



University of Reading

AFRO-CARIBBEAN STUDENT GUIDE

FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS

Welcome to the University of Reading!

“ Welcome to the University of Reading!

Congratulations on securing a place at the University of Reading! We are a small group of current students, who co-produced the guide you are about to read the purpose of the guide is to share information and tips based on our experience as Black students that we hope will help others to make a comfortable start.

A lot of the content you will see was provided courtesy of the Afro-Caribbean Society (ACS) who allowed us to adapt their fresher's guide from Instagram. We recommend that you look them up to see the latest events and meetings.



This guide was written by current students to support transitions to the University of Reading.

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Find more guides
on our link tree



ACS

A welcome message from the Afro-Caribbean Society

The Afro-Caribbean Society (ACS) at the University of Reading is a welcoming space where African and Caribbean students can find comfort in their identity, as well as a sense of community. Here, we understand the importance of having a place where individuals from these backgrounds can come together, share experiences, and form meaningful friendships.

Throughout the academic year, we've hosted an array of engaging events catering to various interests and aspirations. For our career-oriented members, we organise career events providing invaluable insights and guidance for life after university, especially focused on life in the career space as a POC (person of colour). ACS also fosters connections through networking events. From Games Nights to Girls nights, there's something for everyone to enjoy. We've even cheered on our favourite teams during football watch parties and celebrated during the AFCON extravaganza.

Collaboration is also something we like to do. This year we've proudly partnered with the ACS at Oxford Brookes University for our Take Me Out event in February with which we are looking forward to more exciting university collaborations on the horizon. For those who love the nightlife, ACS has you covered with a series of Club Nights, where members can dance the night away and create lasting memories. We have held a lot of events over the year and plan to hold more, including Worship Night for our Christian members after the success of our Iftar night dedicated to our Muslim members. The end-of-year ACS Ball promises unforgettable experiences, showcasing our dedication to catering to diverse interests within our community.

With our many events we recognise that there are events people want to be held but have not yet been seen and this is why our DMs are always open as we are here as a committee to provide events for you! Join us at ACS, where every event is an opportunity to celebrate culture, forge connections, and make memories.

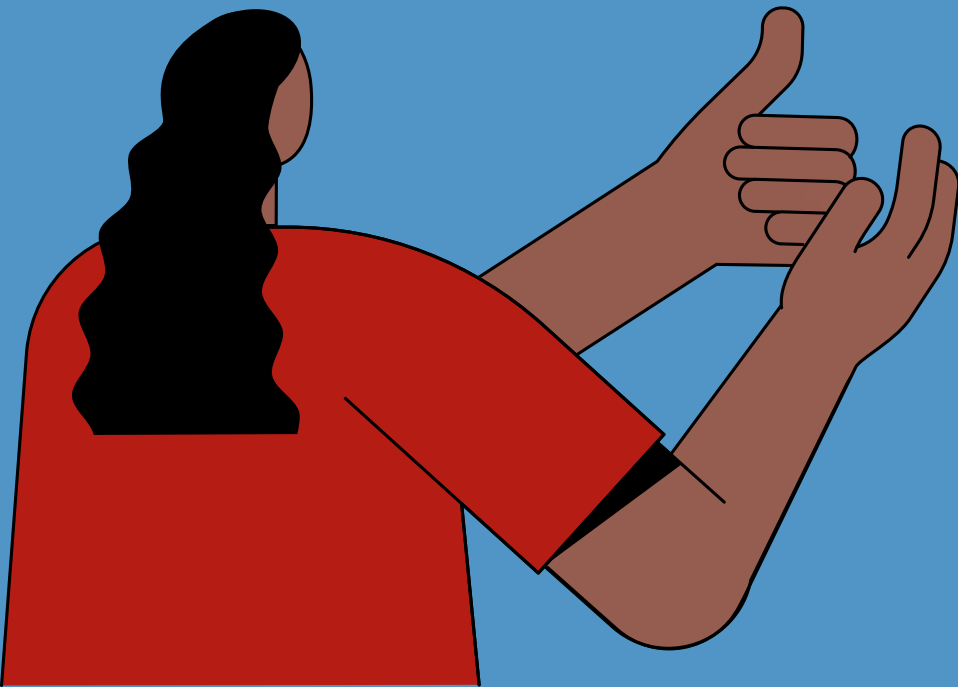
**Grace Enirayetan,
Vice President ACS, 2023-24**

Other cultural societies:

1. Arab Society
2. Association of British & Chinese University Students
3. Bengali Society
4. Bruknights Society (Brunei)
5. Desi Society
6. Filipino Society
7. Iranian Society
8. Kashmiri Society
9. Kuwait Society
10. Mauritian Society
11. Nepalese Society
12. North African Society
13. Omani Society
14. Nigerian Students Society
15. Tamil Society
16. Turkish Society
17. Ukrainian Society
18. Welsh Society



OUR TIPS



01 Link up with like minded students

Try to meet different people and attend as many activities and events as you feel comfortable with. Joining a society like ACS, attending cultural groups in the city or signing up for sports clubs are a great way to make friends and start finding your community, outside of your class.

