Have you ever thought about how you feel when you eat food? Think about your favorite dish. For me that is chocolate or cheese. I feel so happy when I eat them. The same goes with other comfort foods. Did you know that there is scientific proof that some foods can help elevate or lower your mood? It all occurs biochemically in your brain.

Things that make you happy:

- You will feel better if you eat enough carbs. They can help release serotonin (a happy hormone for the brain) and fuel your body.
- Get enough omega-3 fatty acids. These are found in fish. They help with memory and mood. Studies show that countries with the highest fish consumption have lower rates of depression.
- Eat breakfast, and preferably a balanced one. This can help improve memory and energy throughout the day. And you will not be feeling hungry come 10am.
- Protein can help you focus, which is happy.
- Folic acid (in spinach and orange juice) is said to counter depression.

Things that make you sad:

- Skipping meals. When your body does not eat, you can feel tired and cranky.
- Consuming too much fat. Besides the gross greasy feeling we sometimes get, too much fat can contribute to depression and dementia. You can also feel sluggish. You can also feel tired since your body is spending more energy digesting the food.
- Caffeine, if you have too much of it. The crash after the high can make the world seem pretty dim. The aftermath can cause mood swings, anxiety, and nervousness.

You may have noticed that I did not mention chocolate in the list. Although I personally believe that chocolate puts me in a better mood, there is not scientific research to back it.
up. Scientists say it is a very complicated and controversial issue. I will let you decide what you like.

What is your favorite pleasure food?

End with a cute goat!

Sources:

Comments:

*Ellen* - October 8, 2013 at 11:38 PM

I really appreciate the cute goat at the end. :)

82
Thursday, October 10, 2013

Do you want to "Go the Distance" with your food?

For one of my classes I have been researching the topic food miles. Food miles are a calculation of the amount of miles a product travels from producer to consumer. It can contain the distance from farm to processing plant and then processing plant to store. More precise calculations include the distance traveled for the feed for animals. For example, the mileage of the corn to the mill to the processing plant to turn into feed, to the farm to feed the animals.

The theory behind food miles is that they can be a calculation to represent the amount of energy and fossil fuels used to transport food. They can also provide a comparison of local versus outsourced food.

For example:
Eggs bought at Wal-Mart under the brand name of Sunny Farms, Hillandale Farms, or Sunny Meadow travel on average 575 miles from plant to store. In contrast, eggs that I buy from the farmer's market from a local farmer travel 18.3 miles. That means the Wal-Mart eggs travel 31 times farther then the local eggs. But this is not the case with all products.

Meat is a more complicated issue. For these calculations, I included distance from farm to processing plant (slaughter house) and the distance from processing to store. The generic Wal-Mart boneless skinless chicken breasts tracked to a Tyson plant (irony huh? Tyson chicken sold right next to it for a higher price). I had to average the farms that could go to that plant (I chose the four closest, based on grain distribution locations. All farms must be within 60 miles of a Tyson grain mill.) The total food miles for a Wal-Mart chicken is 763.2 miles.

For the local farmer I added the distance from his farm to the processing plant and back plus the distance to market. This added up to 334.3 food miles. That is only half of what Wal-Mart's was.

I was surprised to, but as a product becomes more processed and the food miles go up. To me there seems to be a larger benefit to buying produce local than meat, since there are fewer steps involved.

Did any of this surprise you?
Sources:
Missing Meat

As some of you know, for the duration of this project I have not been eating much meat even though my diet has been lacking in protein. I have made one dish (turkey lasagna) that includes meat. This is not because I dislike meat or am becoming a vegetarian. I like bacon too much. I have even had 4 chicken breasts and a pound of ground beef in my freezer for the past 3 weeks. So why?

To be honest, I am scared to cook meat. I have never cooked it on my own (a friend was over when I made turkey lasagna). I was unsure how to season it, even with a recipe. I am afraid of making myself sick with undercooked meat but also afraid of overcooking or worse burning it and setting off the smoke alarm (that thing is LOUD). I also am grossed out by blood, and raw meat kinda goes into that category. It is icky and slimy.

I know all these are excuses and I just need to get over it and cook the meat so that I can have protein. I learn by doing and by following someone’s example. Basically, what I am saying is does anyone want to come over and keep me company/help me as I make a meat dish? Help me conquer my fear. Encouragement in the comments is also appreciated.

