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Fall 2025



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WILD BLUETM in the GQ

Muhlenberg College's dining landscape is getting a flavorful new upgrade with the rebranding of the popular sushi station in the General's Quarters. Formerly known as Ikigai, the station is relaunching as Wild Blue Sushi, and the update goes beyond just a new name. This transformation includes the introduction of a Mongolian hot bowl option, combining marinated teriyaki proteins such as beef, chicken, salmon and tofu, stir-fried vegetables, and a choice of fried rice or noodles. The result is a made-to-order dish that is sweet, salty, tangy, and entirely customizable.

This enhancement will transform the previously unused space at the entrance of the General's Quarters. By revitalizing the area and expanding both the quality and variety of offerings for students, faculty, and staff, the GQ will continue to be one of the most popular destinations on campus.

"This enhancement in the GQ will bring our program to a new level," says John Pasquarello, general manager of Dining Services. "We'll be able to improve food quality, increase the speed of service, and provide more diverse options. A redesigned layout will also help eliminate line bottlenecks, making the entire space more efficient and enjoyable."

The addition of Mongolian-style hot bowls has been a long-awaited change, driven by student feedback. "Surveys and focus groups have consistently shown a desire for more Asian-inspired hot food," Pasquarello says. "We've heard this directly from students, faculty, and staff. This new concept is something we've wanted to introduce for years, and we're excited it's finally becoming a reality."

The new Mongolian hot bowl concept also reinforces a long-standing partnership with AFC, the company behind the campus sushi operation. "AFC has been on campus for nearly 15 years, and their high standards for food quality and service have always impressed us," Pasquarello says. "We had other options to consider for the expansion, but it was clear AFC was the right fit to lead this evolution."

Antonio Sesma, retail manager, agrees: "Our relationship with AFC is already strong, and I believe this new addition will make it even stronger. It brings mutual value and new energy to both our organizations."

The expansion of Wild Blue Sushi and the introduction of hot bowls show how Muhlenberg's dining program continues to grow in direct response to student needs and preferences. With the continued improvement, updated concepts, and bold new flavors, the General's Quarters is evolving into a more dynamic and diverse dining destination one satisfying bowl at a time.

We are excited about all these new additions coming to campus and are asking for feedback. Feel free to let us know your thoughts on the additions to the GQ by emailing us at diningcomments@muhlenberg.edu.



DINING HALL HACKS

Looking to switch things up in the Wood Dining Commons? Our Dining Hall Hacks come straight from the chefs and staff who know the food best. These simple, creative ideas use ingredients from different stations to make meals that are fun, filling, and easy to build. Whether you're in the mood for something hearty, plant-based, or packed with flavor, these combinations are a great way to try something new without leaving the dining hall. Take a look and see which one you'll try next.

KOSHER BREAKFAST

You've made it to the dining hall bright and early, but the Noshery doesn't open until 11 a.m. Don't worry, you can still enjoy a Kosher start to your day!

What to Look For:

Certified Kosher Items Available Before 11 a.m.:

- Cut Fruit – Pre-packaged and Star-K certified
- Plain Bagels – OU certified
- Cream Cheese – Packaged cream cheese available in the GF fridge
- Coffee & Juice – Always a go-to
- Fresh Fruit – Naturally Kosher
- Cereal – Many brands are Kosher certified
- Milk – Locally sourced and certified
- Hard-Boiled Eggs – Often certified Kosher (ask to see packaging if unsure)

Tip: You can always request to see product packaging to confirm certification.

Final Word:

B'tayavon! (Bon Appétit in Hebrew)



NIRVANA PITA

Ready to reach flavor enlightenment? This pita packs a Mediterranean punch.

Ingredients & Stations:

- Soft Pita Flat – Grab one fresh from Basic Kneads.
- House-Made Tzatziki Sauce – Also from Basic Kneads.
- Lettuce, Tomato, Red Onion, Pickle Chips, Banana Pepper Rings – Found at Top This.
- Shawarma-Seasoned Halal Chicken Breast – Request from Simple Servings.

Steps to Sandwich Nirvana:

1. Start at Basic Kneads and grab a warm, soft pita.
2. Generously spread the house-made Greek yogurt tzatziki sauce.
3. Swing by Top This and pile on your fresh veggies and tangy toppings.
4. Head to Simple Servings and ask for their signature Shawarma-seasoned, Halal-certified chicken breast.
5. Place the chicken into your stuffed pita, wrap it up, and take the first bite into Mediterranean bliss.

Why It Works:

It's creamy, tangy, savory, and fresh, layered with balance, boldness, and texture. This is called "Sandwich Nirvana" for a reason.

Pro Tip: This one's deliciously messy in the best way, so make sure to grab a napkin (or two).

PLANT BASED MAC

Craving fast food flavor with a campus twist? Build your own signature burger!

Option 1: WDC's Plant-Based Mac Daddy Burger

Ingredients & Stations:

- Plant-Based Burger – From The Grill (make it a double if you're hungry!)
- Cheese – Add your favorite slice.
- Mixed Greens or Lettuce – Available at the Salad Bar
- "Fake Mac Sauce" – Mix mayo with a splash of Italian dressing.
- Pickles or Banana Peppers – Optional but encouraged!

Steps:

1. Grab your burger (single or double) with cheese from The Grill.
2. Swing by the Salad Bar for greens and toppings.
3. Whip up your own "Mac Sauce" using mayo and Italian dressing.
4. Add pickles or banana peppers for crunch and tang.
5. Assemble your burger and enjoy!