02 Make the most of what's available

The university has all kinds of schemes and opportunities that can develop your professional skills, like the RED award or part-time Campus Jobs. Our tip is to be curious about what's out there and get involved with as much as you can.

03 Manage your time

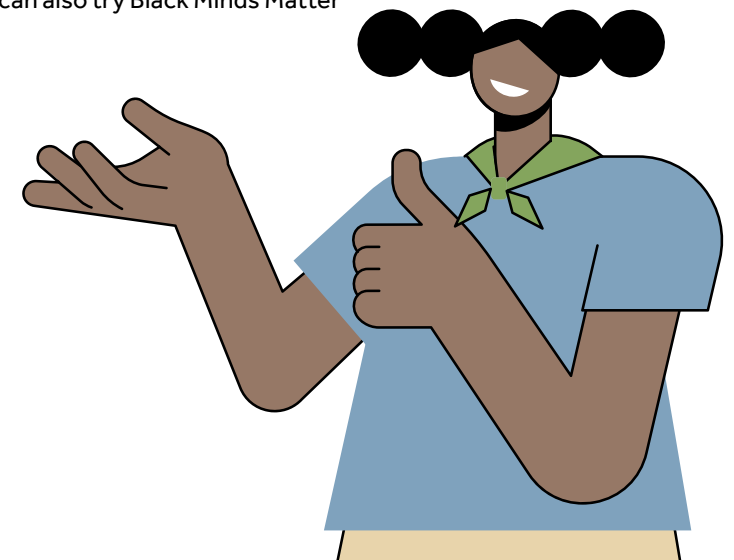
Keeping a work life balance is key to getting the most out of university, especially if you are commuting or working around your studies. Use your first year to get a feel for how best to balance your commitments.

04 Health is wealth

Striving for excellence can be tiring especially with the systemic challenges our community face. Remember to rest and recharge. The university welfare team can support you and you can also try Black Minds Matter



Life as a black student



ENTERTAINMENT AND NIGHTLIFE



There is plenty to do on campus and in Reading.

Things to do

1. Spinners - Bowling, Mini Golf and Darts
2. Reading Museum - Explore the history of Reading, the Biscuit Factory and view the Bayeux tapestry!
3. University of Reading Museums – visit the collections on campus
4. River Thames Boat Cruises – take a trip on the River Thames
5. Market House - Games, karaoke and food
6. Vue Cinema and Reading Biscuit Factory – watch the latest films

Clubs

1. Purple Turtle - Bi-weekly Reggae Sundays and Afrobeats nights.
2. Club Era - Frequent Afrobeats nights and student club nights
3. Lola Lo's – Themed club nights & student discounts
4. Playlist Live – Karaoke, live bands and themed bottomless brunch
5. Gun Street Garden
6. Greyfriars entertainment
7. Island Ting
8. Afro Exe Experience
9. Big_B_Entmt – for mature students and postgrads

Local Groups

Rising Sun Arts Centre – independent arts centre hosting open mics, craft and dance classes

