear visualization of your budget.



You can also use **mobile apps** to track your expenses, as well as your **financial institution's** website or app, which is ideal to avoid having to add your accounts to another app.

Targeting the Best Offers from Food Establishments

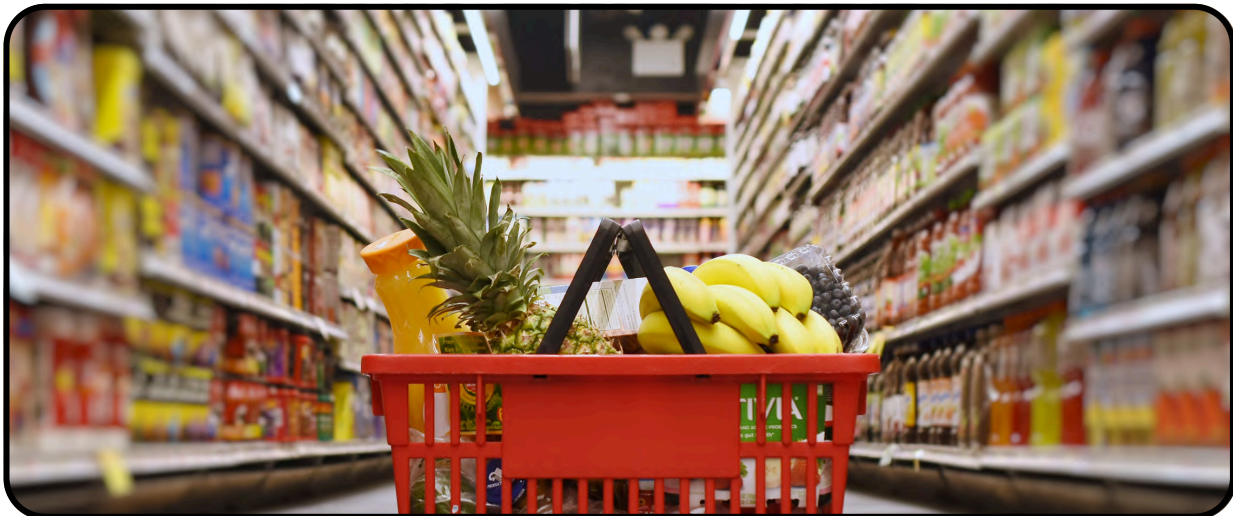
Where to shop for food and groceries?



You can buy food at different types of establishments:

- **Supermarkets and grocery stores:** Maxi, Super C, Metro, Provigo, IGA are the main ones.
- **Seasonal farmers' markets:** Marché du Vieux-Hull, Marché du Plateau, Marché du Vieux-Aylmer, Marché Notre-Dame, Marché public de la Petite-Nation, Marché public de Bowman, Marché fermier de Grand-Remous, Marché de Wakefield, Marché Bristol, and Marché de Chapeau will help you discover the richness of our region.
- **Specialty food stores:** Adonis, La Boîte à Grains, La Trappe à Fromage, Panier d'Afrique, Marché Afrique Mont-Bleu, and Marché de l'Outaouais.
- **Big box stores with food sections:** Walmart, Dollarama, Costco, or Tigre Géant can help you save on some non-perishable foods.
- **Online platforms:** Meal kit or ready-to-eat meal services such as WeCook, Cook It, La Boîte du Chef, Tout Cuit, or Saveurs Santé.

Gas stations and **convenience stores** also offer basic food products, but prices are often higher than at supermarkets.



Understanding Food Marketing



The world of marketing! From store layouts to promotional advertising, everything is designed to attract you and encourage you to buy certain food and drinks to increase company profits. When managing a limited budget, it is crucial to recognize these marketing strategies and resist advertisements, especially those targeting children and teenagers which tend to promote expensive processed products. When you're out shopping, stay alert and stick to your list to avoid impulse purchases. Everything is designed to get you to spend more than you planned.

Pro tip: shopping online might help you stick to your grocery list!

