THE UNIVERSITY FOOD TRANSITION

WHAT TOOLS CAN WE PROVIDE?

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http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/
THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FOOD PROJECT

Designed to:

• Raise awareness of common food-related issues and challenges
• Support international students’ adjustment to buying, preparing, and eating food at University
• Develop a student-facing online resource providing a ‘self-serve’ menu of practical and informative food-related materials

= FOOD INDUCTION TOOLKIT

http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/

Funded by UKCISA GRANTS SCHEME FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
METHODOLOGY & TOOLS

• Literature review
• Desk-based research
• Questionnaire
• Student engagement: Focus groups & discussion sessions
• Competitions
• Social media activity
• Blog

+ SUPPORT FROM STUDENT PROJECT ASSISTANT
LITERATURE REVIEW

• Food acculturation is a dynamic and multifaceted process, and one affected by factors that can be individual, cultural and external. (Hartwell et al 2011)

• International students are likely to experience changes to their diet and have new dietary experiences. A range of factors affect these dietary practices, from health concerns to price, time, and availability of certain foods. (O’Sullivan and Amirabdollahian, 2016)

• Food is an issue of central importance to the life and adjustment journey of many international students, though there may be limitations to what HE institutions can do (Brown, 2009)
TOP TIPS:
- Buying food on a weekly basis can keep costs down and avoid waste.
- Sharing food shopping with flatmates or friends can save time and money.
- Most supermarkets offer an online ordering and delivery service for a small charge.
- Just before supermarkets close they often offer discounts on foods that have a short life-span.
- Frozen fruit and vegetables are just as healthy as fresh; they can be kept longer and are often cheaper too.
- Student discounts are often offered in restaurants and takeaways so always ask.
- Preparing fresh meals is cheaper than buying pre-prepared meals or snacks.

FOOD AND DRINK

Coming to the UK is an exciting and new experience and you will no doubt want to indulge in all the culture that Britain has to offer. So why not start with the food?

Eating and drinking

Eating out in the UK is a very different experience to most places around the world. A lot of Chain restaurants have recently closed which has left the high street feeling empty. However, it is still possible to find some great options to eat out. You can ask the locals for suggestions or try a Google search for restaurants in your area.

Top 3 British Dishes
- Fish and Chips: A classic British dish consisting of fried fish and chips. It is the most popular dish in the UK.
- British cakes: A range of cakes available in the UK, such as sponge cake, Victoria sponge, and Eccles cake.
- British breakfast: A traditional breakfast consisting of eggs, bacon, sausages, and black pudding.

Pubs and alcohol

In England, pubs are a common way to eat, as they often sell a variety of food dishes. You can enjoy a meal in a traditional pub or a modern restaurant. However, it is important to note that pubs are not just for drinking alcohol but also for eating. Some pubs serve full meals, while others serve a limited menu.

Leicester is famous for its Indian cuisine. Make sure to try some of the local dishes such as Chicken Tikka Masala and Naan bread. There are also many Chinese and Thai restaurants in the city that serve delicious food.

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/orientation/pdfs/international-students-guide
QUESTIONNAIRE

- 25 questions with a primary focus on student opinions, feelings and concerns about food
- Distributed through UoR and six UK universities
- 170 Responses received
  - 106 from UoR
- Answers revealed a range of views, expectations and experiences
RESPONDENTS

- Respondents from 41 countries, including 67 from China
- 52 men / 102 women

- More than half (n=85) have lived in the UK for less than 1 year
- The majority live in halls of residence (n=98)
- The majority do not have dietary restrictions (n=116)
FINDINGS

65% of respondents did not have concerns about food prior to their arrival in the UK (n=104).

AND

• Almost 30% are unhappy with the food they eat at Uni to some extent (n=44)
  • (47% felt neutral; n=75)

BUT

• Over 60% found that their diet and/or eating patterns had changed since arrival (n=98)

• Over 95% of respondents feel food is important to the transition experience of international students. (75 somewhat; 76 very)
FINDINGS

- The most important factor in enjoyment of a meal is:
  - **Taste/Quality** of the food (n=142 very important)
  - **Price** (n=86 very important)

- The top source of information for any food-related matters (eating, shopping, cooking) is
  - **Other students** (n=59 very useful)
  - **University web pages** are the least useful source (n=38 not useful)
FINDINGS