RISC – World shop and Refill Shop



RESTAURANTS AND GROCERIES

Where to find cultural ingredients

Freddies Afro Caribbean – Whitley St

Etin-Osa Foods (African goods shop) - Oxford Rd

Amazing Grace Superstore (African Goods Shop) - Oxford Rd

Best and Less Afro Supermarket – Basingstoke Rd

Restaurants

Perry's (Caribbean) - High St

Meme's Kitchen (African) - Basingstoke Rd

Seasons Caribbean Cuisine – Oxford Rd

Avilah Foods (West African) - Oxford Rd

Tutu's Ethiopian Table – Palmer Park

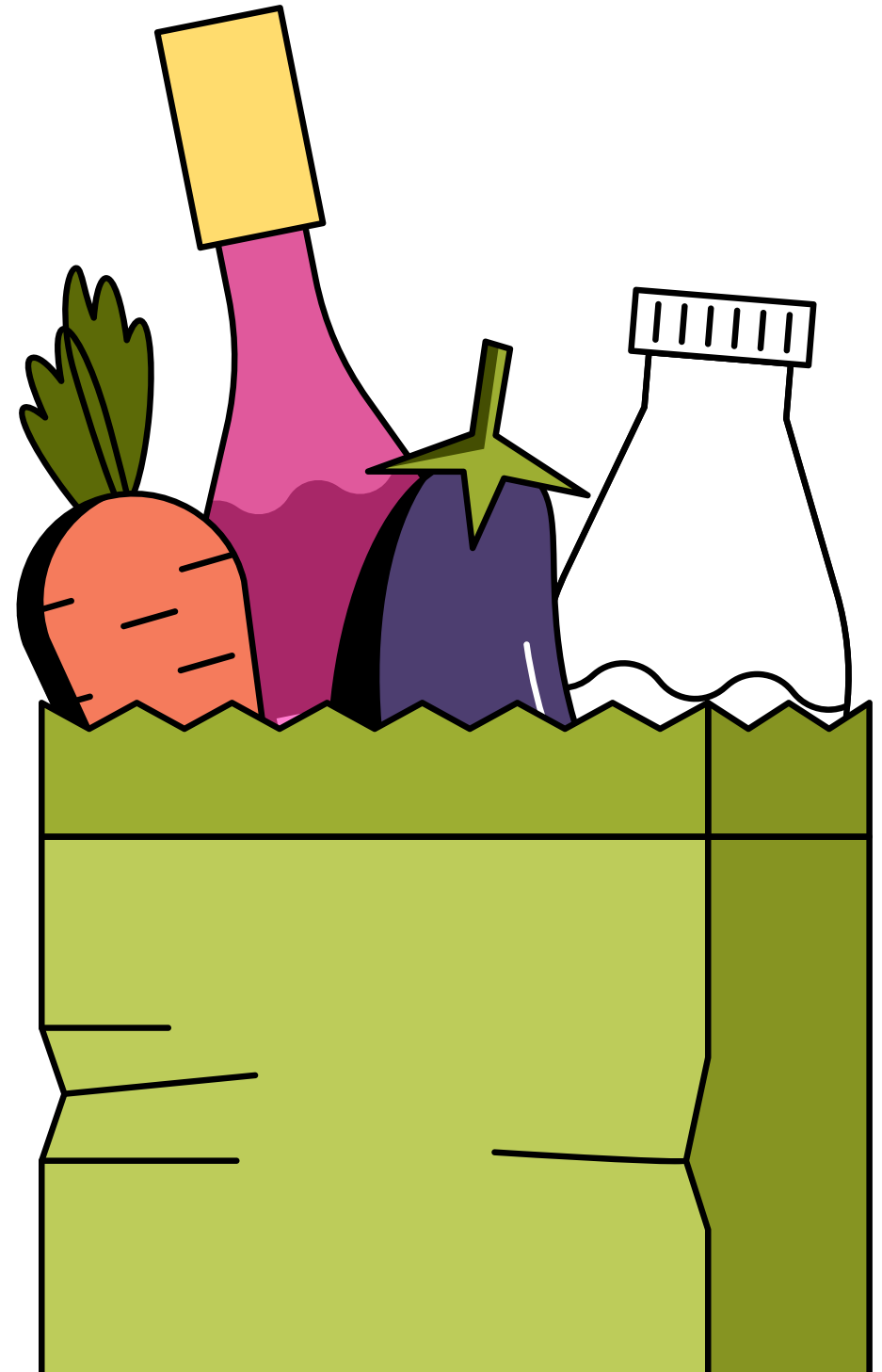
805 Restaurants – Oxford Rd

Blue Collar Corner Street Food Market (suppliers change weekly)

Recipes

Here are some of the websites we like to go to for budget-friendly recipes that remind us of home:

- [That Girl Cooks Healthy](#) – Caribbean
- [Original Flava](#) – Caribbean and fusion
- [Chef Lola's Kitchen](#) – Nigerian and African recipes