Store Layout

Essential products like milk and bread are placed at the far end of the grocery store to encourage you to walk through the aisles and your chances of buying other items along the way.

Shelf Organization

Expensive or popular products are displayed at eye level to catch your attention, while cheaper items and store brands are often placed on the higher or lower shelves.

Strategic Product Placement

The enticing smells of freshly baked pastries or rotisserie chicken are often located at the entrance of grocery stores, a deliberate design to whet your appetite and encourage impulse purchases. Items placed near cash registers, as well as product associations, such as jam and sliced bread are also strategically positioned to catch your eye and encourage unplanned purchases. Sampling stations follow the same logic by offering complimentary tastings to encourage you to buy products you had not intended to purchase.

Marketing

Television, radio and online advertisements, as well as product placement in movies and on social media, strongly influence your food choices. These products, however, are often high sodium, sugar, or saturated fat. Furthermore, the packaging itself is the most eye-catching form of advertising. It is more than just a container, it is a brand ambassador. Colors, images, sizes, and words are carefully designed to grab your attention and even evoke emotions, all in the blink of an eye.



How to Use Flyers



Flyers are an excellent way to manage recurring and essential grocery expenses. They offer discounts on selected products for a set period, usually weekly. They also inform us about the seasonal availability of foods. In June and September, for example, flyers often feature large quantities of strawberries at reduced prices.



The benefits of consulting flyers are many:

- Identify discounted food to save money;
- Recognize seasonal products;
- Plan your expenses;
- Compare food prices from week to week;
- Discover new products.



Where to Find Flyers

Every week, grocery stores launch new specials, usually starting on Thursday. Be sure to check the promotion dates indicated on the flyers. You can view these flyers directly on your chosen grocery store's website, or find them all in one place at the link below:



www.circulars.ca



Tools to Help You Find the Best Deals

This website brings together all the weekly specials from main grocery stores and compares their deals by discount percentage, allowing you to quickly identify the best offers according to your needs.



www.supermarches.ca



In addition to offering a wide range of practical resources for personal and family organization, this website aims to make your search easier by providing "the best deals of the week" in grocery stores and big box stores.



www.maviesimplifiee.ca





Beware of Discounts



Although flyers are very useful for finding current offers quickly and saving money, weekly “discounts” are not always true promotions. They also exploit the perception of a good deal to attract customers and maximize sales.

Here are some key points to watch for when browsing flyers to avoid common promotion traps:

Price per Kilogram (kg), per Pound (lb), or per Unit

Supermarkets often use different measurement units for items on sale, which can make price comparisons difficult and lead to surprises at checkout. For example, a salmon fillet advertised at \$7.99/lb could cost about \$16 if it weighs 2 lbs. Be sure to do the math before buying.

"2 for 1" or "Buy 3, Get 2 Free" Promotions

These types of promotions encourage you to buy more than you need to benefit from the deal. For example, suppose a supermarket offers a "Buy 3, Get 2 Free" promotion on a pack of individual yogurt portions. The price of one pack is \$5. To take advantage of the promotion, you need to buy three packs (\$15) to get two additional ones for free. Although it may seem like a good deal, you are spending \$15 instead of \$5. If you do not consume all the yogurts before their expiration date, you've lost your "savings," and spent more than you intended.

Food Taxes: GST/QST

It is important to understand tax rules to avoid surprises at checkout. Fruits, vegetables, meats, and other unprocessed products, such as raw chicken, are generally exempt from GST/QST. However, processed foods, such as prepared meals, snacks, and sugary drinks, are taxable. Cooked chicken will therefore be subject to these taxes as well.

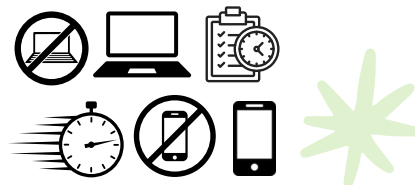
Big Discounts (-30%, -50%)

Large discounts may seem very attractive but also hide several snags to watch out for. Food products with significant reductions are often close to their expiry date, meaning they must be consumed quickly.



