

# Men vs women: eating habits

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Kevin Walker Professor Echelberger ENG 201 2 March 2010 Eating Habits: Men versus Women Getting a hot meal in college is very easy. Most college students have a very short walk to their campus cafeteria. Entering the cafeteria, there is generally an array of meals to choose from. Researchers have been studying the eating habits of college students for a while. Although the studies are predominately due to the typical increase in weight of Americans over the past few centuries, the data has shown interesting results not pertaining to their research.

A fascinating question has arisen to add to the ponderous question of how men and women differ. The question that I was looking to gain knowledge on was " how do men and women vary in food choices? " Central Michigan University's cafeteria Rfoc (Real Food on Campus) was the perfect observatory for my research. The university's campus hosts sixteen different locations to get meals from. The assortment of cafeterias allows for tremendous convenience to the students who need to fit several meals into a jam packed day. Do these busy days force students to eat quick unhealthy snacks instead of a nutritious meal?

Many researchers think the stress from school and a busy schedule force students to put nutrition on the back burner. Others have seen a trend in eating healthy or unhealthy between men and women. Considering all I have to do is walk down four flights of stairs to the Rfoc, I chose to observe at this location. Walking into the cafeteria there were many vantage points to choose from. The main floor seating would be good since it would put me in the middle of the most eaters. Then I started thinking about how I'd be looked at funny for staring at people since I might lock eyes with someone.

Next vantage point I looked at was the tables by the Mediterranean pasta station. Only problem with sitting there was that I would see mostly people eating the Mediterranean food which would skew my observations. Finally I found the perfect lookout point. The bar by the on the left side of the cafeteria seemed ideal since the high bar stools would give me a bird's eye view of the peoples' plates without being looked at funny for creeping. From my post I could see the salad bar, Mediterranean pasta station, international station, Mediterranean pizza station, American dinner station and the produce stand.

The only stations I couldn't see were American dinner, southern kitchen and the dessert station. Since I could see majority of the stations and tables I decided I'd stay in this location to observe. With the observing location picked out all I needed was to figure out what was the best time to observe. From my own personal experience throughout the school year I know when the most people tend to be down there. Breakfast usually gets a decent amount of people from around nine thirty till ten thirty when breakfast ends. However, since breakfast doesn't have a large variety of choices there wouldn't be much to compare.

With breakfast no longer in the running, lunch and dinner were the only two possible times to go. Thinking back to the mind-boggling lines I have had to wait in at dinner time I decided dinner was the best time to observe. Dinner would have a wide range of food offered and more people to observe allowing for better data. When I walked into the cafeteria, the cute girl working the reception desk swiped my card to subtract one meal from my

plan. Like any other typical time eating in the Rfoc I walked up to the display table showing all the possible meals for the day.

Each meal consists of a main dish and possible sides. Southern kitchen offered a marinated pork loin with mashed potatoes and carrots. American dinner was a hamburger offered with toppings like bacon, lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese in addition to fries. Mediterranean pizza had an array of cheese, pepperoni, and ham pizzas. International served an orange chicken with rice and vegetables dish. Fettuccini alfredo and marinara sauces were the possible toppings for the linguini noodles at the Mediterranean pasta station. Desserts consisted of fudge brownies, chocolate chip cookies and ice cream.

The ice cream machine had chocolate and vanilla with toppings like reese's, chocolate chips, fudge, chocolate syrup, marshmallow cream and heath bars. Salad bar had the typical salad bar contents to choose from to make a personal salad with. Some of the available meals were healthy and some were very unhealthy. I quickly grabbed my plate of the chicken from the salad bar since on a diet and made my way to my post. Previous to going to the cafeteria I made a very detailed excel spreadsheet to sort my observations into.

I am a neat freak so I wanted it to be easy to do and presentable. Although my bladder didn't want to I stayed in the cafeteria for a little over an hour recording what the visible guys and girls were eating. I recorded which meals the guys picked and which meals the girls went with. In addition, I took note of whether or not guys and girls grabbed fruit since unlike vegetables they are not included in the meals. Since drinks don't have nutritional value I

didn't record what each gender drank. Once I had all of my data I went back to my dorm and graphed the numbers into a bar graph.

The graph showed men out ate women at Southern Kitchen, Mediterranean Pizza, American Dinner, International Station and the Dessert Station. Thus, women out ate men at the Salad Bar, Mediterranean Pasta, and Fruit. Based on the foods served at these stations, men tended to eat more meat, poultry, and grains than women. Vegetables and fruit were consumed by more women than men as predicted by Tina's study in The Indianapolis Star. Grains were split between the two genders since women consumed more pasta than men and men consumed more pizza than women.

My data agrees with Judith Rodriguez when she said, " Male college students are more likely to eat from the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, and nut groups". Throughout my observations, I saw a trend in the eating habits of men and women. Nanci Hellmich was correct when saying, " Eating habits of men and women in college are different". The reasoning for the difference could be anything from males hoping the protein in the meats would help build bigger muscles to women eating vegetables and fruit because they are " obsessed with maintaining their figure" (LeFebvre).

However, my data does not supply sufficient information to justify the reasoning behind the genders' tendencies of eating certain foods. Men and women have many similarities and differences, but when pertaining to eating habits they are very different. Works Cited Hellmich, Nanci. " College eating habits are clogged with fat. " USA Today. 10 Jan. 2002. Web. 11 Feb. 2010. . LeFebvre, Cathy. " College eating habits analyzed by researchers, students. The Daily Orange. 23 Sept. 2002. Web. 11 Feb. 2010. . Rodriguez, Judith C. " <https://assignbuster.com/men-vs-women-eating-habits/>

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