Comments:

Anonymous - October 28, 2013 at 10:35 PM

There are cooking classes at BSU that you can take if you are really interested in it.
Saturday, October 12, 2013

Half Way There!

So today marks the half-way point. I started this experiment 54 days ago and I have 54 more days left. Every literal day is included, even the trip to DC.

Honestly, I was never sure if I would even make it this far. I have considered quitting several times, because I was hungry. But some people have pushed me to keep going.

So, what have I learned so far? Variety is good, something that I need to constantly work on. It is also good to conquer your fears and try something new, such as kale or beets. Use your resources, cookbooks are a good idea and so is asking for advice. Pay attention to your body; when you are hungry, eat, when you are lightheaded, eat more protein etc. Eat the food you bought first, so that stuff does not go bad.

So how have I changed these past 8 weeks? Unintentionally I have lost 8 lbs. I rarely feel bloated after meals. I eat smaller meals during the day instead of three large ones. I have a much greater appreciation for housewives who cook fresh food every day and for convenience. I am much more conscious about what I eat, and it tends to be much healthier. I am also spending less money than I expected, $255 so far for 8 weeks, averaging $5.08 a day.

What do I miss? Well a few days ago I had a craving for those really fake chocolate donuts in a bag that taste like cardboard (weird right?). I also miss sweets like cake and ice cream. After seeing commercials for Halloween candy, that looks really yummy to.

I did get myself a present for making it this far. One gallon of apple cider (with no preservatives). Yum!!

What changes have you noticed in me so far?

86
Monday, October 14, 2013

Jamba for Dinner

So today, I decided to treat myself for dinner. I got a Strawberry Wild at Jamba juice. This smoothie was made of apple juice, bananas, and strawberries. Yum!

This is the only place on campus that I feel comfortable eating that fits the requirements of this project. The smoothies are made of fresh fruit and sometimes yogurt. The only negative is the cost. My medium sized smoothie cost me $4.85, nearly as much as I spend in a whole day on food.

What food do you like to splurge on for yourself?

Source:

Comments:

Ellen - October 14, 2013 at 9:16 PM

I too splurge on Jamba juice.
Or on Jersey Mikes! Sadly, the closest Jersey Mikes in is Indy so I can only do that when I go home.

Alexa - October 15, 2013 at 11:04 AM

You have Jamba juice on campus? So jealous! Anywho, I just wanted to let you know I have been following your blog, and I am SO impressed! It’s very difficult to eat as purely and healthily as you are, especially for a college kid. Keep it up! Wish I could be doing the same. :)

87
Tuesday, October 15, 2013

Finally... Meat!

Today I ate meat! For the first time in over 2 weeks!! Lemon rosemary chicken was on the menu. My friend Beth came over to help me cook, and by help it was more of supervision. She watched as I did things and gave instructions and helped when I asked many questions.

The First Hiccup: I forgot to take the chicken out of the freezer; it spent over 30 minutes in the microwave defrosting.

I got the recipe from my friend Elizabeth. It is 2 chicken breasts, 1 Tablespoon of olive oil, 1 Tablespoon lemon juice, 2 Teaspoons salt, and 1/2 Tablespoon dried rosemary. The grand total for all that I made was $12.62. I made eight servings out of it.

Here they are going into the oven:
Here is the final product.

You may have noticed that in the above photo, the chicken look a bit cut up. That is because I forgot to take a picture of the chicken when it came out of the oven. I was so hungry I ate a whole piece before Beth reminded me that I would need a picture.

The verdict, chicken is good, meat is good. I want to buy bacon at the next farmer’s market and add more meat into my diet, even though it will cost more. So I am expecting to spend more money a day on food now, but if that means I will be having a healthier diet, then that is ok by me.
Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Something Does Not Look Right

For breakfast today I pulled out the bread I made one week ago. I did not keep it in the fridge because I do not like cold bread.

This is what it looked like.

There are little spots of mold on my yummy bread. Apparently, bread can have blue, black, or green mold as well as other colors. Mold is not a plant or an animal, but a third type of living being that feeds off of the bread as its source of nutrient. Technically, one of the ingredients, yeast, is also a fungus.

I decided to go ahead and eat my toast, but I cut off the top part of the bread, thinking it was fine. After reading that the spores can reach deeper into the bread, I decided to throw away the remaining part of the loaf and be on the safe side concerning my health. The USDA recommends not cutting off the mold and eating the rest of the bread anyway.

