Alternative ways to eat while staying on campus



PHOTO | HANNAH GRAHAM

Health science major, Deenah Banner, a freshman, cooking in her dorm room.

By Hannah Graham
Copy Editor

One of the few universal truths of life is that one must eat to live. Consequently, humans, and resident students especially, spend a great deal of money and time on the creation and consumption of food.

Cooking in the dormitories on campus comes with a fittingly messy list of sorrows and joys, though.

"You don't have to depend on anyone else; you can make what you want," health science major Deenah Banner, a freshman, said.

There are three main dormitories which offer private kitchens on campus, including Schwartz Hall, West Campus Residence Complex and North Campus Residence Complex. According to an example room plan on the Schwartz Hall page, the kitchens have an oven, microwave and sink.

Residents in every building can access communal kitchens, but that comes with its own problems.

"If I think back to when I worked in Wilk, I remember there was a struggle because we had to do a lot of reminding about cleaning in those communal-style kitchens," North Campus Coordinator/Director Reaunna Bartell said.

As for the students actually using those spaces, they are not necessarily representative of the opportunity for independence.

"Honestly, using the community cooking space in West just reminded me of how poor I was while I'm there making ramen again," marketing major Lana Drew, a sophomore, said.

However, not every student finds their on-campus cooking experiences so harrowing.

Banner said: "It made it easier for me. It's way more convenient. I don't have to go all the way to my dining hall for cereal."

While freshmen who live on campus are required to use the full meal plan, once a sophomore, students are able to choose where they live and how much of a meal plan they will be using.

As such, these in-dorm kitchens offer new financial avenues for students who may not be able to afford the full meal plan every year.

The opportunity to use a kitchen space within your dorm room is a boon to students; still, there are some pitfalls.

"I would say our biggest issue right now with the kitchens is education on fire safety," Bartell said. "We have public signage, emergency signs, newsletters, even TikTok videos at one point."

The residence life staff use several avenues to try and communicate the rules around fire and how to avoid smoke alarms going off while cooking, but there are always a handful of alarms that send students out of their dorm hall and into the parking lot or lawn surrounding it each year.

However, the community that is created around kitchens in the dormitories is well worth the occasional fire alarm.

Banner said that she particularly enjoys it when she has a chance to cook for her friends.

"It's exciting, 'cause people actually trust me cooking their food. And they always come back for more," Banner said.

The chance to connect over a plate can help students craft a joyous community.

"I would keep my friend company while she cooked food for us, and one time we got yelled at because we were screaming and laughing too loud," Drew said. "It was worth it."

SOUTHERN NEWS

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Upcoming artist Doechii releases new rap album

By Solé Scott
Editor in Chief

The sound of Top Dawg Entertainment is still alive and thriving, as musical artist Doechii reminds the world that she is more than just a hip-hop artist.

Jaylah Ji'mya Hickmon, known professionally as Doechii, was born in 1998 in Tampa, Florida.

Doechii rose to prominence in 2021 thanks to TikTok, where her song "Yucky Blucky Fruitcake" from her first EP went viral.

The success of TikTok helped her sign with Top Dawg Entertainment that same year and released her second EP, "she/her/black bitch" in 2022.

Her first Billboard Hot 100 entry was in 2023 with "What it is (Block Boy)," featuring Kodak Black. The single peaked at No. 29 and has received platinum certification from the Recording Industry Association of America.

Currently, she boasts 1.3 million followers on TikTok, 854,000 followers on Instagram and 10.7 million monthly listeners on Spotify.

On Aug. 30, Doechii released "Alligator Bites Never Heal," which consists of 19 songs. This album is the first in her catalogue.

Her album cover that was released on Aug. 30 showcases her sitting down on a chair holding an albino alligator with a dark green background.

Doechii already earned her points from me by including the rare albino alligator on the cover art.

My favorite songs on this album are "NISSAN ALTIMA," "HIDE N SEEK," "DEATH ROLL" and "WAIT."

Pitchfork, an online music publication that specializes in reviews, posted their thoughts. The publication scored the album a solid seven out of 10, which is good, since they score albums extremely critically.

What makes Doechii a star is the genre- bending she has mastered between hip-hop, R&B, pop music and her lyricism.

The genre bending music Doechii produces and releases is the reason why her brand is creative and authentic.

She is inspiring not only to people with ambitions to have a career in music, but also to other onlookers. She is one of the only female rappers that are dark skin in today's generation of music.

Just recently, she was featured on a song called "I'M HIS, HE'S MINE" with the one and only Katy Perry. This song showcases that she is a force to be reckoned with.

I am excited to see how her career continues to flourish and wish nothing but the best for her as she continues to go mainstream.

Doechii's upcoming concert shows in the United States will be in November, in Oakland, San Francisco, West Hollywood, Atlanta and Washington D.C.

