

Can you briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Yap Sheng Zoe. I am a Malaysian studying in Tasmania, 20 this year. I am studying a Bachelor of Marine and Antarctic science majoring in marine biology and sustainable aquaculture.

Tell me a bit about your living situation.

I live in uni accommodation with 3 other housemates. We share a kitchen and living space but have our own rooms.

Are you satisfied with your living arrangement?

I think it's alright.

What makes you say that?

I like that my friends are just close by and I can go annoy them. I like that it's on the second floor and it's really easy to get down. I like that the unihopper(University Bus) has a stop nearby.

Do you like living with your housemates?

Sometimes.

So elaborate a little on why you have mixed feelings.

I like that we can cook food together. Like each Friday, we try to cook a different cuisine. What I don't like is sometimes my housemate will come knock my door repeatedly and piss me off.

Cooking Habits:

How often do you cook at home?

About every one or two days

Do you meal prep?

Yes, I make a max of 5 meals cause I only have 5 containers. Like I just made curry two days ago.

First, I boil the rice. Cause I cook it in a pot and not a rice cooker so I need to take longer and take care of it. After it starts boiling, I set a timer and start chopping veggies. Then once the rice timer is up, I take it off the heat and let it steam for 10 mins.

Why not use a rice cooker?

Cause I don't have a rice cooker. I mean, my friend has one but it's big and I don't want to wash it just for one meal. It's much easier to wash a small sauce pot since I only cook enough for me for one meal. If I am meal prepping, I will borrow my friend's rice cooker.

What challenges do you face when deciding what to cook?

If I am feeling lazy, I will just boil spaghetti and put woolies pesto in. If I am not lazy, I will look in my fridge and see what I can work from there. But usually, I've already decided on like what I can make when I go grocery shopping cause I shop for a specific dish.

Do these challenges ever prevent you from cooking?

Yeah, sometimes I just don't eat or I wait really long and just end up eating candy and go to sleep. Hasn't happened that much but it has happened.

Do you sometimes get bored of what you cook?

If I am meal prepping, yes, especially on the final day.

Do you usually cook the same things?

Yes, my dishes that I make often is tomato egg, tofu, spaghetti, roasted chicken and roasted vegetables.

How do you feel about cooking with others?

I don't mind, like everyone's gotta eat. But if they start cooking first, I will usually wait unless they only use the small burner then I will join. Or if they are just using the oven, I will just go ahead and start.

What makes cooking with others enjoyable or difficult for you?

What's enjoyable is that we can split tasks, like you can chop while I cook, or you clean while I cook. But one annoyance is if we are cooking different things, it's like we are both taking up space and we'll block each other.

So is your available kitchen space big or small?

I would say it's small, we have like 1 big stove, 1 medium and two small. And next to it is one countertop and it's not that big

Do you often feel frustrated when having to share?

No not really

Do you tend to avoid the kitchen when others are there? Why?

Yeah, because I won't be able to do my own thing and they'll be up in my space

How often do you participate in social activities? And, how important is it to you?

Not often at all and I don't find it to be really important.

How does living away from home impact your social life?

Most of my friends are in Malaysia so I would say it's impacted heavily. I would say I go out way more in Malaysia than over here.

Do you find it difficult to meet new people?

I mean if I wanted to, I could but I don't want to so... so yeah I'd say it's difficult

Do you think food is a catalyst for social interaction?

Yes, if you give me food, we gonna be bros for life

Do you enjoy meeting up with friends over food?

Yeah

Do you do it often?

No, it's expensive. But if me and my housemates cook together on Friday, we will invite our other friends to come and eat as well. And when I make extra, I will give some to my friends.

Do you enjoy hotpot type of meals?

No, I hate hotpot. It's disgusting cause everyone is putting their shit in the soup and you are putting raw meat in there. It's just a little pet peeve I have and also I don't think hotpot tastes good honestly. I just don't like it. If you let me choose, I'd choose any other thing regardless of cuisine.

How often do you find yourself throwing away food?

Never unless there's mold.

But how often?

I always throw end pieces of bread, I throw away tomato cores and chicken bones.

So you eat everything you buy?

Yeah

How do you feel when you do?

I feel nothing unless it's leftover food and I had to throw it away because it's spoilt

So how often do you have to throw leftover food?

Not often, it has happened once when I took free bread and I forgot about it and had to throw it away.

What are your thoughts on sharing ingredients with others to prevent food waste?

If it's gonna spoil and I am not planning to use it any time soon, I would say sure. My housemates and I share spices, rice and fruits.

Have you ever bought ingredients and never used them?

Yes, I once bought tomatoes but I was too lazy to use them and when I wanted to, it was moldy and I had to throw them.

So how did you feel about that?

Terrible, I waited too long cause I was lazy and I wasted food.

Do you ever want to try and cook new recipes or try cooking food from different cuisines?

Yes I do, I have tried Mexican and Nigerian so far. Both pretty good. Most recently, I tried

Do you ever want to try and cook new recipes or try cooking food from different cuisines but there are just too many ingredients to buy?

Not not really.

Are long ingredient lists intimidating to you?

I guess so. Especially if it sounds foreign, cause that means either I can't find it or it's gonna be expensive. Like I was trying to find this vietnamese chilli sauce, I went to supers or asian markets and couldn't find it. Also I couldn't find prawn chilli crisps.

Do you ever hesitate to try new recipes because you're not sure you'll like the result?

No, I am done living like that.

So you have before?

Yes when I was a kid, I would rather die than try something new

Do you often crave food from home but not know how to cook it or it just involves too many ingredients and steps?

No cause I don't crave stuff from home but when I want to eat it, I will try and make it.

So you don't usually make stuff from home?

No, it's too expensive. Like bak kut teh, I need to buy pork and that's expensive. I make ABC soup when I feel like cause it's not that expensive.

What do you think could be done to make cooking and socializing easier or more enjoyable for students like you?

If ingredients are free. If students see free, they are gonna flock to it?

What about other than that? tools, resources, or community efforts?

Yes, like my student accommodation does free cooking classes once every fortnight. And not a lot of people go so I would go there and cook more and bring two portions home.

How often do you go?

I go every time cause it's free and I don't need to think about what I want to make.

If there were an app that could help you find co-cooking events or share ingredients, what features would you find most helpful?

Free vouchers(lol) for the ingredients.

What about some features and not marketing?

I don't really know, I prob wouldn't use an app like that... Maybe if I can type what's in my fridge and give me a recipe to follow?

How likely are you to use such an app?

Not likely, I don't really use apps for cooking and I just cook what I feel like. I think I generally have good planning when it comes to food.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences with cooking, budgeting, or socializing as a student living away from home?

Budgeting is harddd, I wanna cook so much shit but I have no money.