This incident encouraged me to clean through my fridge, even though I have been keeping a much better track of when my food goes bad. This is what else I found.

Can you guess what this is?
Nope, it is not meat; it is strawberry jam. Full of mold. It was opened in June and made with no preservatives. The sugar provides a good nutrient source for the mold. The USDA recommends throwing out any jam that has mold on it instead of eating around it.

Here is the side view:

I also made a vegetable medley and put in the freezer back in the first week of the semester, so 2 months ago. I have not been enticed to eat it, as it was not amazing to begin with; it is freezer burned with the potential for mold.
So why am I so concerned with mold? Some people think it is not that harmful and you should just eat around it. I do not plan to make myself sick when there is a sign there that the food is not ok. I am also allergic to penicillin, a type of mold that can grow on some food. Combined with environmental allergies, for me it is just not a good idea to chance it.

Sources:
Breakfast for Dinner

Since it is Fall Break and all, I decided to treat myself to pancakes for dinner. Even as an adult it still feels like I am going against the social rules of what is acceptable to eat for each meal. Come to think of it, I have not been eating traditional meals for most of this project. A few days ago my second dinner, yes like hobbits, consisted of hummus and goat Gouda cheese. I am discovering that I like eating several small meals throughout the day instead of three large ones. To me it feels like less work.

I also went to the farmer’s market today. I got BACON, finally. I have really missed it. Other highlights are beets, potatoes, and eggs. There is one more market in October and then they switch to once a month. That should be an interesting transition; I will probably need to get more of my food from a conventional grocery store.

I am trying to find more winter recipes. What is your favorite cold weather food?
Sunday, October 20, 2013

Meat and Money

One reason I did not eat much meat in the beginnings of this project is that buying free range/organic is much more expensive. I feared it would not make my diet feasible due to the expense.

Last week I made lemon rosemary chicken and ate it throughout the week. It was in small portions, but still I was having meat about every day. So how did that affect my data?

For the first 8 weeks, I averaged $5.11 per day on food (this includes breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks). For week 9, I averaged $6.49 per day, an increase of $1.38. This is not as high as I would have expected and it is encouraging me to add more meat to my diet. I still will not be eating tons of meat as I have cheaper sources of protein (such as hummus and eggs).

Does the cost of meat impact how much you eat it?
I Love Pinterest

As I planned for this project, I used Pinterest to pin lots of interesting recipes. It was not until today that I actually used one, as I typically forget that I have it. So, what amazingness did I find today?

Take a look on the next page.

It comes from Shape Magazine originally. I made the original hummus today, and while I put a bit too much garlic in it, it tasted good. I am excited to try some of the other types of hummus such as the beet one, green herb, pesto, and edamame.

Which one do you want to try?

Source:

Comments:

Elizabeth - October 21, 2013 at 2:18 PM

This is the best thing ever. I want to make all of them.
THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO HOMEMADE HUMMUS

Directions: Rinse and drain any canned beans, then combine everything in a food processor and blitz until smooth. For a thinner consistency, add 1 tablespoon water at a time.

**classic**
- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic

**greek**
- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

**southwestern**
- 1 can black beans
- 1 chipotle pepper
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves
- 1 teaspoon cumin

**pesto**
- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 2 tablespoons prepared pesto
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
### Edamame

- 1 3/4 cups cooked shelled edamame
- 1/3 cup tahini
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic

### Tapenade

- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/3 cup pitted black olives
- 1 chopped roasted red pepper
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/4 cup parsley leaves

### Ranch

- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/3 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 teaspoon dried dill

### Cheater’s Classic

- 1 can chickpeas
- 1/3 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic
Tuesday, October 22, 2013

A Day of Cooking

Today I prepared a lot of food. First thing, I made biscuits; even putting in the effort to roll them out and cut them round. Each one ended up costing $0.08.

Next, I made hummus using the recipe in the previous post. I used a bit too much garlic, note to self for next time.
Finally, this evening I made sugar cookie with my friends Ellen and Tabitha. We used the same recipe that I did a while ago. We added 4 tablespoons of milk, which made the cookies much less dry.

