



COOKING AT UNIVERSITY

Four university student Matthew, getting to grips with cooking for himself on his first time away from home was a real learning curve. Now totally at ease in the kitchen, he looks on the experience as literally life-changing

"To be honest," Matthew says, "when I left home for university, I didn't give a great deal of thought to how I would feed myself. At that time I was more concerned with all the other challenges ahead of me, particularly the academic ones, and anyway I knew how to heat up ready meals. I C Especially as I was trying to keep up with difficult new work, and socializing into the small hours with new friends.

"At first I couldn't believe that snacking on nothing but junk food and sometimes skipping meals altogether could have serious effects" I had much less energy than before. "And, worryingly, he was in bad shape. "That did it," he admits. "After a lifetime of healthy home cooking, I was suddenly living on junk food. My diet and lifestyle were harming my system and I desperately needed to turn things round."

He returned to university equipped with a new pan or two and some cooking lessons from Mom under his belt. "I decided to eat as much fresh food as possible- not difficult, since I've always enjoyed fruits and vegetables," says Matthew. "I took time to seek out the best and cheapest places to shop. "These changes, though, didn't cut me off from student life. I wanted to enjoy everything about my experience of university.

"...the friends, the new interests and the social side as well as the study that would hopefully mark out my career. But it took some reorganising and a commitment to set aside time to eat more healthily.

Within week of changing to a balanced diet of healthy, freshly cooked food, my concentration powers, my energy and my appearance were all improving. Getting organized brings benefits. I got into the habit of preparing double portions for the fridge or freezer. I would buy fish or chicken portions, add vegetables and throw the whole thing in the oven

It's also good to keep a stock of frozen vegetables to save time and to eat wholegrain foods which fill you up for longer. At exam time, when time is really short, and I'm starving, I can make a filling omelette in minutes."

What were the reactions to his new lifestyle? Matthew explains: "Well, these days it's cool for guys to be interested in cooking. True, there were jokes that I'd let the side down and abandoned student traditions. But I learned that if you are on an intensive course - I'm doing engineering - you need to have the strength for study and, hopefully, a social life too."



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A I HADN'T, OF COURSE.

B COOKING IT THAT WAY SAVES ON POTS AND WASHING UP, AND ITS AN EASY, TASTY MEAL.

C BEFORE LONG, THOUGH, I WAS GETTING PRETTY FED UP WITH EATING THOSE AND I STARTED TO THINK COOKING FOR MYSELF MIGHT BE IMPORTANT AFTER ALL.

D EATING OUT LIKE THAT QUITE OFTEN ALSO MADE A CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE.

E ON THE MORE POSITIVE SIDE, DOING ALL THIS BECAME EASIER AS TIME WENT ON.

F BUT AFTER A FEW MONTHS I MADE MY FIRST VISIT HOME, AND THE FAMILY'S COMMENTS ON MY UNHEALTHY APPEARANCE MADE ME REALISE IT WAS TRUE.

G IN THE SAME WAY, I GOT TO KNOW THE BEST TIMES TO FIND THE FRESHEST ITEMS AND WHEN TO PICK UP A BARGAIN.