Planning the Weekly Menu Before Grocery Shopping

Your food budget is set, you understand grocery store marketing, and you've accessed and read the flyers. Now, all you need is the optimal shopping list for your budget.



TOP 3 REASONS TO PLAN MEALS IN ADVANCE

1

Saves Time and Money

Meal planning allows you to shop for just what you need, limiting impulse buying and preventing food waste.

2

Healthier Meals

By planning your meals in advance, you know each meal is balanced and nutritious.

3

Less Stress

Knowing your meals in advance eliminates the daily stress of deciding what to cook and helps you manage your schedule more efficiently.

Resources for an Efficient Plan that Meets Your Needs

To plan your meals efficiently, try simple and balanced recipes based on **Canada's Food Guide** recommendations. The guide offers a variety of resources, including recipes tailored to different needs (10 ingredients or less, 30 minutes or less, freezer-friendly, kid-friendly, no-cook, vegetarian). It also provides specific recommendations for healthy eating, especially during pregnancy and breastfeeding.



The **Olo Foundation** also offers valuable dietary advice during pregnancy and the first two years of a child's life. While based in Montreal, its personalized support services are available throughout Quebec. Parents can benefit from a toolkit and complementary educational content accessible online to everyone.

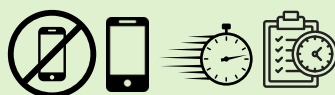


Meal planning is an excellent way to diversify your diet while respecting your budget and food preferences.

Meal Plan Tips

To help plan your meals, compare flyers and find interesting promotions. Note the best offers (price, measurement unit, quantity) and build your menu according to your budget. Before heading out to the grocery store, look through your pantry to avoid buying what you already have.

Practical Tools



Useful Meal Planning Apps

- **Cuisine: Inventaire & recettes:** Developed by Pierre Rochon from Gatineau-based company PiroSCO, this app lets you plan weekly meals, inventory your pantry, fridge, and freezer, make grocery lists, and also offers free recipes.
- **TADA!** : IGA created this tool to plan meals based on flyer discounts and your food preferences. You can specify dietary restrictions, filter recipes by prep time, and create a favorites list to make the same recipes again even when they're not on sale.
- **Recipe Keeper** : An all-in-one app designed to organize, store, and share recipes across devices, including phones, tablets, and computers. You can easily add recipes and categorize them, and create shopping lists and personalized meal plans.

Practical Tip

When searching for recipes, adapt ingredients according to their price and availability. For example, swap red peppers with green ones if they're cheaper. Also, if a product is unavailable or no longer on sale, question whether you really need it or not.



Mobile Apps to Save on Groceries

- **Flipp, Reebee:** These apps help you find the best deals and collect coupons.
- **Check Out 51, Receipt Hog:** Coupon and cash-back apps when you make purchases.
- **Too Good to Go, FoodHero, FlashFood:** Must-have apps to save on your grocery bill and reduce food waste.
- **Sauvegarde:** Similar to the ones above, this app is notable for working together with restaurants and other local retailers to manage food surpluses.
- **Receipt Jar:** Collect and redeem points for e-gift cards usable at your favorite retailers.
- **Glouton:** This app offers the "Économiseur," which analyzes flyers each week to suggest recipes. You can also track ingredient prices in various supermarkets to see where they're cheapest.

Choose Your Food Wisely

Read Food Labels Carefully

Food labels are essential for making informed choices about the food you buy. They indicate nutrient content, ingredients, and nutritional claims, allowing you to assess product quality, make comparisons, and choose the healthiest options.



Key Elements to Understand:

- **Nutrition facts table:**

- **Serving size:** All the nutrition information is based on this serving. Compare the serving size to the amount you actually eat.

- **% Daily Value (% DVs):** Indicates if a serving contains a little or a lot of a specific nutrient (5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot).

- **Nutrients:** Choose foods low in sugar, sodium, and saturated fat. Prioritize those rich in iron, fiber, calcium, and potassium.

