

**Campuses
everywhere are
lining up for
peanuts.**

NEW!

Campus Dining Guide

Created in
Dining

PEANUTS *on the* MENU

*A Campus Dining Guide to Serving Peanuts
Safely and Confidently*



UMassAmherst
UMass Dining



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"Great chefs don't just prepare meals—they create experiences. At UMass, the chefs turn imagination into flavor, bringing bold creativity, passion, and fabulous recipes to every table they touch."

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2 UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S STUDENTS

Today's college students are reshaping expectations around campus dining.

Food choices are increasingly informed by wellness goals, personal values, and cultural connections, rather than convenience alone. For campus dining leaders, understanding these evolving behaviors is essential to developing menus that resonate with students and encourage them to dine on campus.

A GENERATION SEEKING BALANCE & PURPOSE

Students' relationships with food reflect a balance of function and experience. Research from Technomic indicates that energy, mood, and mental focus are among the top wellness outcomes students seek from their meals. Ingredients that support sustained energy, stress management, and academic performance are particularly relevant in the campus environment. Peanuts, which provide plant-based protein, healthy fats, and key nutrients, align well with these functional priorities.

Dining programs that clearly communicate these attributes tend to resonate most with students. That alignment is reflected in student behavior, with seven in 10 students at UMass Amherst consuming peanuts at least weekly, according to a recent campus survey. Many campuses incorporate peanuts and peanut butter into breakfast offerings, salad stations, or targeted messaging during high-demand periods such as finals week. These approaches link nutrition to performance in a way that feels practical and relevant to students' daily routines.

4 MANAGING ALLERGENS IN CAMPUS DINING



OVERVIEW OF ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT AT SCALE

At large campus dining programs, allergen safety is most effective when embedded into everyday operations rather than treated as a standalone initiative. At UMass Amherst, Dining Services serves more than 50,000 meals daily across multiple dining commons, retail locations, cafés, and food trucks. Within this scale, allergen management is integrated into standard workflows, ensuring safety practices are consistent across all venues and service formats.

Transparency and student choice are central to this approach. Allergen information is made available through online menus, mobile apps, and point-of-service signage, allowing students to make informed decisions independently. For those with more complex dietary needs, direct access to registered dietitians and mobile ordering options provides additional layers of support. This model allows students with and without food allergies to dine confidently, balancing safety with menu diversity and avoiding unnecessary restrictions.

STAFF TRAINING AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Consistent and comprehensive staff training is foundational to maintaining allergen safety at scale. All culinary and front-of-house staff complete annual allergen training that covers ingredient awareness, proper food handling, cross-contact prevention, and emergency response procedures. Training is reinforced through ongoing supervision, daily pre-meal briefings, and clearly documented standard operating procedures.

Accountability is built into daily operations. Supervisors routinely verify ingredient labels, review standardized recipes for allergen content, and ensure sanitation and separation protocols are followed. Regular evaluations and hands-on oversight help reinforce expectations and maintain a strong culture of safety within kitchens and service areas.

LABELING, SIGNAGE, AND STATION DESIGN

Clear labeling and intentional station design play a critical role in reducing cross-contact and building student confidence. At UMass Amherst, allergen information is consistently presented across dining hall signage, menus, and mobile platforms, all generated from a centralized menu management system to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Stations are designed to visually and operationally distinguish allergen-containing foods, helping students quickly identify appropriate options while supporting staff adherence to safe preparation practices. This clarity enables students to navigate dining spaces independently and supports informed decision-making without requiring constant staff intervention.

PREVENTING CROSS-CONTACT

Effective cross-contact prevention relies on a combination of physical separation, disciplined workflows, and staff accountability. Dedicated utensils, cookware, cutting boards, and storage areas are used to manage allergens such as peanuts. When feasible, higher-risk items are prepared in separate zones, and all equipment is thoroughly washed, sanitized, and properly stored after use.

Daily oversight, pre-meal reviews, and coordination with campus health services help ensure these practices are consistently applied and trusted by students and families. Education and transparency reinforce the message that allergen safety and menu inclusion can coexist when appropriate protocols are in place.





5 CULINARY INSPIRATION & RECIPE DEVELOPMENT

UMass Amherst Dining approaches recipe development as a collaborative and iterative process rooted in culinary creativity, nutritional review, and student feedback. New ideas are encouraged at all levels of the culinary team, supporting ongoing innovation across menus.

METHODOLOGY: TESTING & REFINING RECIPES AT UMASS AMHERST

UMass Amherst Dining approaches recipe development as a collaborative and iterative process rooted in culinary creativity, nutritional review, and student feedback. New ideas are encouraged at all levels of the culinary team, supporting ongoing innovation across menus. Initial concepts are developed and tested by Head Chefs and Executive Chefs, then reviewed and standardized in partnership with campus dietitians to ensure consistency, nutritional integrity, and alignment with allergen protocols.

New recipes are often piloted during special events and limited-time activations within the dining halls. These controlled launches allow dining teams to evaluate operational feasibility while gathering real-time feedback from students and staff. Recipes that perform well in these settings are refined as needed and, based on demand and feedback, may be incorporated into the regular menu cycle.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD
THE GUIDE

Campus Dining Guide

Created in partnership with UMass
Dining

- ✓ How to maximize peanuts in retail formats

- ✓ Communication strategies
- ✓ Planning and promoting special events
- ✓ Measuring success
- ✓ Getting started

