

Eating Healthy @MIT – What are my options?

Use these guidelines to practice navigating the menus of MIT and beyond...

Whether you eat on East Campus, Central Campus, West Campus, in residential dining or beyond, you can learn to eat for health, energy and enjoyment. Read on and find the way!

Italian / Pizza

Food Trucks**Alpine Bagel/Cambridge Grill**Pritchett & Forbes Family Café

PIZZA – Cheese and veggie are the best choices. Watch your servings—a slice of pizza in the dining hall can be 2-3 servings. Get just one slice and a side salad.

PASTA – Is there a whole wheat option? This is not always available, but when given the option, whole wheat pasta is delicious and provides you with a lot more energy and fiber.

Lasagna, ravioli, manicotti, and tortellini – Most of these options are made with whole fat cheese. Watch your portions.

Sauce – When possible stick with sauces that are made with tomatoes. *Go slow* on the cream, pesto and meat sauces; they tend to be a lot higher in calories and saturated fat.

Portions – This is the area where most people go overboard. A serving of pasta is about ½ cup. Most restaurants give 6 or 8 servings. Ask for an appetizer or half size portion, or share an entrée with a friend.

asian influence

Shinkansen Japan**Food Trucks**Pritchett

When getting a stir-fry, ask if it can be sautéed in broth or water. *Most people do not know this is an option!*

Go for fresh or steamed (as opposed to fried) spring rolls, dumplings and egg rolls and opt for the vegetarian or seafood versions.

Pick the whole grain – Ask if there is a whole grain noodle or brown rice available. Try to avoid fried rice or fried noodle dishes.

Choose your meat – Go for the seafood, chicken, tofu or tempeh. *Go slow* on the red meat. *Go slow* on entrees described as crispy or fried.

Veggie Variety – Get as much variety as possible. *Add flavor with garlic and onions.*

Do not be afraid to have it your way – Ask for the sauce on the side or for them to go light on the sauce. This is where most of the calories and fat come from—you should control how much.

Building a **POWERFUL SANDWICH**

Alpine Bagel/Cambridge Grill**LaVerde's**Bio Café**Bosworth's**Brain & Cognitive Science Café**Building 4 Café**Steam Café**Pritchett**Refresher Café**Forbes Family Café**Food Trucks

Bread – Whole grain is the best choice. You should be looking for breads with the following descriptions: whole wheat, whole grain, whole oat, rye, pumpernickel, etc.

Meat – The leaner the better; go for sliced turkey, chicken, ham. Try to avoid some of the overly processed or high fat options (roast beef, salami, pastrami or bologna).

Cheese – Always ask if there is a lower fat version. Limit yourself to one or two slices.

Pile on the Veggies – This is good chance to get your servings and make your sandwich more satisfying. *Add cucumbers, lettuce, avocados, tomatoes, peppers, onions, pickles, sprouts, etc.*

Condiments – *Go slow* on the mayonnaise if possible. Instead, go for mustard, ketchup, relish, etc.

soup & salad

Alpine Bagel/Cambridge Grill**LaVerde's**Bio Café**Bosworth's**Brain & Cognitive Science Café**Building 4 Café**Steam Café**Pritchett**Refresher Café**Forbes Family Café**Food Trucks

SOUP – Look for soups with a broth or vegetable base. You can also get a lot of protein and nutrients from black bean soup or veggie chili. **GO SLOW** on cream based soups (cream of broccoli, chowders, etc) or soups that have a lot of ground meat and/or cheese in them.

SALAD – **Start with a foundation of fresh greens.** **GO SLOW** on salads made with mayonnaise, pasta or potatoes.

Veggie Variety – Color is key; add peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, broccoli, carrots, etc.

Protein – Add white meat turkey, chicken, or tofu; cottage cheese or low fat cheese.

Dressing – *When a salad goes wrong* – There can be a lot of calories and saturated fat in prepared dressings. *Ask for it on the side.* When possible, select low fat, low calorie, or olive oil and vinegar. **Watch your serving size** – a serving of dressing is usually 1-2 Tbs., about the size of your thumb.

