



WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG? A LOOK INSIDE THE LUNCHES OF THE GRADUATE NUTRITION STUDENTS AT USC

HANNAH GRENFELL | nutrition X USC

WHY PACK A LUNCH?

Packing a lunch for school can seem like a chore. It takes time and forethought and can seem like an easy corner to cut when the semester gets hectic. However, packing a lunch is an important skill to learn. On some days, it may be a better option to bring your own food to campus and can be crucial to surviving long days on campus.

WHAT TOOLS OR RESOURCES DO I NEED TO PACK A LUNCH?

Investing in a few supplies will make your life much easier when packing your lunch. An insulated lunch bag, a set of glass Tupperware with a variety of sizes, Ziplock bags and a water bottle are musts. This might feel expensive at first, but you will save money over time. Be sure to check out what resources are available to you. Is there a student lounge near your classes with a fridge, microwave, toaster or sink? If you can find a fridge, you won't have to carry your lunch around with you all day and you can make sure it doesn't spoil. Microwaves are great because you can bring leftovers from dinner the night before.



WHAT'S IN BROOKLIN WHITE'S BAG?

On this particular day, Brooklin was going to be on campus for more than 10 hours. What you see here is lunch, snack and dinner. Brooklin brought a kale salad with tomato and cucumber on a bed of brown rice, carrot sticks with a smoky chipotle almond dip, cashews, an apple, pretzels and a package of chickpea masala from Costco that she microwaved in the student lounge for dinner.

WHAT'S IN ERICKA NAEGLE'S BAG?

Ericka brought seed crackers, anchovy dip (anchovies, mayonnaise, mustard, pepperoncini) and fresh, raw vegetables (carrot, bell pepper, cucumber, broccoli) to dip in Trader Joe's spinach dip. Ericka likes to defrost frozen spinach, squeeze out the excess liquid and add it to the spinach dip so it's healthier!



WHAT'S IN SOPHIA SCATTAGLIA'S BAG?

Sophia brought grapes, Trader Joe's sweet potato fries she made in the air fryer to get those crispy edges, and a salad with butter lettuce, farro, arugula, shredded chicken, red onion, cucumber and feta. Sophia likes to make her own salad dressing with olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, pepper and garlic powder.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BRING IN YOUR BAG?

When packing your lunch, think about balance, variety and nutrient density. Choose whole grain options whenever possible and try to stay away from added sugars. Make sure your lunch has healthy sources of carbohydrates, protein, and fat and remember to *ALWAYS* include fresh fruits and vegetables!

LUNCH BOX IDEAS

- Trail mix
- Hard boiled eggs
- Dinner leftovers
- PB & J on whole wheat bread
- Yogurt with fruit or granola as topping
- Ants on a log
- Granola bar (watch out for high sugar content!)
- Vegetable sticks with hummus
- Apple and nut butter
- Green salad
- Lupini snacking beans
- Seed crackers with avocado or cheese
- Popcorn
- Nuts
- Plantain chips
- Fresh pineapple with salt and pepper