College-Aged Males and Cooking

This project looks at the relationship between men in college and their cooking habits. It also analyzes if they know how to cook, and where they learned from. Many people have the general assumption that men in college do not cook, and they just eat junk food. This is the case for the majority of college males, but for the percentage that do cook, were they raised in a household that forced them to cook? Did they learn from a friend, or did their parents teach them? Was their father involved with cooking, or did they not have a father in the household so they had to step up and take on a part of the cooking role.

My project also is taking a look at the types of food that men cook on a regular basis. Is it easy to cook Rice-a-Roni? Do they mostly cook meat or vegetables? Do they cook with friends or just for themselves? I will also be looking at if they are cooking an actual meal, or if they are just heating up frozen, pre-made freezer foods. Analyzing what they cook and why they actually cook can tell a lot about the person.

Culture and family background may have a significant influence on the students cooking habits. Some students may only cook in their home because of dietary restrictions, or because they only enjoy the foods if they are homemade. Some culturally specific foods may be hard to find already prepared in Chico, so they need to make it themselves.

Men may not be involved in the cooking process, but they may be involved in the meal planning, shopping, or preparation of the food. In one study performed in 1993, it was found that approximately 23% of men helped plan what was going to be made, 36% of men went shopping for the food, and 27% helped by preparing the food (Harnack et al., 1998).

Men and cooking can be seen sometime as a joke because of the long-standing impression that they are the “breadwinners” of the household. Men are often portrayed in comic type rolls as helpless males in the kitchens or in cartoons as housewives (Alder, Thomas, 1981).

Four university college males will be interviewed. They will be all different races, and I will also be interviewing different ages. I will also interview people with different living situations, to see if their living situations will have an effect on their eating habits. I will ask them some open ended questions and follow up with some probing questions, hopefully leading the subject into a more in depth answer.

References:

Adler, Thomas (1981) Making Pancakes on Sunday: The Male Cook in Family Tradition Western Folklore 40; 1:45-54

Hello my name is Cassie and I am gathering information for a qualitative research project on men and cooking for my cultural food’s class. I am studying the relationship between males and if they cook in college or not. I would appreciate it if I could ask you a few questions. Everything I ask you will remain confidential. Can you please answer a few questions?

What is a normal day like as far as eating is concerned?
- Do you eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner?

Do you know how to cook?
- Who taught you?
- Did you ever cook in your home growing up?

Who did the meal planning, cooking and grocery shopping in your home growing up?

Do you cook in your own home?
- If so, why do you choose to?
- If not, why not?

How often do you eat out?
- What types of foods do you usually eat?

Do you cook ethnic meals or is your diet fairly Americanized?

Do you cook meals that are made fresh, or do you heat up pre-made frozen meals?
- What foods do you normally eat?

What else can you tell me about the way you cook or your cooking habits?

Thank you for your time.