AT THE GRILL

Alpine Bagel/Cambridge Grill**Pritchett**
Forbes Family Café**Food Trucks

Burgers and cheese steaks are not the only way to go at the grill. When possible ask for grilled chicken, fish or a veggie burger. *Go slow* on the red meat.

Watch your buns – Is there a whole grain option? If not, ask if there is whole wheat bread you can have instead.

Add Veggies – Lettuce, tomato, avocado, pickles, peppers, cucumbers, sprouts, mushrooms, onions, etc. *Go slow* on the cheese and high fat condiments like mayonnaise.

Fries or Salad? – If you choose to have a burger, choose the salad in order to have a balanced meal.

PIZZA – Cheese and veggie are the best choices. Watch your servings—a slice of pizza in the dining hall can be 2-3 servings. Get just one slice and a side salad.

Comfort Food:

Just like Mom makes

Steam Café**Pritchett**Forbes Family Café**

Best choices – Choose white meat turkey, pork, or chicken. Fish or tofu/tempeh are also great options. *GO SLOW* on red meat. Look for items that are roasted, steamed, baked or grilled. Ask for the gravy or sauce to be on the side.

Proportion vs. Portion – a serving of protein is about 4 ounces (a deck of cards). Watch your portions and avoid having more than 2 servings per meal.

More than half your plate should be filled with a vegetable and a grain. *Go slow* on vegetables covered in butter and potatoes that are fried or mashed with a lot of butter and cream. Eat a variety of vegetables and try some of the less known grains—*quinoa, couscous, bulgar, brown rice, whole wheat pasta* are all great options!

MIDDLE EASTERN

Sepal**Food Trucks**Steam Café**

Grains/Bread – Opt for whole grains (couscous, brown rice) and whole wheat pita bread if it is available.

Vegetables – Do not be afraid to ask about preparation. Try veggies that are not fried or made with a lot of oil and/or cheese.

Cheese – Feta cheese has less fat than other popular cheeses, but it is quite salty.

Protein – Select leaner meats like white meat chicken, fish and shrimp, and you can always opt for the many vegetarian options.

Go slow on fried dishes such as falafel (many campus vendors offer a baked version), kibbeh (deep-fried meat and wheat balls) and stuffed pastries. Ask for tahini on the side or order cucumber-yogurt sauce instead.

Indian – Café Spice

Grains/Bread – "pulkas," "nann," "chapati," and "kulcha" (various types of baked, low-fat breads).

Opt for whole wheat pita bread if it is available.

Ask about preparation. Many items are cooked with ghee (clarified butter), coconut oil or coconut milk (all add a lot of calories and fat). Items that include the words "*kandhari*," "*malai*," or "*korma*" indicate dishes high in cream or coconut milk.

Among your more healthful choices – Salad or vegetables with yogurt dressing; *mulligatawny* (chicken) or *del rasam* (lentil) soups; chicken and fish cooked *tandoori* (marinated and baked) or *vindoori*-style (marinated and braised).

Go slow on "samosa" (fried meat or vegetables); "pakori" (deep-fried breads and vegetables); and thick cheese puddings and honeyed pastries.

TEX MEX – Anna's Taqueria

Going whole grain – Pick whole wheat or corn tortillas and brown rice when available. *Go slow* on fried tortilla chips and nachos.

Protein – Go for white meat chicken, seafood or beans and you can always go for grilled vegetables. *Go slow* on the red meat and pork.

Beans are great for you. Be sure to opt for pinto beans and/or black beans. *Go slow* on refried beans.

Cheese/Condiments – Ask for no cheese or only half the amount they normally put. *Go slow* on sour cream and guacamole (get it on the side so you can add it in small quantities).

GO SLOW on white rice. Most restaurants prepare their Mexican rice with chicken broth (**vegetarians**: be sure to ask). Watch your portions— $\frac{1}{2}$ cup is a serving; try not to have more than two servings.

Breakfast

Dunkin Donuts*Bio Café *Bosworth's*Brain & Cognitive Science Café*Building 4 Café* Refresher Café
*Forbes Family Café

Whole grain cereals – Try plain oatmeal, Kashi cereals, Shredded Wheat, Cheerios, Grape Nuts, etc. Be prepared and keep options at work.

Whole grain breads – Go for whole grain bread, English muffins, bagels, etc.

