

## **DEVELOPING CULINARY SKILLS AMONG RESIDENTS OF THE STUDENT HOUSING OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF PARÁ**

**Karen de Fátima Saraiva Guimarães Silva<sup>1</sup>, Letícia da Silva Oliveira<sup>2</sup>, Rafael da Silva Chaves<sup>3</sup>, Matheus Kayky Pereira de Souza<sup>4</sup>, Caroline Marry Vaz Lavareda<sup>5</sup>, Thais de Oliveira Granado Santos<sup>6</sup>, Erika Vasconcelos de Oliveira<sup>7</sup>, Elenilma Barros da Silva<sup>8</sup>, Lais Pinon de Carvalho<sup>9</sup> and Xaene Maria Fernandes Duarte Mendonça<sup>10</sup>.**

### **ABSTRACT**

Culinary skills are essential for safe food preparation, encompassing both basic and advanced techniques for both home cooks and professionals. In student housing settings, where residents often prepare their own meals, these skills are even more crucial. This study investigated the impact of culinary workshops on the quality of meals and the efficient use of food inputs in a Federal Educational Institution (IFE). Prior to the workshops, a site visit was conducted to assess needs and available resources, and residents completed a questionnaire about their attitudes and culinary skills. During the workshops, guided by Nutrition tutors, participants learned about hygiene, preparation and storage techniques, following an eight-step program, which included the preparation and tasting of recipes. After the workshops, the participants answered a final questionnaire to evaluate the results. With the participation of 31 residents, the workshops covered everything from hygiene and preparation practices to the organization and presentation of food. The results showed that 97.4% of the participants improved their cooking skills, 96.4% understood the fueling process better, and 92.9% highlighted that cooking promotes autonomy and healthy eating. It is concluded that the workshops were effective and it is suggested that they continue to strengthen healthy eating practices and reduce waste.

**Keywords:** Culinary Skills, Food and Nutrition Education, Student Housing.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Culinary skills refer to the set of skills and knowledge required to prepare, cook, and present food in a safe, tasty, and attractive way. This skill set ranges from basic techniques

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<sup>1</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>2</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>3</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>4</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>5</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>6</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>7</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>8</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>9</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará

<sup>10</sup> Federal University of Pará – Pará



to more advanced techniques. Culinary skills are crucial for both individuals who cook regularly at home and food industry professionals, influencing food quality, safety, and presentation (Jomori et al., 2018). In the context of student housing, food preparation is essential, especially during holidays and weekends, when inputs are provided for residents' meals. Given the importance of this activity, it is essential for residents to possess adequate cooking skills to ensure nutritious meals, promote creativity, teamwork, and self-confidence (Rocha, 2022). The Food Guide for the Brazilian Population (Brasil, 2014) and the Food and Nutrition Education Reference Framework (Brasil, 2012) highlight the importance of food and nutrition education in promoting appropriate eating practices and reducing waste. To this end, it is necessary to implement educational campaigns focused on culinary skills, which can take place at home, in culinary schools, or through food and nutrition education programs, and are essential to raise awareness among residents about healthy practices, foster cooperation, and promote greater food autonomy (Diez-Garcia et al., 2020).

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this study was to report the implementation of culinary workshops as a strategy to promote and improve the culinary skills of residents of a student residence, in order to improve the quality of meals, increase efficiency in food preparation, and foster healthier, collaborative and sustainable eating practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Before the workshops, a visit to the student housing was carried out to recognize the space, identify the available utensils and assess the needs of the residents, which made it possible to prepare and distribute invitations to the events. Residents were then invited to participate in the workshops and, before they began, filled out an evaluation form on attitudes, self-efficacy and culinary behavior, submitted via Google Forms®. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Health Sciences (ICS/UFPa), under CAAE No. 32808720.30000.0018. During the workshops, technical materials were provided and each group received a prescription, accompanied by a student tutor from the Nutrition Course. The workshops were divided into eight phases: 1) Presentation and icebreaker dynamics on food, with debates based on the Food Guide for the Brazilian Population; 2) Explanation of the process of supplying the student residence; 3) Demonstration of the technique of vegetable hygiene; 4) Division of revenues and formation of teams; 5) Preparation of preparations under the guidance of tutors; 6) Presentation and tasting of recipes; 7) Cleaning and organization of the space; 8)

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Evaluation of the workshop with feedback from participants via Google Forms. During the activities, participants were guided on good hygiene practices and culinary techniques, and the presentation of the recipes included information on preparation and storage, in order to ensure the quality and safety of the food. After the workshops, questionnaires were applied to assess the achievement of the proposed objectives.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The realization of the culinary workshops with 31 residents of the student housing represented 38.27% of the total number of residents. The sample was predominantly male (61.29%, n=19) and female (38.71%, n=12). The initial questionnaire revealed that more than half of the residents have a positive attitude towards the act of cooking, considering the activity enjoyable and not frustrating. Most believe that preparing meals at home is more economical and that experience is essential for healthy eating, although they recognize the work and fatigue involved. These findings are in line with the literature, which suggests that a positive attitude can facilitate the adoption of healthy eating practices (Jomori et al., 2018). During the workshops, 28 participants provided feedback.

The majority (97.4%) stated that the activities improved their culinary skills, and 96.4% recognized an increase in knowledge about the food acquisition process. These results indicate that the workshops were effective both for the logistical understanding and for the improvement of practical skills. In addition, 92.9% agreed that cooking promotes autonomy, healthy eating, and a greater connection with nature and modes of production. These findings reinforce the Food Guide for the Brazilian Population, which highlights the importance of culinary practice for a balanced and sustainable diet (Brasil, 2014). After the workshops, 100% of the participants agreed that the division of tasks in the kitchen increases efficiency and makes the activity more pleasurable and less tiring. They also reported greater safety in storage techniques, waste control and food diversity.

These results corroborate the idea that food education can improve culinary practices and reduce work overload, making the experience more productive (Diez-Garcia, 2017). Finally, 96.4% of the participants considered it essential to hold biannual workshops. This feedback suggests a strong interest in more learning opportunities and reinforces the importance of integrating ongoing hands-on activities into the food education program, with significant benefits for residents' health and autonomy.



## CONCLUSION

The culinary workshops achieved their goals by significantly improving residents' culinary skills and their understanding of the food procurement and sourcing process. However, to maximize the benefits, it is recommended to increase the number of days and times of activities, ensuring a more inclusive participation and expanding the impact of educational actions. It is also suggested to explore different formats and themes in the workshops to cater to a wider variety of residents' interests and needs. The continuity and expansion of these activities are essential to strengthen culinary practices and students' food autonomy, promoting a better quality of life and greater integration with everyday food processes.



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