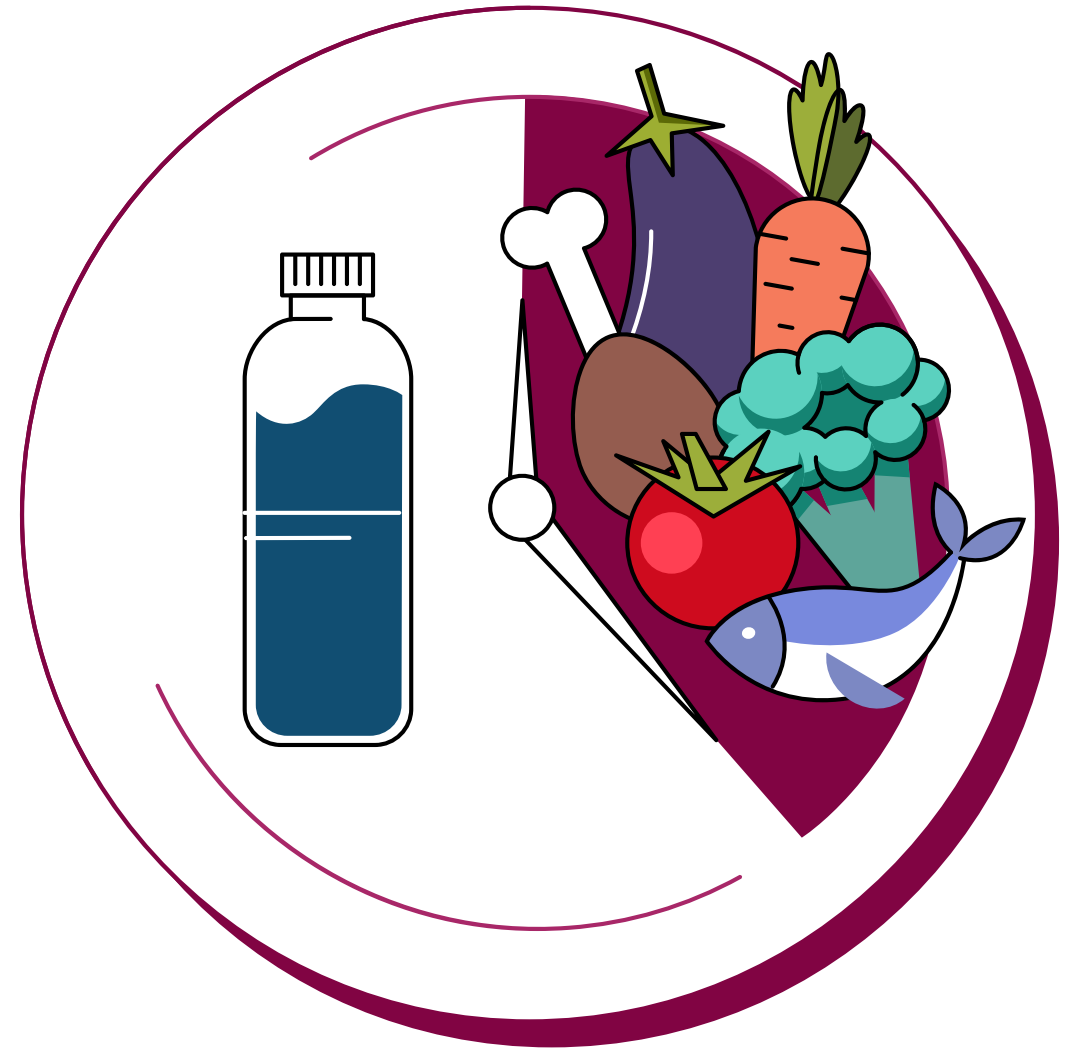
SALTFISH FRITTERS

Ingredients (makes 8-10)

1. 140g plain flour
2. 1 pack Saltfish (see grocery stores above for where to find it!)
3. 1 small onion
4. 1 small tomato
5. 1 pepper
6. 1 Spring onion (sliced, whites and greens separated)
7. ½ Scotch Bonnet (optional)
8. ½ tsp Dried Thyme
9. 1½ cup warm water
10. Vegetable Oil (for frying)

Directions:

1. Boil a pan of water and add the saltfish. Boil for 3- 5 mins to remove excess salt
2. Add chopped onion, tomato, spring onion whites and pepper in to a mixing bowl. Add the dried thyme and boiled saltfish.
3. Season with salt and pepper, and add the scotch bonnet (if using)
4. Add the flour, and mix the ingredients together. When combined, add the water in intervals, mixing into a dough in between.
5. Heat a deep pan with vegetable oil on a medium heat. When heated, spoon a small amount of the saltfish batter into the pan. Repeat this, being careful not to overcrowd the pan.
6. Cook on each side until golden brown, and place on to a paper towel (this absorbs the excess oil)
7. Allow to cool slightly and add the green spring onion slices for garnish



Tips:

Scotch bonnet can be quite hot! It can be replaced with ½ tsp of chilli flakes. If you don't like it spicy then feel free to not add any chilli at all. Saltfish is a preserved fish and does not need to be cooked before using. Boiling the fish, softens it to make it perfectly flaky for the fritters and removes the excess salt.

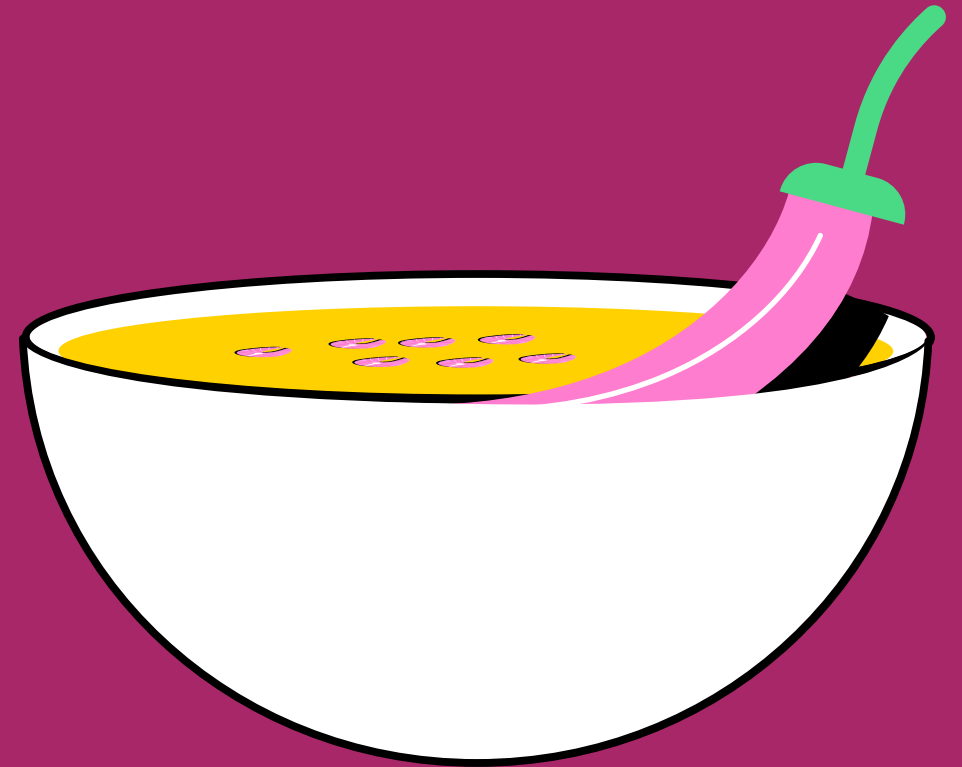
MISIR WAT

Ingredients (makes 8-10)

