Jazz Up Your Meals With Unions' Culinary Workshop Series

University Communications
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If your morning breakfast routine consists of guzzling a cup of coffee and grabbing a doughnut on your way out the door, you might want to think about attending the next workshop in Arizona Student Unions' plantEd series.

The "Breakfast Basics" workshop, on Oct. 18, is open to all UA employees and students and will focus on how to prepare healthy breakfast options, some of which can be made in advance so they are ready to go when you are.

It's not unusual for people to skimp on breakfast, or skip it entirely, in the morning rush, but it's really not a good idea, says Christine Carlson, a registered dietitian and assistant director of nutrition for Arizona Student Unions.

"When you eat breakfast, you're breaking the fast," Carlson says. "It helps get your metabolism going and gives you some fuel for the day, and you think better."

"Breakfast Basics" is the second workshop in the Arizona Student Unions' yearlong plantEd culinary workshop series, which was launched last month as part of an ongoing effort to encourage healthy eating for UA community members.

"We want to provide nutrition education and also life skills," Carlson said.

Carlson co-leads the workshops with Arizona Student Unions Senior Executive Chef Michael Omo, who does live cooking demonstrations and shares the finished products with participants.

The workshops, which run 45 minutes to an hour, include nutrition education, cooking pointers, demonstrations and time for questions. Participants leave with simple recipes they can re-create at home.

"We want to take some of the intimidation away about food," said Omo, who tries to offer culinary tips that benefit everyone from novices to seasoned veterans in the kitchen.

The first workshop, on "Root to Stem Cooking," held last week, focused on plant-based cooking using a variety of vegetables and fruits. Participants left with instructions for making pickled watermelon rinds, "quick and easy" pickles, infused vinegar and cream of asparagus soup.

No experience is necessary to attend a workshop. The only requirement, according to Omo: "Just love food."

Advance registration is required for the workshops and can be completed online.
Registration is $12 for a single session, or you can sign up for all seven remaining workshops for $70. Two sessions of each workshops are offered – one at noon and one at 5 p.m. – with each limited to 25 participants. Workshops are held in the Student Union's Culinary Studio, which also serves as a test kitchen for other Union eateries. The studio is located in the former kitchen of the Cellar restaurant on the lower level of the Union.

The upcoming plantEd workshops, all of which take place on Wednesdays, are:

- **Oct. 18**: Breakfast Basics: Prepare healthier, nutrient-dense, quick breakfast options. Learn about eggs, oats, yogurt, alternative breakfast meats and more.
- **Nov. 8**: Soups: Discover how to create a one-pot meal starting with a simple vegetable stock.
- **Dec. 6**: Desserts: Discover healthier options to satisfy your sweet tooth, just in time for the holidays.
- **Jan. 17**: Seafood and Poultry: Explore lean proteins and how to season them with herbs and spices while using healthier cooking methods.
- **Feb. 7**: Stir-Fry: Create easy-to-make stir-fry using what you have on hand.
- **March 14**: Grains: Explore the benefits of eating whole grains, and learn about the various types of grains and how to prepare them.
- **April 11**: Salads: Create flavorful, healthier salads.

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