I am finding that I do not like sweets as much anymore. Maybe I am losing my sweet tooth.
Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Circumstances Outside of My Control

I woke up at 6:20 this morning, burrowing under my covers seeking warmth. I thought this was normal until my roommate came knocking on my door a few minutes later stating the power was out, and oh, we had just had the first snow of the year. I hop into action, getting dressed with many layers.

Then it hits me, no power means that I cannot cook, and I need breakfast before work. I figured my school would have power, so I drive over and get breakfast in the dining halls. It cost me $4.90!! I got a small hot chocolate from Starbucks for $2.75. (Note to self, my homemade hot chocolate tastes 10x better). I also got potato rounds for $0.95 and 3 pieces of bacon at $0.40 each.

It is quite nice having breakfast prepared for me, but I can already tell what I have been eating the past few months is not only cheaper but of a better quality. For example, my hot chocolate cost about $1.90 and my bacon is $0.30 per slice.

Here is to hoping the power is back soon so I can get back to cooking!

Comments:

Anonymous - October 24, 2013 at 7:32 PM

Can you post your recipe for hot chocolate?? It sounds enticing :)}
Wednesday, October 23, 2013

**Not So Vegan Mac n' Cheese**

I got a large head of cauliflower at last Saturday's Farmer's Market. Large is an understatement. I knew that I would not be able to eat it raw before it went bad. Therefore, I needed to make a dish with cauliflower as a base. I stumbled upon Cauli "Mac" N' Cheez on The Healthy Voyager blog.

I substituted all of the vegan cheese ingredients for real cheese ingredients, hence making the recipe no longer vegan. It is still vegetarian.
This is one of those recipes where I kept forgetting steps and having to go back and redo them. For instance, I did not blot the cauliflower dry when I drained it and I also forgot to grease the pan. Both of these were remedied before it went into the oven. I set it to 350 instead of 370, nearly doubling the cooking time.

Verdict. It is tasty and cheesy. It may have been cheaper with noodles though; cauliflower was the most expensive ingredient at 5 dollars. The whole dish cost $10.84, with eight servings.

Source:
Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Bananito

*Musa acuminata,* anyone? Otherwise known as a bananito (I am not kidding), this is another variety of banana. (It is also called a manzana, stubby banana, or ladyfinger). In our grocery stores, we have only one type of banana, the Cavendish banana. They originated in Eastern Asia, Southern China, India, Philippines, and Malaysia. See if you can tell the difference between them below:

Now where would I get such a strange, fat little fruit? Well I work in the greenhouses on campus where we happen to have a few banana trees. They were ripe today and my boss said I could take four bananas to make banana bread for this project.

This is the recipe that I used for the bread. The bananas were a little harder to mash up, maybe I should have waited a day for them to ripen a bit more. It turned out well; I can't wait to try it!

It looks delicious!

Sources:
Thursday, October 24, 2013

Not So Secret Hot Chocolate

So, I had someone ask about my hot chocolate recipe. I am slight embarrassed to say that it is not entirely made from scratch (but that is on my list of to dos).

I make hot chocolate with 2 cups of 2% milk with 2 tablespoons of this:

I got it at Earth Fare, a natural grocery store. The ingredients are: natural cane sugar, Dutch processed cocoa (with alkalai), and natural vanilla powder. The serving instructions are 1 tsp. per cup of milk, so I triple the amount of powder I use making it extra chocolately. I allow this in my project as it has less the five ingredients and all of those ingredients are not really processed.

I hope that answers your question Anonymous!

Comments:

Mary - November 8, 2013 at 10:56 AM

Oooo Christmas gift idea! Homemade hot chocolate.
Saturday, October 26, 2013

Cleaning Time

With all the cooking I have been doing this semester, the kitchen has to be kept clean. Not only to prevent germs, but also because, aesthetically, I prefer a clean organized kitchen. I think it is whiter then I have ever seen it.

I forgot to take a before pictures, so here is the after one. Just imagine a lot of clutter and dishes for the before

Yes, on the stove are three towels that my mom hand wove for me. They are much better at absorbing liquids then store bought towels. It makes my kitchen feel more like home.
Chocolate Surprise

Today I managed to oversleep (I am embarrassed to say I got up at 11:50am). This means I missed the last regular farmer’s market of the season, and I really needed to get some groceries today.

I decided to go to Marsh to get the few things I needed. I was able to get organic milk and organic butter, one peck of apples (they were local, from Goshen, IN), and most importantly, chocolate.