- **List of ingredients:**

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Sometimes it's hard to decipher them, like sugars under different names (corn syrup, fructose, glucose). The longer the list, the more processed and unhealthy the product is likely to be.

- **Composition Claims:**

Claims like "trans fat-free" or "no added sugar" don't necessarily mean that a product is healthy. Take the time to read the full ingredient list and nutrition facts table.

- **Expiration Dates:**

"Best before" dates indicate how long an unopened product will stay fresh, tasty, and nutritious. The packaging date is also indicated. For more details on food storage, see page 18 of this document.

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive

Per 1 cup (250 mL) / par 1 tasse (250 mL)

Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 80	
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 115 mg	5 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 12 g	4 %
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 11 g	
Protein / Protéines 9 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	15 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	30 %
Iron / Fer	0 %
Vitamin D / Vitamine D	45 %

Useful Resources

- [Canada's Food Guide – How to use food labels to make healthier choices](#)



- **Yuka** is an app that scans barcodes of food and cosmetic products, providing detailed information about their composition.



Did You Know?

The nutritional value and cost of food varies according the form its in, whether it is fresh, frozen, or canned. Frozen fruits and vegetables retain most of their nutrients and are generally less expensive than fresh. Canned foods may lose some nutrients but are the cheapest and most convenient option, especially if they contain no added salt or sugar. **Choose store brands for better value.**

Favor Local and Seasonal Products

For the same price, local products are always the best choice, ensuring fresh, seasonal foods. They are generally better quality, more nutritious, and contribute to your well-being and the preservation of the environment.

Myth

"Buying local is more expensive"

Not necessarily.

When in season, Quebec fruits and vegetables are often cheaper than imported ones. Their prices reflect high production standards, which support your health and the environment, thus adding value to every purchase.

Opt for Whole Foods

Grocery stores offer prepared foods like cut vegetables or fruit, shredded cheese, sandwiches, salads, cooked chicken, etc. While they may save time, these products are more expensive because you pay for preparation, and often for single servings. If your schedule permits, spend some time preparing your own food to save money and get the most out of your groceries.

Avoid Highly Processed Foods

Reduce the amount of foods and drinks that add high levels of sodium, sugars, or saturated fats to your diet, such as chips, cookies, and sugary soft drinks. Choose healthier options like fresh fruits, vegetables, and water instead.

http://

Tools



Équiterre

Calendar of fruit and vegetable availability in Quebec



Aliments du Québec

Quebec harvest reference sheet



MAPAQ

Quebec fish and seafood. See "Featured This Month"

DÉFI JE MANGE LOCAL

www.defijemangelocal.ca



Jerusalem artichokes and rutabagas are in season, but you don't know how to prepare them? On this website, just enter the main ingredient to get recipe ideas that feature them. Ideal for using seasonal products and avoiding food waste, they also host challenges and regional events, like "Croquez l'Outaouais," and let you see which businesses participate in these initiatives.

Caffeine and Student Life: Finding a Helpful Balance



Caffeine consumption is popular among many students, whether in coffee, tea, or energy drinks. It helps you stay alert and focused, especially during study or exam periods.

Too much caffeine, however, can cause anxiety, sleep problems, and even addiction. **Beware** of energy drinks especially, as they contain caffeine combined with other ingredients like sugar or artificial sweeteners which amplify these negative effects and increase health risks.

Moderate your caffeine intake, especially late in the day, and remember that coffee doesn't replace water. Drinking plenty of water keeps you hydrated and your body and mind functioning well.

The key is finding the right balance to stay productive without compromising your health.

What you need to remember is that...

Water is simply the best
drink ever!

Have fun flavoring your
water with fresh fruit, and
make drinking water a daily
ritual, like the first thing you
do when you wake up, or
before you sit down for a
meal.



Alcohol and Student Life: Balancing Fun and Safety

Alcohol is often associated with relaxing and student social activities, but it carries significant health risks.

Alcohol abuse can impair concentration and judgment, increase anxiety and depression, and harm academic performance.

