

The Big Swill

Campus grub on trial

Is campus food really the worst in the universe? Excalibur sent five of its hungriest reporters to find out. Kevin Connolly, Adrian Iwachiw, Roman Pawlyshyn, Paul Pivato, Julia Steinecke, braved nine of York's most infamous eating establishments and crawled back to file this report.

Acropolis-Atkinson College

Rating: 

Everything about the Acropolis seems rather ordinary. Service is very fast (soup was served within a minute of ordering), and the selection includes different steak dinners (salmon steak, halibut steak, sirloin), spaghetti, veal cordon bleu, baby beef liver, chicken omelet (most within the \$5-\$9 range). Sandwiches and cold dishes can be had for under \$5, though there is little choice in salads.

The navy bean soup was a change from canned or Central Square soup, though, again, not spectacular. I ordered a Porcupine Meatball dinner (which didn't seem to be made of porcupine meat, though one never knows). This consisted of three fairly big, light and fluffy meatballs stuffed with plenty of rice and sauce (actually I couldn't tell if the third one was a meatball or some kind of cabbage roll filled with pork and rice), some crisp fries and what seemed to be canned peas.

All of this, along with a small chef's salad, a bun (not particularly fresh) and coffee, was enough to oversatisfy a hungry appetite. It came out to \$6.37 (plus tip). —AI

The Ainger-Atkinson College

Rating: 

Ironically, the place that serves the best food on campus doesn't accept scrip. However, the Ainger offers a wide assortment of nutritional foods—things like guava juice, quiche, spinach pies, fruit and vegetable salads, cottage cheese in containers, granola, mixed fruits and nuts, good muffins, and a wide assortment of herbal teas.

Favorite foods of Ainger regulars include bagels (regular—40¢, whole wheat—50¢) toasted and topped with one or more of several cheeses (cream cheese, cheddar, smoked gruyere, havarti), butters (peanut or apple) or tomatoes, and their spicy, vegetarian chili (95¢). Sandwiches of various kinds are only \$1.05 on rye bread, or \$1.10 on kaiser. Soups change daily. Coffee is 40¢ (35¢ if you bring your own mug).

However, a word of warning: much of the food selection tends to run out by late afternoon, so arrive early.

Otherwise, the prices and quality of the food make this the place to recommend—even the music is good. —AI

Argh-McLaughlin College

Rating: 

Located in the basement of MacLaughlin College, the Argh, a small coffee and sandwich bar, boasts some of the most passable food on campus. The sandwiches are cheap and tasty and their bagels, toasted with cream cheese, are heavenly compared to the burnt offerings (I had to say it) of the main cafeteria. The coffee, however, is as sickening as everywhere else on campus. God knows where they get the stuff, it has all the flavor and aroma of fresh soil, percolated in acid rain. Aaaargh!

All things being equal, this is one of the better places to eat on campus, despite the claustrophobic implications of its quaintly squalid dining facilities. —KC

Central Square Cafeteria

Rating: 

Bacon and eggs: they're fattening, they cause high-blood pressure, arteriosclerosis and cancer. So you know they're good for you. A breakfast of bacon and eggs (\$2.16) at the Central Square Cafeteria, however, is not good for you. If it were insipid, it would still be good, but it is beyond insipidness. It is in the realm of evil.

I ordered my eggs scrambled because I thought it was impossible to make bad scrambled eggs. But the truth—so hard to swallow—was sitting on my plate. They were indeed bad. Lumpish and dingy, they tasted as if they had been sauteed in stale water. Parsley could not muffle the wretched taste of the eggs, and I grew furious, because I knew that included somewhere in the price was the cost of two meaningless sprigs of parsley.

If anything is easier to make than scrambled eggs, it is toast. Next to the eggs were four generous slices of toast, which were four slices too generous. Sick rats and starving seagulls have eaten better bread. The toast tasted as if it had been lightly fried over burning plastic.

The whole meal was served on a paper plate with a synthetic knife and fork. Throw-away utensils for throw-away food. —PP

Winters Cafeteria

Rating: 

It may not sound complimentary to call the Winters cafeteria a junk food haven, but in this case, "junk food" happens to mean some of the more palatable food on campus.

Winters is the campus hot-spot for pizzas—they go through 60 to 70 a day, more on Wednesdays. It's easy to see why.

