



## THE BENEFITS OF INCREASING FIBER INTAKE

PAIGE NEEDLES | nutrition X USC

For many of us, the only time we ever heard about needing to eat fiber was from an older relative shoving prunes in our face. In a world full of super food trends and almond flour pizza crust, fiber remains overlooked. I'm here to give fiber the credit it deserves, and how you'll be able to incorporate more fiber in your diet on campus.

### WHAT IS FIBER?

Fiber is the indigestible component of plant-sourced carbohydrates. There are many forms of fiber, but a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes will ensure you are getting enough variety. It is recommended that women should consume around 25g of fiber daily and men about 38g. That may not sound like a lot, but most Americans struggle to reach this goal due to a lack of whole, plant-based foods and too many processed carbohydrates.



### WHY SHOULD I EAT FIBER-RICH FOODS?

Fiber is associated with a number of benefits including:

1. Reduced risk of the following diseases and conditions: cardiovascular disease, hypertension, high LDL cholesterol, type two diabetes, colon cancer, and diverticular disease.
2. Enhanced health of gastrointestinal tract
3. Relief from constipation
4. Improved glycemic response
5. Increased satiety after eating
6. Removal of toxins
7. Food (prebiotic) for your gut microbiome

Shall I go on....?

## WHAT FOODS HAVE FIBER AND WHERE ARE THESE ON CAMPUS?

Here's a list of some high-fiber foods in each plant-based category. While these options are particularly high in fiber, all vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole-grains have fiber so choose what you like!

**FRUITS:** Raspberries, pears, apples, and avocados

**VEGETABLES:** Artichoke, broccoli, beets, brussels sprouts

**LEGUMES:** Lentils, beans, chickpeas, edamame

**GRAINS:** Quinoa, bran cereal, oats, whole-wheat bread and pasta

**OTHER:** Nuts, chia seeds, flax seeds

Look out for these ingredients in Residential Dining locations on campus. A good rule of thumb is to divide your plate into the following proportions:  $\frac{1}{2}$  plate vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  whole-grains, fruit, or legumes, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  protein. Small changes like quinoa over white rice, or whole-grain bread for your sandwich instead of white bread will make a difference.



While the menus in Residential Dining change daily, here are some great examples of high-fiber choices at each dining hall.

**PARKSIDE:** Parkside has an incredible salad bar. Add a side salad with lots of vegetables to your main meal. The salad bar also has quinoa daily. Pick up a vegetable and a bean option at the self-serve stations offered daily as well.

**EVERYBODY'S KITCHEN:** For breakfast or a snack, choose Bob's Red Mill thick cut oatmeal. Look for berries in the daily assorted fruits selection. During lunch and dinner, look out for lentil soup for a great, high-fiber side.

**USC VILLAGE:** The plant-based mezze bar is your best friend! Get some roasted vegetables and dip them in hummus. Ask for chia seeds and sliced almonds in your crepes. For dinner, try out the smoky veggie ground and bean chili.

I hope you now will keep fiber in mind as you eat on and off campus. Fiber will keep you feeling good and feeling full so you can focus on acing that test.