Health Canada offers advice on how **young adults can reduce risks related to alcohol consumption**, such as knowing your limits, making a plan to get home safely, eating before drinking alcohol, hydrating between drinks, never leaving your drink unattended, and avoiding mixing with other substances.

You can also refer to the Quebec organization **Éduc'alcool**, which provides detailed information on alcohol consumption, associated risks, and tips for responsible drinking. Their website has many resources to better understand the effects of alcohol and how to drink responsibly.





Eco-Friendly Eating



As a **consumer**, your **food purchases** and **kitchen management decisions** have an impact on the **environment**. You can reduce your ecological footprint by following these recommendations:

Check Food Origin

Especially when the price is equal or lower, choose a product that comes from closer, like a bag of Quebec apples instead of California apples, or fish caught in Canada rather than Asia.

Select Foods Without Packaging or in Recyclable Materials

Purchase loose onions, for example, instead of those in a non-recyclable mesh bag. Likewise, pick a recyclable cardboard box for dry pasta instead of a non-recyclable plastic bag. These simple choices reduce waste and promote sustainable consumption.

Choose Large Formats Over Individual Units

Individual packaging, often non-recyclable, generates waste that could be avoided. For example, choose a large recyclable tub of yogurt instead of non-recyclable individual cups. Even when packages are recyclable, larger formats reduce plastic production.

Reduce Food Waste

Learn tricks like storing at the right temperature, freezing, reusing leftovers, and regularly rotating and taking stock of your fridge and pantry.

Compost your peels and food scraps via brown bins if your location offers this service. This system collects organic waste for compost—a natural fertilizer used to enrich agricultural soils and promote plant growth. By composting, you help reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by landfills where most household waste is sent.

Pssst! Use paper bags to collect your table scraps and deposit them in the brown bin. No plastic allowed!

Compost!



Sort Your Recyclables...

...to give them a second life and reduce what goes to the landfill. Become a sorting pro with the mobile app **D-TRI-TUS**. Ask the app about the material you want to throw away, and it will tell you which bin to use.





Food Storage and Cooking Tips



Food Hygiene

Before diving into tips for preparing and storing food, it's essential to remember the importance of food hygiene. Proper food hygiene helps prevent contamination and foodborne illnesses, ensuring the safety of the meals you prepare and consume.

This includes **washing your hands and certain foods thoroughly** to remove contaminants and pesticides, as well as carefully **cleaning surfaces, utensils, and kitchen tools** after each use to prevent cross-contamination.

Other Essential Principles of Food Hygiene

Proper Food Storage: Refrigerate perishable foods, separate raw foods from cooked foods, keep the refrigerator at a temperature below 4°C (39°F), and frozen foods at -18°C (0°F), regularly checking the temperatures of your refrigerator and freezer. Also, be sure to rotate foods regularly and check your inventory to reduce waste and consume items before their expiration date.

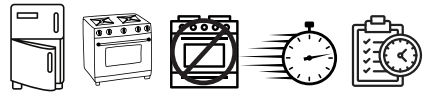
Maintaining the Cold Chain: This means keeping products at low temperatures during transport until storage to prevent the growth of bacteria. For longer trips, it's recommended to use insulated bags to prevent products from warming up too much. Once home, immediately store foods in their appropriate places.

Freezing Food: Do not refreeze thawed products to avoid the risk of food poisoning. Label packages with the freezing date to make stock management easier and ensure effective rotation of foods.

For more details on food hygiene practices, **consult the recommendations from MAPAQ.**



Cooking in Bulk



Preparing meals in large quantities can really make your life easier! Buying whole products and cooking them yourself also saves you money in the long run. You can make several portions at once and freeze some for later. When groceries are planned and purchased, you have everything you need to pull on a chef's hat and rock the kitchen!



Cooking and Freezing: A Winning Duo

Preparing food in large quantities saves time and money, as you buy ingredients in bulk and avoid daily cooking. Freezing leftovers reduces food waste and provides you with ready-made meals when you most need them. This is a winning combination to reduce stress during intense study periods and free up time to enjoy other activities.