The pizza, which comes with assorted toppings from plain cheese to the works, goes for \$1.45 for the deluxe model. The *Excalibur* test slice was soft, chewy, and healthy on the tomato sauce, if not a little soggy. It won't win any awards, but it's at least as good as the product at half a dozen local pizza parlors.

Winters can also fill you with acceptable sandwiches, depending on how wisely you choose your ingredients.

The *Excalibur* test demanded nothing less than the junkiest option: a turkey sub laden with mayonnaise, checking in at \$2.75.

It was a mistake. Where the pizza made for a tasty junk food nibble, the sub was indifferent on any count. You could squeeze the bun like an accordion despite its semi-stale state, the shredded lettuce was of the week-old-on-the-counter variety and the pressed turkey meat was tasteless. But with the selection of ingredients and a level mind, you can probably do much better than *Excalibur* did.

The rest of the *Excalibur* test meal at Winters didn't fare well. The pea soup (75¢) was a gristly affair generously laced with chunks of no-name animal fat.

So if you stick to the pizza, chances are you won't go wrong at Winters. You may not get all your vitamins, but at least you won't feel the urge to instantly brush your teeth. —RP

The ratings . . .



The Horror! The Horror!



Grit your teeth & sell your scrip



Uh-huh



My god, it's food!



Ah...

Marky's-Winters College

Rating: 

Marky's menu boasts a small but seductive menu of sandwiches and deli food, seductive, that is, until you taste your meal. Granted, a random selection is not necessarily indicative of the whole menu, but in the case of the beef knish, fries, and gravy, it was enough to kill even the most rampant curiosity.

The knish was obviously microwaved from some frozen brand, and was the worst "food" I have ever tasted, *anywhere*. The tough crust tasted like a cross between cardboard and leatherette. When peeled back it revealed a cold minced beef that tasted like it had been pulled from a syphilitic cow. All this was coated lovingly with a tasteless orange gravy that ruined the fries, and added insult to injury when combined with the alleged knish. The only redeeming feature was the acceptable matzo soup.

The staff at Marky's was inexplicably large, outnumbering at all times the understandably sparse clientele.

The one thing that Marky's has going for it is that it is the only licensed place on campus that takes scrip. It is relatively inexpensive (my meal came to \$4.20 plus drinks—at least you don't have to pay for the abuse), and should be safe for a quick soup and sandwich. Avoid the knish like the plague. —KC

Founders Dining Hall

Rating: 

The cafeteria that spans the bottom of Founders and Vanier Colleges is alive with noise. There are groans, burps, sighs, and wails. There is the angry clatter of forks on trays. There are remarks like: "It doesn't look like chicken," "There's something in your salad," or "This is worse than bad; it's awful."

There are a few things you should know before tackling Founders food. Taste your meal before you add salt and pepper. Most

things, including the innocent potato, are heavily spiced. Avoid meats that look highly processed: the chicken sticks, for example. Chicken is not weiner-shaped by nature; something criminal has been done to it since it left the farm.

Stay away from odd colors. Last year's green pumpkin pie was not worth the money. Have a nibble on the lettuce before you invest in a

vegetable salad—sometimes it's sour.

Things that are generally edible include chicken, roast beef, boiled corn, pizza subs. Hamburgers, hot dogs, and grilled cheese sandwiches are safe.

If you know what to look for, you can get yourself a half-decent at Founders. When all else fails, when everything looks green and crawling and sour, the cafeteria also sells Chipwiches and Hickory sticks. —JS

York residence students each were required to buy \$1,050 of scrip this year to spend in York eateries. This translates to \$30.88 per week. Here's what \$30.88 can buy you in one week of dining at Founders:

Stong Dining Hall

Rating: 

Here, in one of our hallowed dining halls, our lucky diner was treated to roast beef, broccoli, and baked potatoes. The beef was dry and overcooked, giving it the consistency slightly softer than tree bark, and one had to soak it in gravy for what seemed to be hours before it was even remotely edible.

The broccoli was limp and chewy, tasting like some sort of seaweed. The baked potato, mercifully, was tasteless, though its waxy feeling in the mouth was nothing short of nauseating. It is true that we can't expect Cordon Bleu quality from a college cafeteria, but at these prices something palatable would have been appreciated.

