

New classes, new professors, and new classmates aren't the only things that come with the start of a new semester. Campus dining halls are also refreshing their menus with the start of a new school year. With the hopes of meeting the taste buds of a large population, universities are offering low-calorie, local, vegan, and even comfort food options on their menus this fall.

- **Low-Calorie Entrées**

As the nation is concerned with the rise in obesity, universities are trying to provide more healthy options to students. Salad bars, fruits, and veggies are filling cafeterias nationwide. In addition, with many students crunched for time, some universities are offering to-go meals under 600 calories. This gives students a way to eat on the run, without consuming the extra calories.



- **Local Food**

Universities nationwide are going local and offer ingredients from farms within a 100-mile radius. Some campuses even have their very own garden that helps support the food service program. Read more on how different schools and universities are buying local and going organic [here](#).

- **Vegan Dining Halls**

Numerous campus dining programs offer vegan meal options, however, one university is opening a completely vegan dining hall. The University of North Texas, with more than 36,000 students, started serving vegan meals in the Mean Greens dining hall this past Monday. The University wanted to work toward offering more variety and healthy options after receiving feedback from its students. With the [University of North Texas](#) being the first mainstream university to offer an all-vegan cafeteria, it may open up the door for other universities nationwide.

- **Comfort Food**

As low-calorie options may be a priority for some, college students still desire a form of comfort food. Fast food, southern-style, and sweets are still among students' appetites. Healthy meals may be available in cafeterias, but it comes down to the decision of the student if they choose a low-calorie option or a burger with fries and piece of cake. Universities are still making sure to cater to *all* appetites.



Sushi, ethnic varieties, organic entrées, kosher food, and of course, flavored coffee drinks are also being added to menus throughout the country.

In addition, universities are doing more than just revamping their menus. Many campuses are eliminating trays from their dining services in an effort to reduce water use from cleaning. This also limits students' meal portions, as they cannot eat more than they can carry. The overall environment of cafeterias is also improving nationwide. Through the use of vibrant colors and welcoming furniture, it encourages students to utilize campus dining. To help improve the flow of students, universities are also focused on the equipment and design of their cafeterias – important elements.

What other trends are you seeing on university menus this fall? Have you seen students demanding any unique entrées? How are you catering to the *entire* student population?