1. A warming Ethiopian stew (pronounced me-sir wot) from africanbites.com
2. Ingredients
3. 1-2 tablespoons (14-28g) spiced butter (or coconut oil)
4. ¼ cup (60ml) cooking oil
5. 1 large onion, diced
6. 1½ tablespoons (14g) berbere spice
7. 2 teaspoons (6g) garlic, minced
8. ½ tablespoon (1g) fresh ginger, minced
9. 1 teaspoon (2g) coriander or cumin
10. 1-2 teaspoons (2-4g) smoked paprika
11. 1 cup (200g) lentils, soaked for 2 hours
12. 1 tablespoon (14g) tomato paste
13. 2 cups (475ml) broth (beef, chicken, or vegetable (for vegan option))
14. 2 tablespoons (8g) parsley, chopped (or cilantro)
15. Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Wash your lentils, then let them soak while you prepare the seasonings.
2. Heat a large saucepan with oil and spiced butter, then add onions, berbere spice, garlic, ginger, cumin, and smoked paprika. Stir occasionally for 2-3 minutes until the onions are translucent.
3. Then add the soaked lentils and tomato paste. Stir and sauté for 2-3 more minutes. Add stock or water and season with salt.



4. Bring to a boil and let it simmer until it thickens. It might take about 30 minutes, depending on how you like your lentils. Throw in some parsley, adjust for salt and pepper, and adjust the stew's consistency.

Tips

Serve with rice or injera

Use red split lentils for a quick and cheap dinner (these can be used in other meals. Try using them to make meals spread out longer or make tarka dhal, an Indian side dish) You can buy Berbere premixed or make your own spice blend africanbites.com/berbere-spice/

PLÁTANOS AL CALDERO

Ingredients (makes 8-10)

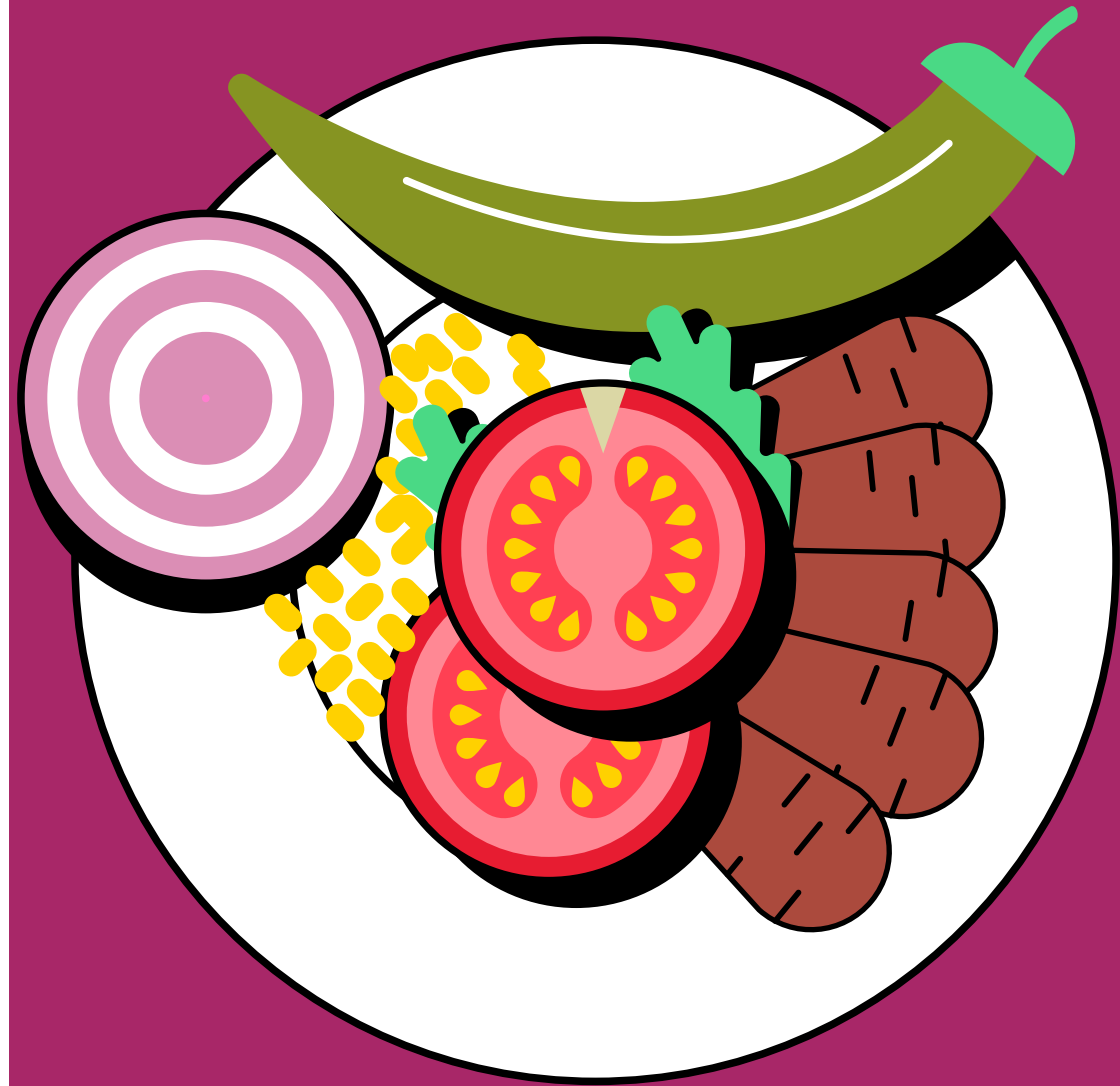
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. A w2 plantain, (very ripe) | 4. 1 cup water |
| 2. 4 cinnamon stick | 5. 3 tablespoons brown sugar |
| 3. 4 tablespoons vegetable oil | 6. 4 tablespoons golden rum, (optional) |
| | 7. ¼ teaspoon salt |