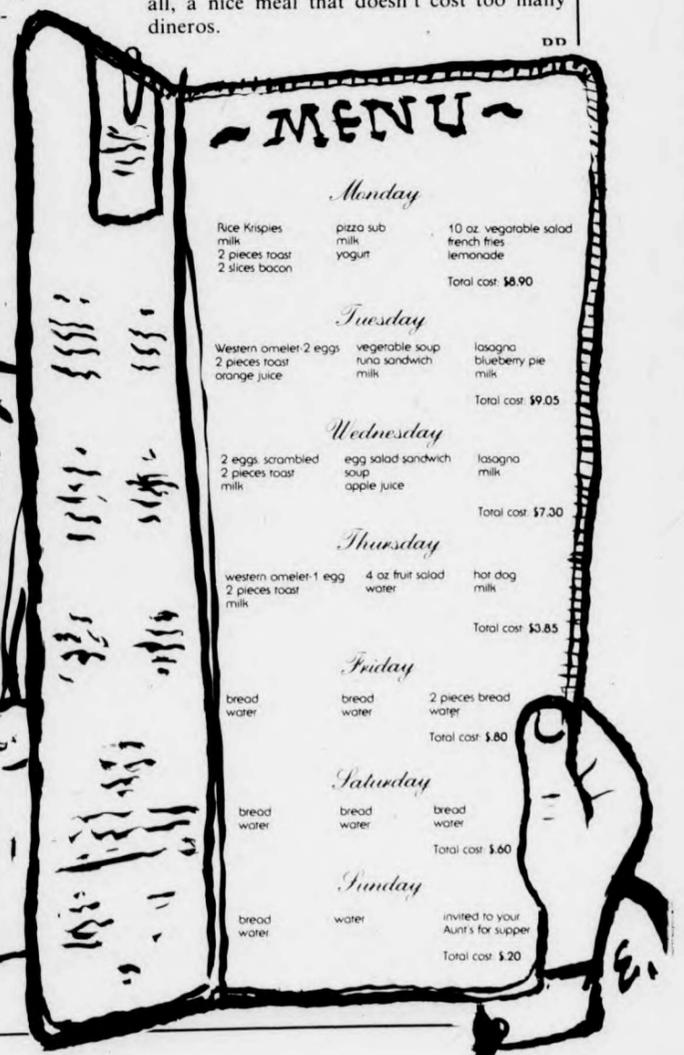
The roast beef was \$3.30, and with rice, broccoli, baked potato, and dessert, the meal was over \$5.50. Speaking of dessert, the rum ball that we had the misfortune to select was unspeakable. The cake was soaked with rum extract, and resembled wet sand in taste and appearance. The confection was so heavy that two forkfuls were enough to finish off the average eater, and more than half was completely out of the question. The rice was good and the gravy made the beef barely edible, but all in all, most bachelors eat better. The portions were generous, in this case annoyingly so, and the service was quick and as friendly as could be expected (after all, they probably eat this stuff too.) —KC

Atkinson Cafeteria

Rating: 

A quick delicious lunch a la Club Sandwich and fries can be found in the Atkinson Cafeteria. The Caf is spacious and clean, unlike Central Square Cafeteria, which has all the ambience of a bus terminal.

The Club Sandwich is thick and fresh, its delicate contents gushing out between the crisp, sublime toast. And it's good too. The fries are excellent soured in a rich gravy. All in all, a nice meal that doesn't cost too many dineros. —JD



- MENU -

<i>Monday</i>		
Rice Krispies milk 2 pieces toast 2 slices bacon	pizza sub milk yogurt	10 oz. vegetable salad french fries lemonade
Total cost: \$6.90		
<i>Tuesday</i>		
Western omelet-2 eggs 2 pieces toast orange juice	vegetable soup tuna sandwich milk	lasagna blueberry pie milk
Total cost: \$9.05		
<i>Wednesday</i>		
2 eggs scrambled 2 pieces toast milk	egg salad sandwich soup apple juice	lasagna milk
Total cost: \$7.30		
<i>Thursday</i>		
western omelet-1 egg 2 pieces toast milk	4 oz fruit salad water	hot dog milk
Total cost: \$3.85		
<i>Friday</i>		
bread water	bread water	2 pieces bread water
Total cost: \$6.00		
<i>Saturday</i>		
bread water	bread water	bread water
Total cost: \$6.00		
<i>Sunday</i>		
bread water	water	invited to your Aunt's for supper
Total cost: \$2.20		