Example of a Quick and Budget-Friendly Recipe That Freezes Well



Chili

- **Ingredients** :Canned red beans, canned tomatoes, canned corn, onion, chili powder. Optional: ground beef or chicken, plant-based protein (dried or frozen).
- **Instructions** : Sauté the onion. Add your protein of choice. Once cooked, add the remaining ingredients. Let simmer.

Best Before, Still Good Until...

Did you know that the "best before" date doesn't mean the food is no longer good to eat after that date? In fact, many foods can still be safely consumed several days after the expiration date. [Learn more.](#)

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code for more quick **recipe ideas under \$5 per serving** that you can prepare in large quantities.



Social Media



Platforms like **Instagram**, **TikTok**, **Pinterest**, and **Facebook** are packed with accounts and groups dedicated to cooking, where users share creative and budget-friendly recipes, as well as tips for reducing food waste.

YouTube is also a great tool for improving food literacy, as it offers a wide range of accessible and engaging educational content. The platform's ability to present information visually and interactively makes it easier to understand complex concepts. It's a powerful resource for developing food literacy knowledge and skills, and more.

Psssst!

Go check out Radio-Canada Info's [YouTube channel](#), especially the shows *L'épicerie*, *La semaine verte*, and *La facture*. You are guaranteed to find relevant and enriching content!



Social media offers many **advantages** for culinary exploration, whether it's accessing information or tutorials on cooking techniques, meal planning, understanding nutritional information, and much more.

However, it's important to note some **social media drawbacks**. These platforms can spread misleading information and encourage overconsumption. **Stay vigilant about food marketing, advertisements, and the time you spend in front of screens** to protect your well-being and your food choices.

🔍 recipe ideas for beginners



🔍 **budget-friendly recipes**

🔍 quick meals

🔍 seasonal cooking

🔍 zero-waste cooking

Research Tip:

Use specific keywords when searching to find posts or videos that align with your preferences.



Your searches influence and personalize your algorithm. The more you search for food content on social media, the more you'll discover!



Cooking Without a Full Kitchen



With a few tricks and a bit of creativity, you can absolutely eat healthily without a fully equipped kitchen.

Choose Non-Perishable Foods

- **Canned legumes:** Beans, chickpeas, lentils.
- **Canned fruits and vegetables:** Tomatoes, corn, pineapple, peaches.
- **Grains and cereals:** Rice, pasta, quinoa, couscous, oats.
- **Dairy products that are shelf-stable:** Powdered or UHT milk, hard cheeses like parmesan.
- **Nuts, seeds, and nut butters:** (almonds, peanuts, pistachios).
- **Healthy snacks:** Granola bars, dried fruits, crackers, applesauce.



Buy Fruits and Vegetables That Keep Well Without Refrigeration

Unrefrigerated foods at the grocery store can be kept on your countertop for long periods if left whole. For example: bananas, citrus fruits, avocados, pineapple, squash, potatoes, onions, apples, carrots, kiwis, garlic, tomatoes, and more.

Opt for No-Cook Recipes



No stove? No problem! No-cook recipes are perfect for whipping up meals in no time without having to deal with kitchen equipment. They're also ideal for preserving the freshness and nutrients of the ingredients.

For inspiration, check out the No-Cook recipe section of Canada's Food Guide via [this link](#).

Basic and Affordable Kitchen Equipment

- Kettle
- Toaster oven
- Rice cooker
- Microwave



Did you know...

A rice cooker can also be used to steam vegetables and cook eggs.

Tip: Choose versatile foods that require little storage space and can be used in a variety of recipes, such as rice, pasta, oats, couscous, or flour.



Other more expensive appliances exist such as a **slow cooker**, **pressure cooker**, or **air fryer**.

To reduce costs, consider sharing these purchases with other students or roommates.



Getting Involved in Food Initiatives



Community Initiatives

You can get involved in a variety of activities that not only help reduce food waste, but also strengthen social ties and promote more sustainable and local eating.