Unfortunately, Marsh does not carry any of the normal brands of chocolate that fit my rules. However, I found a surprise in the candy isle:

Dove chocolate is Rainforest Alliance Certified! That also goes for most of the Mars Company (which own the Dove brand). So, even though these chocolates are not organic, the cocoa is made in a more sustainable manner then say Hershey chocolate. I was able to warrant this purchase because of the certification and because I needed chocolate and this is the best that I can get at a standard grocery store. Believe me, you want me to have chocolate :)
Eggceptional Eggs

I recently had a friend ask me what the health benefits were from eating organic or free-range eggs. I surprised myself that I could not put into words why they were better. So, after some research, I have come up with a few reasons:

1. There is a difference in diet. Commercial/generic hens eat a grain meal that can consist of corn, soy, and/or cottonseed. Free-range chickens sometimes have access to a similar food, but they also eat grass, seeds, worms, and bugs.

2. Free-range grocery store eggs are different from free-range farmer's market eggs. The commercial free-range type may be set up similarly to generic eggs (chickens live indoors with a concrete floor) with the exception that there is one small door allowing the chickens to go into a small fenced-in grass area. They typically do not choose to go outside.

3. A study done by Mother Earth News concluded that free-range eggs had the following as compared to a commercial/generic egg:
   - 1/3 less cholesterol
   - 7 times more beta carotene
   - 1/4 less saturated fat
   - 3 times more vitamin E
   - 2/3 more vitamin A
   - 2 times more omega 3 fatty acids

4. If you have not noticed, free-range eggs are a darker yellow then commercial eggs.

Left: Commercial egg; Right: farmer's market egg. Photo from The Nourishing Gourmet.
So, what do labels mean on the carton?

- Free Range/Free Roaming - hens are not in a cage, they typically do have access to the outdoors, USDA does not regulate this term
- Certified Organic - hens are not in a cage, they have access to outside for an unspecified amount of time, they are fed a vegetarian organic diet
- Omega 3 - Slightly higher omega 3 levels through altering the hen's diet
- Cage free - hens are not in a cage, they typically do not have access to the outdoors
- Natural - no regulation for this term, may not mean anything

So... what kind of eggs do you eat?

Sources:
What Will be in Your Christmas Stocking?

So my folks have been asking me recently, what do I want for Christmas? Honestly, I do not have many ideas yet (that is sure to change), but I did think of something I hope to find in my stocking. In my family, typically your stocking is full of your favorite candy. In years past, I have found jellybeans, dark chocolate, an assortment of candy canes (especially sour ones), pop rocks, you get the idea.

So what do I want this year? Peppermint candies, not any peppermint candy though. I want Hammond's Candy. When I visited my cousin in Colorado over the summer, we toured their factory. They still make and twist all their candy canes by hand. But I do not want a candy cane.

I want this:

Old fashioned ribbon candy. They make it on original machinery. The type in particular that I want is the All Natural version; there is no artificial sweeteners or colors. I got some when I was in Colorado but they barely made the plane trip home, soooo delicious.

What is your favorite type of candy?

Source:

Comments:

Jane - November 3, 2013 at 7:23 PM

Ribbon candy used to be my favorite Christmas sweet, too, but not the peppermint or spearmint or wintergreen flavors (yuck). I liked the fruity flavors. I was perfectly happy with whatever goes in them... I loved that stuff. I really don’t care for it anymore, but it was my favorite when I was a kid...
Stuck on Side Meat

This past week I have been stuck in a rut. Every day at some point, I have biscuits and bacon. Typically for breakfast. Then there are biscuits for lunch, and maybe for dinner. It is just easier when I have them lying around then to make something different.

I can see how these two foods were go to foods for early settlers of America. Bacon, or side meat as they called it, would keep cured in the smokehouse all winter long. It provided vital fat and protein, necessary for their diets. Biscuits provided carbohydrates and were a carrier for other foods such as jam or butter. They also helped fill up the stomach and decrease the feelings of hunger.

The sad thing is that I only have a few biscuits and 2 pieces of bacon left. I will have to wait a week at least until I could get bacon from Becker Farms again. I can always make more biscuits though. The nature of this project is forcing me to eat different things. I will need to find another source of protein since my bacon will be gone. Therefore, I will need to cook my chicken or beef, eat eggs, or make more hummus and eat more nuts.