Directions:

1. Peel the plantains and cut into half lengthway. Stick the cinnamon into the plantains.
2. In a skillet, heat the oil over medium heat, add the plantains and fry until golden brown all around.
3. In a separate container mix water, sugar, rum, and salt. Pour this mix into the frying pan (careful with splatters!).
4. Lower the heat and cook and rotate until the liquid turns into syrup and $\frac{2}{3}$ has evaporated.
5. Remove the cinnamon sticks and serve immediately.

Tips

Picking the perfect plantain is important – the skin should be almost black and the fruit slightly mushy. For a savoury option, serve with rice or scrambled eggs. For a sweet treat, add a little more sugar and serve with whipped cream or ice cream



HAIR AND BEAUTY

Supporting local businesses and students



Barbers

Faded – Donnington Rd

Rezgas Cut – Wokingham Rd

Tenio Barbershop – Oxford Rd

Hairdressers

@tbeautyloungeuk

Braid Central 365 Oxford Road, RG30

1HA @_braidscentral_

Elegant Hair & Beauty

8 Union St, RG1 1EU

@GKHairUK

@Porscheslayshair

Lashes

@Eyellae

@Mbmlashes

Nails

Amy's Nails – 147B Friar Street, RG1 1EX

The Nail Lounge

16 West Street, RG1 1TT

@Culture_Nailss

Beauty Supply Stores

XPression Hair Shop

Queen Victoria St and King's Road

Zab's Hair and Beauty

495 Oxford Road, RG30 1HF

The Katwalk

365 Oxford Road, RG30 1HA

FAITH AND RELIGION



The Muslim Centre, Whiteknights Campus

Open to students and the local community by offering congregation prayers, Friday prayers, facilities for meetings, faith education and various activities.

Chaplaincy Centre, Whiteknights Campus

Open to all as a friendly place to discuss religion and worship with members of the local community.

Community spaces:

Reading Hindu Temple, 112 Whitley St, RG2 0EQ

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, 30 Cumberland Road, RG1 3LB

Reading Synagogue, 7 Goldsmid Road, RG1 7YB

Wycliffe Baptist Church, 233 Kings Road, RG1 4LS

There are religious societies:

1. Catholic Society
2. Christian Union
3. First Love Society
4. Hindu Society
5. Islamic Society
6. Jewish Society
7. Kharis in Campus
8. Orthodox Christian Society
9. PENSA
10. Sikh Society

YOUR UNION



Reading Students' Union exists to help students individually and collectively as a community. We're here to help make your life as a student, better. Every student's journey looks different, and we have a lot to offer for all students. So, however you connect with us, we hope the students' union will be a place where you will feel at home and where you can find support if you need it.

From clubs and societies to events, leadership opportunities to our free, confidential advice service, we've got something for everyone!

With over 150 sports teams and societies, and plenty of volunteering options, there are lots of opportunities to get involved with at your Students' Union.

readingsu.co.uk/student-opportunities

Leadership roles are a great way to have a voice, make positive change and gain experience to improve your future employment opportunities.

readingsu.co.uk/student-voice

Our free, confidential, independent and non-discriminatory advice service is here for all students. We deal with a wide range of issues such as academic, housing and money advice - if you are unsure, just get in touch.

readingsu.co.uk/advice-&-support

Students' Union App

Download the Students' Union App and select "Reading Students' Union" to check out ways to get involved, catch up on our latest news, browse our events and join various sports' clubs, societies or volunteering groups.

