



‘What, no rice?’

Launch Event for the
Conference of Colleges Diversity Fund Project
on special dietary requirements of BAME and
observant religious students

*with Femi Otitoju,
Challenge Consultancy*

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Presenters

Femi Otitoju

Founder and Managing Director, Challenge Cons

Ruedi Baumann

Director of Accommodation, Conferences, & Catering, Jesus College

Bart Ashton

Domestic Bursar, Lady Margaret Hall

Anneli Chambliss Howes

Bursar, Blackfriars Hall

Kevin Dudley

Executive Chef, Pembroke College



Femi Otitoju

Challenge Training



University of Brighton



**Conference of Colleges Diversity Fund
Project on special dietary requirements of
BAME and observant religious students**

Also known as:



“What no rice?”



PUDDING RICE

White

1 kg

Produced in the UK since 1973
New Zealand, 100% Wholegrain



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Conference of Colleges

- Works with the 39 Colleges and 6 permanent Halls and deals with matters of:
 - ➔ Shared Interest
 - ➔ Common purpose
- Provides a voice for college interests
- Domestic Bursars Committee recognised a need and organised this training



A Challenge Shaped Hole

- This brief fulfilled two of our favourite interests:
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion training
 - Our deep and abiding love of food
- This training is funded from the University's Diversity Fund



The Challenge Fridge

Of course it's pink

We feed everyone at
Challenge:

- All Day
- Every Day
- For Free



The Challenge Fridge

We feed everyone at Challenge:

- All Day
 - Every Day
 - For Free
- We fill it up at least twice a week
 - Colleagues order anything they like



Student Survey

- In 2015 Challenge worked with Northumbria University
- We surveyed students from all over the UK



Food was the most common concern

- **What** would be available?
- **When** would it be available?
- **Where** would it be available?
- What would **it be like**?
- What **if it's awful**?

- How **can I survive** without ...?



One young man on his way to Teddy Hall had these concerns

1. Will I be able to manage my money?
2. What will the food be like?
3. Will I be able to get breakfast when I get up early for my sports training?
4. Are there facilities for me to cook my own food?
5. What will the other students in my halls be like?



Teddy Hall cont.

6. Will there a space in the halls where I can get together with other students to make our meals?
7. Are there any shops nearby?
8. How do I get a doctor if I'm not well?
9. What if I get homesick?
10. Can I get parcels delivered to the halls – like hampers and stuff?



**Why is it important we
consider world food in
our menu planning?**

Who is the Oxford Student?

- In 2017 there were approximately **23,000** Students and **13,900** staff
- This is the traditional view of an Oxford Man, or indeed Woman



Things are changing

- In 2017 **10,400** of student body were international students
- From **138** countries



Paying Customers

- International Students will often pay directly for their education
- Students at Oxford are by definition very smart and can be very discerning
- The University is part of a global marketplace
- Shouldn't the University menus reflect this diversity?



138 Countries

In 2017 there were 16 students who were the only people from their country here at Oxford

How do you comfort eat in a strange land?

- **Afghanistan**
- **Algeria**
- **Bahamas**
- **Benin**
- **Bhutan**
- **Burkina Faso**
- **Congo**
- **East Timor**
- **Ethiopia**
- **Gambia**
- **Laos**
- **Mali**
- **Mozambique**
- **St Lucia**
- **Togo**
- **Uruguay**
- **Yemen**

Known knowns and guesstimates

- Oxford doesn't publish religious data on students

BUT

- Looking at student numbers and where they come from
- Challenge calculates there were approx. **790** Muslim students at Oxford in 2017



Fitting in

- Some students cannot eat the wonderful food produced at Oxford:
 - ➔ For cultural reasons
 - ➔ For religious reasons
 - ➔ For biological reasons
 - ➔ Because they miss home
- When the Brits go abroad we famously take our food with us
- What do your students expect to find here?



**What is the potential
impact on the student
when we don't
consider globally
diverse food?**



EATING HABITS OF PEOPLE IN THE UK

Why am I eating this?

- British cuisine has been influenced by many things over the centuries
- Influences like?
 - Invasions
 - Empire & Colonialism
 - War & Rationing
 - Immigration
 - Holidays & Gap Years
 - Celebrity Chefs



Eating for religious reasons missing

- UK a culturally Christian country
- With no religious dietary requirements
- We have to learn what they are
- We have to learn why these are important for others



But Not Stereotypical

- Not all Jewish people keep kosher
- Not all Muslim people eat halal
- Not all Christians eat pork
- Choice, Respect and Consideration



Colleges have equality policies

'promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.'



They also provide that no student or member of staff will be treated less favourably on numerous grounds including **philosophical belief**

Ethical Eating

- Veganism is now a “**philosophical belief**” and as such is covered by policy
- Being religious does not stop you having a philosophical belief
- You can be:
 - Catholic and Vegan
 - A Marxist Jew
 - A Darwinian Hindu



Political eating?