Even though I fall into patterns for a week at a time, they are not forever. At some point I run out of a food item and I have to eat whatever else is in my pantry.

What is your favorite food? What would you do if you ran out of it?
Saturday, November 2, 2013

A Number's Game

I thought now is as good of time as any to update you on the money side of this project. I have just completed week 11 and I have 5 more weeks to go. I am almost 3/4 of the way done. Of the first 77 days, I have stuck to the diet for 70 of them. The 7 days off included the 4 day trip to Washington DC, 2 days at home for Labor Day weekend, and today where I went home to visit family. I am anticipating one or two more weekends at home and thanksgiving break to not be calculated in the totals. I am finding that on those days I am not monetarily counting, I am still eating following the rules; I am just not the one paying for it.

So far, I spend on average $5.32 on food per day. I have spent $554.58 on food, eaten $372.10, and wasted $41.93. That means I have $140.55 in food sitting around my house waiting to be eaten.

I have a maximum of 35 days left on the project. This will be more like 30 counted monetarily for the project due to family gatherings. I do hope to do all the calculations for thanksgiving dinner though.

I am amazed on how little I spend per day on food. Most of it is still organic or right from the farmer’s market. I think the main thing that helps me is that I make everything from scratch, I am conscious when things will expire, and I have a smaller appetite. I also cook in bulk.

How much do you spend a day on food? Do you wish you could spend less?
A Different Type of Restriction

I am not sure if I mentioned this before, but now is a good of time as any. I have another restriction to my diet besides the whole no processed food organic thing. I have food allergies.

I was diagnosed with food allergies my freshmen year of college. They originally thought I was allergic to 26 different foods including pork, turkey, beef, apples, bananas, cantaloupe, spinach, broccoli, yeast (brewer's and baker's), all nuts, shellfish, peppers, potatoes, etc. I cannot remember the rest. For a periods I eliminated all of these from my diet, sustaining on Pediasure, a child's nutritional supplement. I guess this is one reason why this project is not as hard, my diet is not as nearly restricted.

So, what am I actually allergic to? After eliminating everything, I brought back foods one by one. When they did not make me sick, I assumed that I was not allergic to them. The skin prick test is 40% accurate if the result is positive. I am allergic to bell peppers (I include all related peppers in this group just to be safe) and all shellfish. That is not that much to deal with.

Are you, my reader, allergic to anything?
This Week Could be Cheap

If the last two days are anything to judge by, I will be spending a lot less on food this week. So far, I have spent $5.39 in two days. So why is it so low? I currently have a cold and more likely the flu. Therefore, my appetite has shrunk considerably.

Right now, I am eating biscuits and orange juice. I am going to try my very best not to break the rules and get better at the same time. I am really fortunate that I just made myself a large batch of biscuits, so that should hold me out this week food wise. I can also make rice. Seeing that I get dizzy when I stand up, cooking is not exactly a priority. Sleeping on the couch sounds just fine with me.

What are your remedies when you get sick? I know chicken noodle soup is a good one. I have one bag left of it frozen, but I will save it until I have an appetite.

I am sorry for the short post, but it is time for me to go crash and get better.

Comments:

Anonymous - November 4, 2013 at 9:11 PM

Elevate your head when you sleep.
Only eat when you are hungry.
Proteins are a good thing to eat.
Stay warm :}
Wednesday, November 6, 2013

Different Kind of Diet

So, what have I been up to the past few days? Lots of sleeping, up to 14 hours a day. I have also not been eating that much. I have had lots of biscuits, some butter, and rice. This is the best I can do for sick food without breaking the rules. Oh, and I have also gone through one gallon of orange juice.

On the plus side, I am not eating that much food, therefore, I am not running out. I am hoping to be back to normal tomorrow, where I get to go to a super fancy luncheon for my seminar. I cannot say no to free food.

This weekend I get to go home. I hope to teach my sister how to make hummus and teach my family to like it. The tables are turned, the picky eater bringing a new food to her family. Believe it or not, I was an extremely picky eater as a child. I still kinda am.

Any suggestion of what I should eat to get better?

Comments:

Mary - November 8, 2013 at 10:27 AM

Drink some kombucha! I'll share some this weekend.
My Friends Are Amazing

As you may have already figured out, I have been sick with the flu for the past week. I have not been posting as much because my diet has not been that interesting. Biscuits, biscuits, and more biscuits.