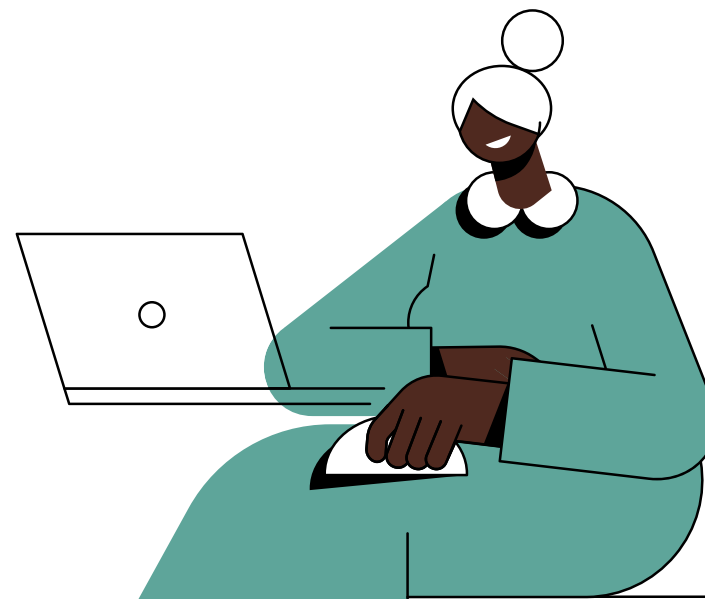
Find out more and download the app:

<https://readingsu.co.uk/whats-on/articles/downloadtheapp>

or search your app Store.

For more information about us, and how you can get involved, head to

readingsu.co.uk



UNIVERSITY SERVICES

STaR Mentors

STaR (Student Transitions at Reading) mentors are student volunteers who help new students at UoR. They're brilliant at answering questions regarding university life and will give you tips based on their own experience. We highly recommend meeting with your STaR mentor.

reading.ac.uk/star-mentors

Life Tools

Our Life Tools programme has been designed by experts to facilitate your transition into university and enhance your student experience. It helps you take control of your personal development and strengthen your skills to achieve your academic potential and prepare for life beyond university.

reading.ac.uk/life-tools



UoR Student App

The official University of Reading app is free to download and available to all students. The app makes accessing all the essential information you need for student life at Reading as easy as possible. It offers:

1. Your academic timetable
2. A personalised **Me@Reading news feed**
3. Notifications for the most important update
4. Easy access to support information and campus maps.

Find out more and download the app reading.ac.uk/student-app or search your app Store.

Welfare and well-being support

Our Student Welfare Team is here to help you with any personal difficulties you may experience during your time here, including homesickness, family or relationship difficulties, and advice on drug and alcohol issues.

reading.ac.uk/welfare-team

We also have a team of counsellors and mental health professionals to support your emotional and mental health needs, enabling you to engage successfully in your studies.

reading.ac.uk/counselling

0118 378 4216

Careers advice

The Careers Service supports you in gaining skills, experience and direction for your future career. We can help with part-time jobs, placements, graduate roles and lots more via workshops, events and 1:1 appointments.

reading.ac.uk/careers

0118 378 8359

Henley Business School Careers: henley.ac.uk/careers

Campus Jobs

Campus Jobs is your one stop shop for all paid part-time work at the University, providing one-off work opportunities and regular shift work that is exclusive to Reading students.

reading.ac.uk/campusjobs

0118 378 4499

Support Centres

The Support Centres (Henley School Office or equivalent) are the first place you should go to for all questions, help or advice throughout your time at the University of Reading. They will provide you with the support you need to be successful in your studies and beyond.

They are staffed by Student Support Coordinators who will advise or point you in the right direction on a range of academic and non-academic issues. You can contact your Student Support Coordinator by logging into RISIS and clicking on 'Ask a Question'. Alternatively you can telephone your Support Centre or visit them in person between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

reading.ac.uk/support-centres to find your Support Centre details.

The Student Financial Support Team

The Student Financial Support Team is here to offer you help, advice and support on a wide range of financial issues. You can access Blackbullion, a platform with courses and tools on things like how to budget, credit scores, hardship and much more.

Reading.ac.uk/money

Disability Advisory Service (DAS)

Students with a disability, specific learning differences (SpLD) or medical / mental health condition can contact DAS for confidential information and advice on provisions like extra time or rest breaks, particular adjustments to your course, or particular support to access your studies. Register online through the RISIS portal:

risisweb.reading.ac.uk

reading.ac.uk/essentials/Support-And-Wellbeing/Disability

Disability@reading.ac.uk

0118 378 4202

Study Advice

The Study Advice team are based in the Library and support you to develop the academic skills needed to be successful at university. They can help you to improve your grades by offering you time management strategies, advice on academic writing, tips on getting the most out of seminars, and much more. They offer 1-2-1 advice sessions, drop-ins, weekly webinars and have a range of videos and guides.

reading.ac.uk/library/study-advice

Halls Welfare Team

The Halls Welfare Team consist of Wardens and Hall Mentors. They are there to support your welfare, manage student conduct and behaviour in University Halls of Residence. They link in with other support services for students such as Student Welfare to provide a holistic support network.

reading.ac.uk/wardens 0800 029 1984

Report & Support

An online tool for staff, students, and visitors to report issues of harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, hate crimes, and other problematic behaviours. Users can report with their name and details to receive support from the University, or you can report anonymously.

<https://reportandsupport.reading.ac.uk/>



FRESHER'S CHECKLIST

Get Enrolled

Make sure you enrol on RISIS and then head to the enrolment desk on campus to get your Campus Card.

