



EATING 101

RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM
A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

Waste Not: Rethinking What We Toss

Picture this: You enter the dining hall, hungry and excited, loading your plate with tempting food. Soon you realize your eyes are hungrier than your stomach, and you leave the rest behind on the conveyor belt without a second thought. But what happens to that leftover food? In the U.S., up to 40% of all food produced goes uneaten, and 95% of that ends up in landfills, wasting money, water, and energy. Although the choice to discard uneaten food may seem insignificant, these everyday choices accumulate, ultimately leading to a significant environmental impact. Want to make a difference? Read below to learn how you can take simple steps to reduce your food waste in the Rutgers dining halls.

Take Less

Taste Don't Waste: Start with smaller portions and practice mindful eating (tuning into your hunger cues and stopping when you're satisfied). You can always go back for seconds if you are still hungry.

Finish What You Start: When trying something new, take a sample size first to see if you like it. Check the menu at food.rutgers.edu before heading to the dining hall to identify new items to try.

Assess Hunger

Check Your Cravings: Before eating, pause and ask yourself if you are truly hungry or just nibbling out of habit. This quick "gut check" can help you select only the items you will eat, reducing food waste.

Give Fullness Time: Your body needs about 15 to 20 minutes to signal that you are satisfied. Take a short pause before going back for seconds. Your future self (and the waste bin) will thank you.

Store Leftovers

Respect Leftovers: If you are not hungry enough to finish your takeout meal, save the rest for later. Store leftovers in airtight containers and refrigerate promptly to keep things fresh.

Sip, Save, Repeat: Skip the single-use plastic water bottles and bring a refillable bottle to take-out. It is refreshingly easy to stay hydrated and reduce waste with refill stations at each dining hall and across campus.

Sample it, savor it, stash it, don't trash it!

Revised By: Candace Johnson

Reviewed by: Alison Brown, M.S., R.D.N.

References: *Food Waste*. Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/sustainability/food-waste/>. Accessed on: November 14, 2025. *College Campus Food Waste Reduction Tips*. Available at: <https://stopfoodwaste.org/tips/plan/college-campus-food-waste-reduction-tips>. Accessed on: November 14, 2025. *The Global Benefits of Reducing Food Loss and Waste, and How to Do It*. Available at: <https://www.wri.org/insights/reducing-food-loss-and-food-waste>. Accessed on: November 14, 2025. *Rutgers Dining Services*. Available at: <https://food.rutgers.edu>. Accessed on: November 19, 2025. *Sustainability Presentation*. Available at: <https://food.rutgers.edu/sustainability/sustainability-inside-and-out/sustainability-inside-and-out/sustainability-presentation>. Accessed on: November 19, 2025.