• In answer to the question whether the University could do anything to help students with any food-related matters, we received 90 free text responses. The top answers were:
  • NO, nothing (19)
  • Improve the variety of food in some way (21)
• Respondents indicated mixed perspectives on British food:
  
  Q: How do you feel about British food?
  Good … Too sweet, too salty, too oily …
  Tasteless … Amazing … Expensive … Best breakfast …
  Cold … Delicious … Just OK … Boring …
  Needs more vegetables … What is British food?
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Two competitions to engage students across the University and to enhance awareness of different food cultures:

• Food photos
  • #myrdgstudentmeal

• Student recipes
  • #myrdgstudentrecipe
Thai traditional food, Khao Yum. It’s very famous meal in the southernmost province of from Thailand. It is plenty of nutrients such as carbohydrate from rice, protein from fish, lipid from sausages and both vitamin and mineral are from coconut fried and vegetables. Yummy!!!
As a student, cooking our own food to eat for many meals saves time and saves money. Here is my stir-fried noodle from last night dinner, now in my lunch box and will be part of my today dinner.
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Discussion sessions with students:
- Students’ Union officers and societies
- Individual students
- Pre-sessional and IFP students

LOVE FOOD?

Join the International Student Food

Help us build a one-stop online resource to assist new students with shopping, cooking and eating at

Join our team
Would you like to shape the project? Can you share your food knowledge, stories, advice, and favorite recipes? Are you willing to help other students? Check out our social media to keep updated with our meetings and events:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/intStudentFood
Twitter: @IntStudentFood
Blog: http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/

Participate in our questionnaire
https://tinyurl.com/vcywtd

For further information contact Dr Liz Wilding:
studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Targeted sessions: Food Chat

• Regular one-hour lunchtime sessions
• Actively promoted as a conversational opportunity to Pre-sessional students (though open to all)
  • General discussion on food
  • Addressed concerns/questions
  • Elicited advice/suggestions for new students
  • Anything else of interest

Food Chat

Come join our open chat sessions in SACLL to talk about food. Share your questions, experiences, stories and advice with other students and with members of the International Student Food Project.

- Wednesday 25 April 12.00 – 12.45
- Wednesday 2 May 12.00 – 12.45
- Friday 4 May 12.00 – 12.45
- Friday 18 May 12.00 – 12.45
- Wednesday 23 May 12.00 – 12.45

Food provided!

The International Student Food Project aims to help international students with shopping, cooking and eating at Reading.

For further information contact Dr Liz Wilding
studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk
WHAT DID OUR STUDENTS SAY?

Suggestions:
- Website links - basic advice on types of cooking equipment
- Recipe book - quick meals, relevant to Reading
- Halal / vegetarian / dietary
  Labelling - food consultancy (one word committee)
- Welcome week flyer, cooking demonstration
- More vegetarian / vegan options
- Healthy options
  Recipe cards for Co-Op, market
STUDENT TRANSITION

Rate your food experiences during your first month as a Reading student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given with ratings:

[2] I was not used to the food and it was practically tasteless
[2] There are many different flavours which were unknown to me
[2] It is expensive (to) eat outside and I don’t like (to) cook myself
[3] At first it was difficult for me to find good food
[4] (I) cook myself
The concerns expressed were varied and diverse. They included:

- Food prices too high
- A lack of information about Halal food
- A perception England had too much cold food
- A lack of variety and/or of familiar food
- Uncertainty about where to shop, and about how to do internet shopping
STUDENT ADVICE

Bring more cash.
Bring more ingredients from home.
Search before coming.
Ask more.
Don’t have too high expectations.
Train your cooking skills before coming.

Learn how to cook.
Search online where to shop.
Talk to friends and new people.
and ask them for information.

Cook on your own.
Search before you come.
Download Deliveroo.
Learn if you do not know how to cook.
Find out how to get around good restaurants in town.
Find out what you like in the Co-op.
STUDENT SUGGESTIONS

Our students felt that the University could provide more practical support and advice on everyday food matters, such as:

- Recipe cards
- Cooking demonstrations or classes
- Healthy eating sessions
- Other food-based activities
- Maps/advice on how to find shops and supermarkets
- Guides to online shopping in the UK
- Pre-arrival ideas on cooking equipment and kitchen appliances
WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- Questionnaire data
- Feedback from meetings
- Blog / Website
- Recipe cards
- Printed induction materials
- Dissemination across the University

About the project
NEWS: We are still looking for student contributors to the blog. Email us at studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk with ideas, suggestions, or questions.