Watch portion sizes – The average bagel is 3-5 servings (eat half). *Go slow* on muffins, scones, croissants and pastries. Most are packed with calories and saturated fat.

Dairy – Select skim, 1%, or 2% milk, yogurt or cottage cheese. *Go slow* on butter and whole fat cream cheese. Instead add low sugar jam, natural peanut butter, or low fat cream cheese.

Egg Sandwiches – Ask if they can make it with just the egg white. If not, *go slow* on the meat and cheese and ask for it on whole grain toast or English muffin.

convenience:
macgregor & laverde's

Trucks

Watch your portions – Go for quality, not just quantity.

Best cereals – Quaker Old Fashioned Oatmeal, Kashi Heart to Heart, Go Lean and Go Lean Crunch, Original Cheerios, Grape Nuts, Shredded Wheat and Bran

Best snacks – Fruit and cut-up vegetables

Best portable protein – Tuna in pop-top can or foil bag, fat free or low fat yogurt or cottage cheese, string cheese

Best crackers: – Ak-Mak 100% whole wheat crackers, Reduced Fat Triscuits

Best munchies – Soy Crisps or Pita Chips in single serving bags, nuts, baked potato chips, unpopped popcorn (if you have an air popper)

GO SLOW on Lunchables, which have more than 50% of your daily sodium maximum and are very high in fat.

GO SLOW on the Dannon Frusion, which has about 50 grams of sugar – about as much as a Pepsi.

Share a meal with a friend, eat half and save the rest for dinner; select appetizers, soups and salads. **Ask about preparation** – Do not be bashful; ask how the meat, fish, chicken or tofu is cooked. Try to stick with items that are steamed, baked, broiled or grilled.

Can I have it on the side? – Often sauces and dressings pack a lot of calories and fat. Whenever possible, ask for the sauce and dressing on the side so you can control the amount you put on your food (1-2 tablespoons is usually considered a serving).

Mix it up – Love the dish you get at Gooseberry's and do not want to give it up? Don't! Try the new STEAM Café, Sepal, or Anna's Tacqueria – they are all inexpensive and have many options that will fuel your mind and body. Save that indulgent dish for Friday.

Put in a request!

Our campus is moving in an exciting direction, but there are still some healthy options we hope will be added to the many menus on campus. Help it along by requesting and buying these items from the vendors you visit on a regular basis. *Show them that healthy choices sell!*

Soups & Salads

Ask for dressings made with no sugar and healthy plant oils (or at least plain olive oil and vinegar). Ask for some of the lower fat soups that we mention.

Sandwich Builders

Try whole grain bread, rolls, buns, tortilla and pita. You should also ask that vendors carry a low fat cheese option.

Italian/Pizza Requests

Ask for whole wheat pasta, whole wheat pizza crust, more dishes made with low-fat dairy (ravioli, manicotti, lasagna), and low-fat cheese.

Middle Eastern Requests

Anything that is fried can be baked; ask for more baked falafel and whole wheat pita.

Influence the Asian Choices

Ask for low sodium soy sauce, brown rice, whole grain noodles or soba noodles, and sushi made with brown rice.

The Best Tex Mex

Ask for whole wheat tortillas, baked tortilla chips, brown rice, and more dishes made with low-fat dairy (sour cream, cheese, etc).

Comfort Food is Not a Dirty Word

Ask for more whole grain options (pasta, rice, grains), vegetables that are prepared plain/steamed/grilled, and more lean cuts of meat that are grilled, baked, broiled or roasted.

Grill It Up Right

Ask for whole grain buns or bread, low-fat cheese, baked or air cooked french fries and veggie burgers. If you're having pizza, ask for whole wheat crust and low fat cheese.

The Healthy Indian Express

Ask for brown rice, dishes made without ghee (clarified butter), coconut milk or cream, breads and entrees that are baked, and dishes made with lighter plant based oils.

Breakfast is the Most Important Meal of the Day

Ask for whole grain breads, English muffins and bagels; whole grain cereals and prepared oatmeal; non fat or low fat yogurt and cottage cheese; egg whites or egg beaters; low fat cheese.

Questions about this topic? Contact Julie Banda at the Center for Health Promotion and Wellness

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