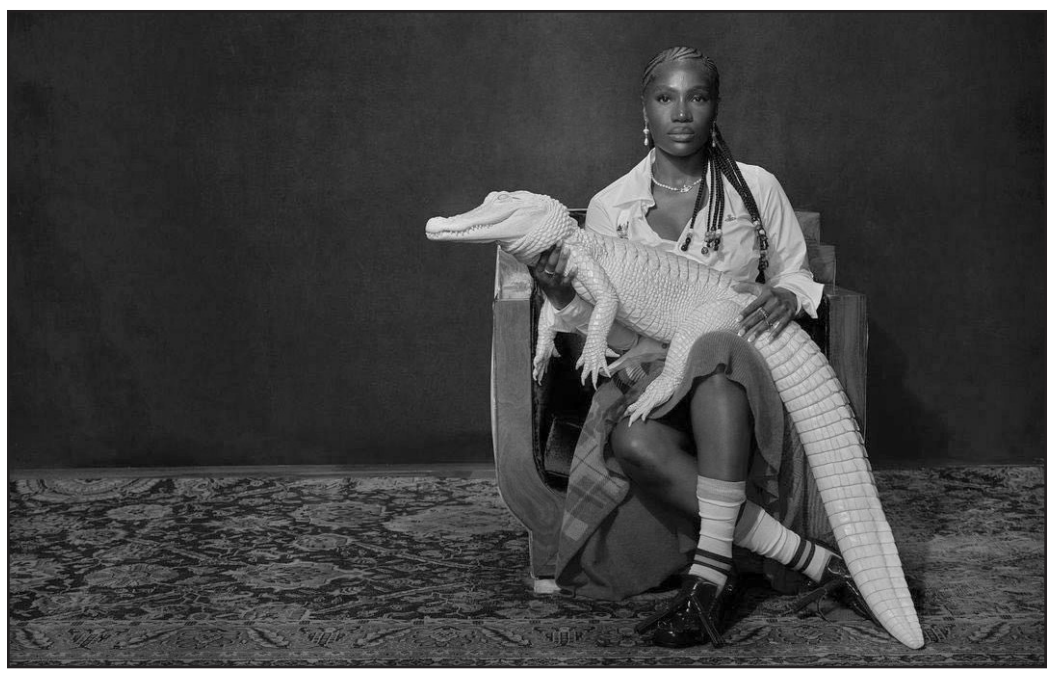


PHOTO | INSTAGRAM

"Alligator Bites Never Heal" official cover art.

Luxury clothing is extremely expensive

By Jay'Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Luxury clothing has long been associated with high prices, often sparking debates about whether such costs are justified.

While some argue that quality materials and craftsmanship warrant these prices, others contend that the luxury fashion industry relies heavily on marketing, brand prestige, and exclusivity to inflate costs.

One of the primary arguments against expensive prices is that the actual cost of materials and labor often does not align with retail prices.

Many luxury brands use high-quality fabrics and skilled artisans, but the markup can be astronomical.

For instance, a simple dress may cost several hundred dollars to produce, yet it can retail for thousands.

This disparity raises questions about the true value of luxury items, suggesting that consumers are paying more for the brand name than the product itself.

Moreover, the luxury fashion industry heavily invests in marketing and branding.

High-profile advertising campaigns, celebrity endorsements and fashion shows create an allure that drives consumer demand.

The emphasis on image and status can detract from the actual craftsmanship and innovation involved in creating the clothing.

Customers might find themselves paying a premium not for superior quality, but for the prestige associated with a brand.

The exclusivity factor plays a significant role in pricing and the prestige of a brand.

The emotional appeal of luxury clothing is something that also cannot be overlooked.

Brands cultivate a lifestyle image that resonates with consumers, often associating their products with success.

This emotional connection can lead consumers to justify spending insane amounts, even when the tangible benefits of the pieces are questionable.

Limited editions and scarcity tactics create a sense of urgency and desirability, pushing consumers to spend more to own a piece of fashion that feels rare.

This model creates a cycle where high prices are accepted simply because of the brand's status, rather than any inherent quality in the garments themselves.

The rapid pace of fashion trends also impacts the issue of high-priced luxury items.

The fashion industry often operates on a seasonal cycle, compelling brands to continuously introduce new collections.

This relentless drive for novelty encourages consumers to buy frequently, leading to a perception that luxury items are worth their high price tags simply due to their trendiness, which is not always the case.

As awareness of these dynamics grows, a shift in consumer attitudes may be on the horizon.

More individuals are seeking value-driven purchases and embracing sustainable fashion by thrifting, using second-hand platforms like Depop, Grailed and Poshmark.

This change could convince luxury brands to reevaluate their pricing structures to cater towards customers while still providing genuine quality and craftsmanship. If this change happens, consumers might be more willing to accept slightly higher prices, as they would be justified.

These are the opinions of the Southern News Editoral Staff