The International Student Food Project supports international students in cooking and eating at the University of Reading. Working closely with students, we have been developing a resource to:

- provide information and advice on shopping, cooking and eating
- draw attention to common issues or challenges
- share and celebrate our students’ different cultures
- raise awareness of food’s social and cultural importance
BUILDING AN ONLINE TOOLKIT

• Materials now online, with more to be added soon.
• Used as ‘proof of concept’ and to build connections across diverse units at Uni, including catering, halls, welfare and support staff, academics, Students’ Union, and more.
• Being promoted to current Pre-sessional students.

• [http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/](http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/)
PRACTICAL ADVICE

Halal Restaurants in Reading

Fernando’s Peri Peri
41 Oxford Rd, Reading RG1 7QG
Phone: 0118 334 3338
fernandosperiperi.co.uk

Piri Piri Chicken Hut - Reading
37 Whitley St, Reading RG2 0EG
Phone: 0118 931 0444
www.periperichickenhut.co.uk

Bakery House
82 London street, RG1 3PR
Phone: 0118 327 4040
www.bakeryhouse.co

King’s Grill
16 King’s Rd, Reading RG1 3AA
Phone: 0118 950 0220
www.kingsgrill.uk

Kobeda Palace
409/411 Oxford Rd, RG30 1HA
Phone: 0118 327 1400
www.kobedapalace.co.uk

Supermarkets in Reading
- Aldi
- Asda
- Co-op Food
- Co-op Food (Campus)
- Costcutter (Asian store)
- Marks & Spencer
- Morrisons
- Sainsbury’s
- SeeWoo (泗和全記)
- Tesco Express
- Tesco Extra
- Waitrose
## Online Shopping Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supermarket</th>
<th>ASDA</th>
<th>Ocado</th>
<th>Morrisons</th>
<th>Sainsbury's</th>
<th>TESCO</th>
<th>Waitrose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grocery delivery</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free trial</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>No?</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Anytime delivery pass (Mon – Sun) | 12 months - £5  
6 months - £6 | 12 months - £5.83  
6 months - £8.33  
Monthly - £6.99 | 12 months - £5.41  
6 months - £6.67  
Monthly - £8 | 12 months - £5  
6 months - £5.83  
3 months - £6.67 | 6 months - £6.99  
Monthly - £7.99 | Does not offer delivery pass |
| Midweek delivery pass (Tues – Thurs) | 12 months - £2  
6 months - £2.50  
Monthly - £2.99 | 12 months - £2.92  
6 months - £3.33  
Monthly - £5 | 12 months - £2.50  
6 months - £3  
3 months - £3.33 | 12 months - £2.50  
6 months - £3.33  
Monthly - £3.33 | 6 months - £3.49  
Monthly - £3.99 |
| Min spend     | £40  | £40   | £40       | £40         | £40   | £40      |

Details above are accurate as of June 2018. Please refer to individual supermarket’s website for the latest prices and offers – terms and conditions may apply.
**NEXT STEPS**

Only a **pilot project so far**, with the constraints of a limited budget and a fixed end-date. Our plans are to:

- Consolidate and finish analysis of the data and student feedback – perhaps relaunch the survey to gather more responses
- Continue building the toolkit – both online and on paper
- Continue disseminating information within UoR and more widely – influence institutional practice
- Find new ways to engage students in future activities and focus more on the social/cultural aspects of food.
FINAL THOUGHT:
HOW IMPORTANT IS FOOD TO THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

I always believe that food draws people together. By being able to appreciate food, we can easily create a community.

Food is culture!

It’s important for your health

Having familiar foods helps settle you in and combat homesickness, while trying local foods is part of the experience of being here.

It depends on how picky the student is in terms of food.

If students are not concerned about the food transition until after their arrival, what can we do to engage them more at an earlier stage?
THANK YOU – ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Just arrived in Reading? Ready, set, EAT!

Tesco, ASDA, Morrisons, Waitrose... What's the difference between these supermarkets?

How do I use the oven?

Is it possible to eat healthily while at Uni?

Find out here:
http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/

Brought to you by the International Student Food Project
REFERENCES