Consider **gleaning** in the summer and fall, which is the practice of collecting fruits and vegetables left in the fields after the main harvests, thus helping to reduce food waste. In exchange for your participation, you can take home a certain amount of this harvest for free. For more information on how to sign up and who to contact in your area, visit the Facebook page of the **Escouade anti-gaspillage alimentaire**.



Another interesting initiative to consider is collective kitchens. These spaces allow groups of people to cook together and share the costs of ingredients and prepared meals. Participants can then take these meals home. In addition to preparing affordable and nutritious dishes, these workshops encourage learning new recipes and building social connections. To find active collective kitchens, you can contact the **Regroupement des cuisines collectives de Gatineau (RCCG)** or **click here**.



Community or collective gardens create spaces for sharing and learning where members can grow their own fruits, vegetables, herbs, and ornamental plants, while exchanging knowledge and skills. To join a garden, you can consult the **gardens map** on the City of Gatineau website and contact the organization to sign up.



You can also turn to **neighborhood homes and associations, family centers, and youth centers**. Some of these places offer collective kitchens, cooking workshops, healthy living awareness programs, have community gardens or sharing fridges, and organize seasonal local markets. By clicking **this link**, you'll access a directory of resources and services for youth, families, and residents of Gatineau.



In Your Educational Institution

No matter which school you attend in Outaouais, they all offer food initiatives and services you can access. These services aim to support your nutrition, improve student life, and promote sustainable practices.



For example, you might find **shared fridges** where students can drop off or pick up food for free, helping to reduce food waste. Some institutions offer **anti-waste collective kitchens**, where you can cook in groups using surplus food, or **cooking-on-a-budget workshops** to learn how to prepare tasty meals at a lower cost. You may also have access to **collective gardens** where you can grow your own vegetables, and get **gardening and nutrition advice** to support healthy, local eating.

Be sure to thoroughly explore your school's website to identify available services and, if needed, contact the student services staff for more information.

Université du Québec en Outaouais

Access the [UQO - Campus Nourricier](#) website



Cégep de l'Outaouais

Access the [Cégep de l'Outaouais](#) website



Collège Héritage

Access the [Collège Héritage](#) website



Cooking Together is Better!

Whether you're preparing meals as a couple or in a group, taking turns cooking with your roommates, or exchanging dishes with friends, it's a great opportunity to share friendly moments and embark on a collective culinary adventure. Besides being simple and enjoyable, it's also practical. By sharing tasks and recipes, you save time and money while improving your cooking skills. And the best part? You get to enjoy a variety of meals, so you never get bored with your own recipes!





Additional Resources



In case of emergency, several organizations in the Outaouais region can provide you with food assistance. Among them, **food banks** and **soup kitchens** offer essential services, and you can also use **community fridges** for additional help.

To find available resources near you, refer to the interactive map on the **Moisson Outaouais** website, which indicates all food assistance services in the region.



On top of food, a range of resources is available in various areas, including support for employment and income, childhood, youth and family, immigration and cultural communities, justice and rights advocacy, and more.

For an effective search, the CISSS de l'Outaouais (CISSSO) website offers a **directory of community organizations** in the region, listed alphabetically, making it easy to find an organization by name.



Additionally, the **211qc.ca** website provides a directory organized by thematic categories, making it easier to search for specific services according to your needs. Once in the website, find the "Directories" tab and select "**Outaouais**." You can explore the results by category, alphabetically, or by geographic location using an interactive map. For direct access, **click here** to download the PDF version of the directory.



Thanks to these online tools, searching for resources in Outaouais is both simple and effective, allowing you to quickly find the services you need.



The Table de concertation sur la faim et le développement social de l'Outaouais (TCFDSO) can also serve as a reference point and help you identify and access appropriate resources. Be sure to check out the Aliment'action étudiante en Outaouais project page. Here you'll find specific resources to support your nutrition during your studies, with practical tools and information dedicated to you.



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Our Project Partners – Thank You!



How did you find this guide?

Do you have any questions or comments? Are there any strategies you use to eat well despite the constraints of this challenging context? Don't hesitate to share them with us!



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