- Veganism often seen as a legitimate response to climate change issues
- Individual Colleges may face student action
- Or may simply be overwhelmed by Flexitarians



Everyone is different

- Ethical eating and religion and belief often go hand in hand
- Many religions promote:
 - Vegetarianism
 - Meat is eaten sparingly
 - Other sources of protein utilised



Other considerations

- Allergies
- Intolerances
- Causes unclear:
 - Changes in food production
 - Changes in hygiene
 - Changes in Climate



Something for Everyone

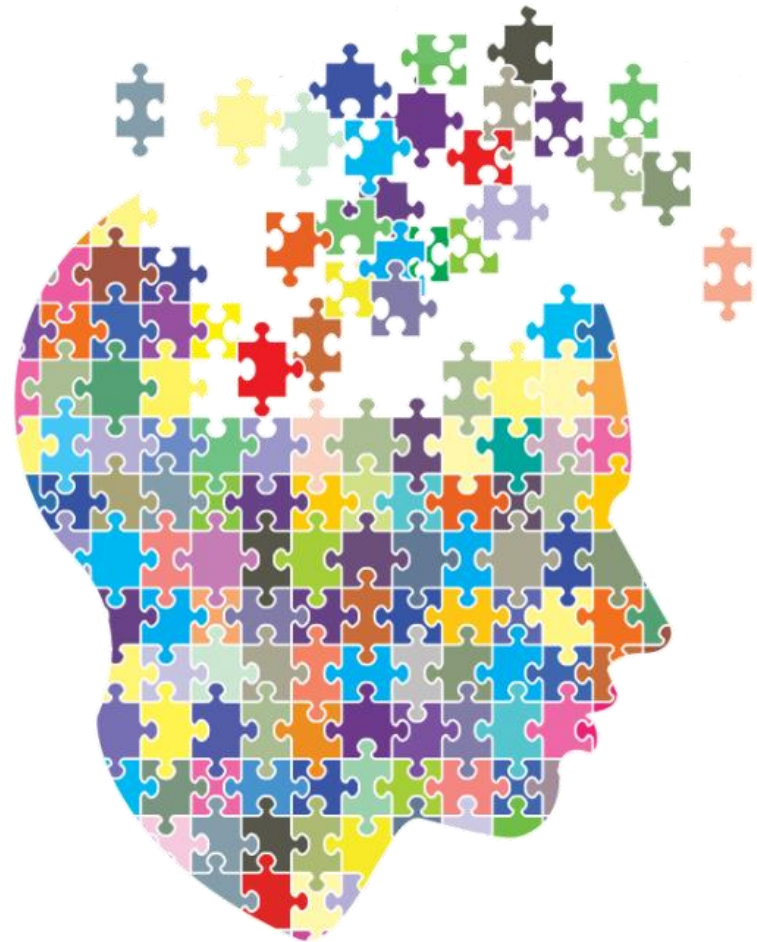
- Most allergies develop in childhood and are often grown out of
- Some intolerances develop later in life
- Especially in middle age
- These can be linked to childhood ailments like eczema
- Most are “idiopathic”, a medical term for “we just don’t know”



The Training

Challenge practices
Active Learning:

- We Identify issues
- Explain Situations
- Get people involved
- Get people working and talking
- Try not to talk for too long – 10 mins max



Lots of activity

- Quizzes
- Puzzles
- Working in pairs
- Working in groups
- Analytical exercises
- Get people out of their seats
- Discussions
- Intense heated debates (5 mins max)

- In your small groups consider each of the situations listed below, discuss whether they are:

Fine	Perfectly OK for everyone
Dodgy	Might be difficult for some students and staff
Awful	Completely inappropriate in a professional kitchen

Accidentally Vegan

Many people have the mistaken belief that becoming Vegan is a bit like joining a cult.

That you have to give up everything!!!

- This exercise is to look at what already exists in supermarkets.
- Food items that are "Accidentally Vegan"
- In pairs decide whether you think something is or isn't vegan.

One size does not fit all

Our case studies use imaginary, but authentic, credible students:

- We want staff to think of students as individuals
- Allowed them to develop over time
- Presenting with complex dietary requirements
- We Had Fun:
 - ➔ How do you feed a strict vegetarian Jain with nightshade Intolerance?



Used University Resources

- Adaptations using actual college menus
- Figures from the University website
- A very patient Domestic Bursar



Feedback

- We listened to the focus groups
- Designed the training to meet Oxford's needs
- Delegates have been keen and wonderful to work with
- They were prepared to:
 - share and learn
 - Try new food
 - Eat insects
- Training sessions well received and enjoyed by all



Start of a wonderful process

- Listen to the Students
- Listen to each other
- Don't just wait
- Ask people how things could improve
- Experiment
- Be Bold
- Get usable feedback
- Use the website



***YOUR FEEDBACK
MATTERS***

Femi Otitoju



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training@challcon.com

020 7272 3400

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THE WEBSITE