Today I finally felt up to cooking. I made scrambled eggs sandwiches with provolone cheese, and of course, biscuits. Sadly, my appetite was not up to the meal and I only finished half, but that is something. I also made hot chocolate, since it is a nippy day.

This afternoon my friend Ellen came over and brought me food. She made some ice cream in her little ice cream maker. That will do wonders for my sore throat. It tastes much like a chocolate frosty, not too thick, and not too runny. Ice cream for dinner it is.
Saturday, November 9, 2013

Food Feast

This weekend I got to go home and see my family. This morning my sister Catherine, her boyfriend Joe, and my cousin Mary got together to cook. Catherine and Joe tackled the Eggs Benedict while I worked on hummus, and Mary made kale chips. My aunt Linda sat conveniently close, I believe to be the first taste tester.

Here my sister Catherine shows off her mad cooking skills!

The finished Eggs Benedict! The yoke is running away!!
So much hummus!! I got my mom to try it, and gasp...she liked it :) 

More lemon rosemary chicken for dinner! Yay protein (I am eating it Mama Carnivore).
I have had a lot of protein today. Eggs, ham, hummus, and chicken. Plus milk in hot chocolate if that counts. I am also so stuffed after dinner; I have not had this feeling for a long time. I am also gaining my energy back.

Comments:

*Elizabeth* - November 9, 2013 at 8:00 PM

Yay, you are eating again!
And yay, hummus!
Sunday, November 10, 2013

Grocery Bags

Shopping bags. I bet that you probably do not think much about what carries your food from store to car. Paper or plastic? How about neither. With this project, I have been making my best effort to use reusable bags when I buy groceries.

These bags are sold at most stores now for as cheap as 99 cents. So why do I use them? One of the first reasons is that I am sick of the accumulation of plastic bags at my house. Honestly, I have no idea what to do with them all. They can be small trashcan liners, but that is all that I have thought up. The same goes with paper sacks. Because of my childhood, the only other use for them that I can think of is weaving projects for elementary school kids.

Only 1-2% of plastic bags are recycled in the USA. This means that 98% of them are going into landfills.

Target will credit you $0.05 for each reusable bag you use. This is the only store that I currently shop at that I could find if they give a bag credit. Who knows, it could catch on at other stores.

Sources:
Tuesday, November 12, 2013

Survey Time

One of the main goals of this project was to prove that I could eat organic food with no preservatives while maintaining a college student's budget. It is now time to establish what a college student actually pays for food.

I have created a survey that I would like you take. Please only take it if you are a current college student (graduate and doctoral are ok too). The survey is completely confidential. I would also appreciate it if you could pass it on to any other college students that you know.

Once I get enough data collected, I will post the results here. I am really excited to see what information I get.

Here is the link
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KKPGDH7

And don't worry, it is only 10 questions and should be quick and painless.

Here is another goat for your troubles.

Source:
Me Want Cookies

This evening I have been craving sugar to the point of eating it out of the bag. Don't worry it was only a tablespoon. About an hour later, this craving intensified, so I began to wonder why. What is my body telling me by craving sugar? Does that mean I am lacking something in my diet? After a brief search on the internet, this is what I found:

When you are craving sugar, such as cookies, ice cream, and candy it means that your glycemic (sugar) levels are low. Low blood sugar should not be remedied by giving into pure sugar, as that can cause your blood sugar to spike and then crash again. That is why I wanted more sugar an hour later. What I found is best is to eat a piece of fruit. It has a lower sugar level and the fiber found in fruit is good for you. Eating legumes and carbs can also help as they slowly release sugar therefore not creating as much of a sugar high and crash. We are designed to crave sugar as a survival instinct, but this is not a problem in most modern day societies.

What about chocolate? Oddly enough, it does not fit into the sugar cravings. Chocolate has magnesium in it, so when you are craving it, that might actually mean that you need magnesium. Magnesium is found in leafy greens, so try eating those (I know a harsh alternative to chocolate). From what I read dark chocolate in small quantities is also ok.

The other main craving I have faced is salt. Normally I crave it during the summer when I am working outside, and that typically means I am dehydrated and actually need salt and electrolytes. My coworkers know that I will put salt on my biscuits and bread or just eat it straight out of the box. When you are not dehydrated, salt cravings are caused by stress. Instead of eating, try slowly breathing and doing something to relax before you binge.

What are you craving right now?