Register with a GP

It's important to have access to a local GP whilst at university, so you have medical support throughout the year and when you need it. Look out for the University Medical Group during Welcome or register as a new patient online.

Register with DAS

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS) provides support for students with any disability, long term health condition, mental health condition, or specific learning difficulty (SpLD) to enable access to learning where previously this may be a difficulty. If needed, be sure to contact DAS and declare so that we can support you.

Freshers' Fair

Visit the Freshers Fair behind Reading Students' Union to meet student services, societies and sports clubs

Look after your finances

Make sure to keep track of your budget, and consider doing a Blackbullion training course to help you understand how you can save money. Download Student Beans and UniDays to get the latest student discounts

Explore!

Moving to a new place is a big change. Make sure you explore Whiteknights and Reading Town Centre, there's plenty to do and a lot to get involved in.



GLOSSARY

Academic

A general word describing a member of staff who teaches and researches. Sometimes we use the word "lecturer" or "tutor" instead.

Academic Tutor

Every student has an academic tutor – they are one of the teaching staff. Your tutor is your first point of contact for any questions. They're a bit like a school/college form tutor.

Bibliography

Bibliography is a list of ALL the sources you used in preparing the work (not just the ones referred to – that would be a reference list).

Blackboard

The "virtual learning environment" (VLE) where the teaching materials and information are stored.

Essay Questions

A question which requires you to make an argument, backed up by evidence, to answer the question.

Essentials

This is the University of Reading's main webpage for student information and support www.reading.ac.uk/essentials

Exceptional Circumstances

If you are affected by circumstances outside your control (e.g., you are ill or dealing with a personal crisis) and it affects your studies and your ability to meet a deadline, then the Exceptional Circumstances process is how you let the university know.

Footnotes

Footnotes are at the end of each page with a number & you add the relevant number in your writing.

Formative Assessment

A piece of work that you do to practice your skills and get feedback. It does not count towards your module grade or results. Optional but highly recommended.

Generic Feedback

Information given to all students about a piece of work. It often gathers together common mistakes made by students on the module and gives general guidance on how to improve.

Independent Learning

At university you are expected to plan your own time, around your timetabled classes, and follow the instructions to do reading, prepare for classes and assessments yourself. Please talk to your academic tutor if you are struggling.

Independent Feedback

On your assessed work, the marker will give you personal feedback and how to improve. You can use the office hours to speak to them about it.

Lecture

A large group teaching session led by a lecturer. It can be in a lecture hall or via video/online. A lecture gives you an outline or introduction to a subject area. You are expected to take notes and follow this up with reading.

Marking Rubric

A marking guide showing you what you need to do for a piece of work and which the marker will use when assessing your work.

Moderation

A member of staff marks your work, but it is then “moderated” by other staff to ensure that it has been marked fairly and consistently with other students’ work.

Module

A module is a subject with a set number of credits (usually 20). Your degree is made up of lots of modules.



Module Convenor

The member of teaching staff responsible for each topic (module) you study.

Office/Student Hours

Times that academic teaching staff are available to meet with their students. Sometimes they are bookable, other times they are drop-in times where you just go along and knock on the door to their office.

Referencing

Citations or references show where you got your information from or what influenced your thinking. There are different ways to reference your work, but your lecturer will tell you which style they recommend.

RISIS

The University of Reading’s database. It stores your tutor card with all your personal details and results & where you pick modules, update your personal details & seek help. You can use RISIS to contact the Support Centre helpdesk:
www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk

Student Support Co-ordinators

These are staff who work in the Support Centres and are always happy to help you.

Summative Assessment

A piece of work that does count towards your module grade. Compulsory – you must do this work.

Support Centre

The Support Centres are another first point of contact for all questions, help or advice throughout your time at the University.

Turnitin

Is software which checks your work against a database for similarities with books, websites, and other university work. The similarity score shows how similar your work is to other people's.

Plagiarism is using other people's words or ideas as if they are your own, without referencing. There is lots of advice to avoid plagiarising or cheating (also called academic misconduct): reading.ac.uk/study-advice-guides/referencing. It might be tempting to use "A.I." chat bots in your essays but that could lead to academic misconduct.

Tutorial / Seminar

A small group teaching session led by a lecturer. This can be in a classroom or online. There will be tasks to prepare and reading to do (look on Blackboard), before the class and we discuss the material in class. You may work in groups in some classes. This is a good place to ask questions to help you understand the subject. It may take time to build confidence speaking up in seminars but you will get there.

Word Limit/Count/ Page Limit/Count

To ensure fairness the length of assignments is limited. This may be a word limit/count which means you should not write more than the set number of words (eg. 1250 words). Sometimes it is a page limit/count which means do not go over the set number of pages of typing (eg. 5 pages). Bibliographies do not count towards word or page limits. Footnotes usually do!

*Enjoy
your
time at
Reading!*





Welcome to the University of Reading!

This guide is intended to help students who are the first in their family to go to university transition to the University of Reading and navigate student life. It is written by current "first-generation" students who have drawn on their own experiences to offer tips and advice.