Sources:
Since getting off of the campus meal plan, I have eliminated most processed foods from my diet and have generally been eating more healthily than ever before. But I do crave sugar all the time! Even though I eat a lot of apples, legumes, whole grains, and vegetables of all kinds, I can hardly go a day without really wanting cookies or candy or muffins or pie or... you get the picture.
I also crave coffee pretty frequently, though as you know, I really shouldn’t have it because it makes me insanely fidgety and unfocused.

I have also read that when you stop eating processed sugar, you are detoxing. So the cravings could be caused by an “addiction” on processed sugar. Coffee is the same thing, withdrawal, therefore craving.

well i suppose to amend the previous question, it would be more like "wheat, malt, rice, granola, etc cravings?"
Building Patience

My roommate made an interesting comment today. I was stating how I was excited once this project was over, I would be able to eat instant soup. I really do miss the convenience in having food at the snap of your fingers when that craving strikes. She mentioned that by cooking food, you could build patience and character.

Those who know me well know that I am not the most patient person in the world. It has been challenging to have to wait for my food. Annoying to say the least. Cooking every meal requires planning, making sure you have all the ingredients, and allotting time to cook and eat.

The last 4 years of college I lived in the dorms, eating processed food whenever I wanted. It was the easy option, although expensive. So far, living off campus and making my own food has been rewarding. I do not have to worry about contamination of my food with peppers, and I can have whatever I want when I eat. This actually makes life less stressful.

Back to building patience and character, I think I have improved on both accounts. I am used to food taking a while to make and I appreciate how good home-cooked food tastes. My patience is only tried when I have a craving that I cannot satisfy immediately. On character, I think I have grown as a person. I am more independent about what I eat and more willing to take chances and try new foods.

Have you noticed any changes in me over the course of this project?
Saturday, November 16, 2013

Final Farmers Market and Three Weeks Left

So today was not the final farmers market of the year, just the last one to occur during my project. That is right, I have 3 weeks, read 21 days, left of this diet. Huzzah!!! Honestly, I am ready to be done and it is taking more effort to stick to my rules and not sneak around them.

I got some cool stuff at the farmers market today.

I got eggs, BACON (yay!!!!), onions, and apples. Bacon was the main thing that I wanted to get. I really missed it; it is probably my favorite meat in the world. The rest were necessities and I would rather get them from the market then from the store.

I also got myself a present to help keep my stress low in the coming weeks.

Lavender! Hopefully it will bloom in the coming months. For now I can rub the leaves and smell them, lavender has a very calming effect. Except if you are my sister, she dislikes the smell of lavender.

Comments:

Esther - November 27, 2013 at 8:46 PM

Just don’t do what Steph did to her plant!
A New Type of Farming

For my seminar, I have been doing research on different science topics. This past week, I wrote an article on vertical farms. They are what they sound like, a farm that goes up instead of side to side.

So why the interest? Aren’t current farming techniques sufficient for our needs? In actuality, by 2050, the world’s population is expected to reach 10 billion and we are in need of new techniques to grow more food. Vertical farms might be the answer. They utilize shelves to grow more plants.

Aquaponics are used in these systems. Basically, fish are raised in containment and their "dirty" water is then filtered through the plant roots, providing them with nourishment. This closed loop system can be seen as efficient as it eliminates waste and puts it to good use.

To help to explain this concept more, so that you can visualize it, here is a video. And it has British accents!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPKCdThs3bw

These types of companies also exist in the United States. For instance, FarmedHere LLC opened its doors in Chicago in 2013.

Sources:
Tuesday, November 19, 2013

Where Do I Keep Everything?

I was thinking, I really have not discussed where I keep all my food for this project. At my house, I have a small fridge, as my roommate uses most of the full sized one. I also have some shelves and a cabinet.
Here we go.

My food corner:
Inside the cabinet. I tend to forget what is in here :/. So far, I have not come across rotten food, just sprouting potatoes.

I am in my fridge every day and yet stuff still goes bad. I am still working how to use the door space more effectively.
The freezer, otherwise known as the place food disappears for months only to be rediscovered. Case in point, the zucchini muffins I found last week that were made in early September.
My other cabinet. Baking dry goods, containers, and cups.

So, that is where all of my food lives. I like having it organized. It is actually a little messy right now, so I might empty stuff out later and clean all the shelves.

How do you organize your food?