Option 2: Marty the Mule's McChicken Sandwich

Swap the Plant-Based Burger for a Chicken Patty from The Grill.

Build it the same way for a crispy, crave-worthy alternative!

Why This Hack?

Sometimes the station menus don't hit the spot and this go-to creation brings something fun, flavorful, and totally customizable to the table.

Pro Tip: Don't be afraid to mix sauces and toppings from different stations. Your perfect combo might be waiting right around the corner.



RICE BOWL

Ingredients & Stations:

- Fresh-Cooked Rice – Found near the steamers
- Grilled Chicken & Roasted Veggies – Available at Wildfire Grille
- Fresh Veggies & Add-ons – From the Salad Bar
- Sauces – Located by the rice cookers and Top This station

Steps:

1. Start with a bed of warm rice.
2. Add grilled chicken and your favorite roasted veggies.
3. Head to the salad bar for a cold crunch from cucumbers, carrots, greens, and more.
4. Top it all off with bold sauces! (soy, sesame, sriracha ranch)

Why It Works:

Who doesn't love a one-bowl meal for its balance, convenience, and endless customization.

WDC PB&J

Ingredients & Stations:

- Milk & Honey Bread – Get 2 slices from Chew Street Deli
- Banana – Grab one from the hand fruit basket
- House-Milled Peanut Butter & Jelly – Available at Basic Kneads: Breads and Spreads

Steps:

1. Toast both slices of bread at Basic Kneads.
2. Slice the banana.
3. Spread peanut butter on one slice.
4. Top with banana slices.
5. Spread jelly on the second slice.
6. Combine slices into a sandwich and enjoy!

Perfect For: A sweet and savory mid-day boost.

Chef's Tip: It's the ultimate classic, elevated with house-made ingredients.

FAITH, FOOD, BASEBALL

Each summer, the Lehigh Valley IronPigs stadium becomes more than just a ballpark. It transforms into a place of cultural pride, community connection, and kosher cuisine. For more than a decade, Muhlenberg College's Red Door Catering team has partnered with the Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley and the IronPigs, the Triple-A affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies, to support their annual Jewish Heritage Night. The event, now a cherished tradition, brings together local families, students, and organizations to celebrate Jewish culture in a public and festive setting.

At the heart of the event for Muhlenberg Dining is Rabbi Jonathan Powers, kosher manager, who has been involved since the beginning. Alongside the Red Door team, Rabbi Powers serves kosher meals to game attendees, creating an environment where both tradition and hospitality thrive. "My favorite part about Jewish Heritage Night is that I get to interact with the Jewish community," he says.

"Many of the people I know personally, and some I only see a few times a year. It's good to see the community come out and celebrate their Jewish religion publicly, especially in times when antisemitism is on the rise."



For the Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley, the event is equally significant. Aaron Gorodzinsky, director of development, has been involved since the early years and believes the event is only possible because of the longstanding partnership with Sodexo and Muhlenberg Dining. "Since the beginning of Jewish Heritage Night, over 10 years ago, we have partnered with Sodexo to bring kosher hot dogs and knishes as part of the event," he says. "There is no Jewish Heritage Night without a kosher meal."

The partnership began in 2014 and has grown steadily over the years, becoming a signature moment on the IronPigs' promotional calendar. For Alex Rivera, vice president of food and beverage for the team, the event is about much more than baseball. "My favorite part is seeing our community come together in celebration," he says. "Families, students, and local organizations gather to enjoy a fun evening while honoring Jewish culture. Themed giveaways and cultural recognition throughout the game create a truly special atmosphere."

The event is also meaningful in its broader impact. "It's a win for everyone," says Rabbi Powers. "The Jewish community gets to come out and enjoy a game together and be proud of their religion. The IronPigs get the support of the community. The Jewish Federation gets to see and promote the Jewish community. And we get to showcase our kosher food and facility, which is the only one of its kind in the region."

Gorodzinsky agrees and highlights the logistical benefits of the partnership. "The ease of not having to kosher the ballpark's kitchens makes a huge difference in both the price and quality of the food," he says. "It allows us to focus on the experience and deliver something meaningful to the community."

Participation in Jewish Heritage Night has remained strong over the years, with consistent attendance and a sense of excitement each season. "We've seen a pretty steady crowd of about 300 members of our community each year," says Gorodzinsky. "I know each one of them looks forward to the day."

Rabbi Powers and Rivera both believe the recent rise in antisemitic acts has made the event even more important. "The Jewish community recognizes this and values the chance to show support and identity in such a public forum," says Powers. "Attending a local baseball game becomes a way to stand proud and be seen."

Rivera notes that community partnerships have played a key role in growing the event. "Working with organizations like Muhlenberg Dining has helped us create something that is both meaningful and fun. It's a great platform to share traditions with the broader public."

Looking ahead, all three partners hope to continue expanding the celebration. "Before COVID and before the rise in security concerns, the IronPigs offered more extensive Jewish-themed entertainment during the games. Things like games between innings and music were a big part of the experience," says Powers. "I hope we return to that in the future, with more kosher offerings, greater participation, and a full embrace of the festive atmosphere this night is meant to create." "We plan to continue working with Sodexo and the IronPigs to ensure one of the most fun nights of the year continues," adds Gorodzinsky.

Rivera sees continued growth on the horizon. "We are always open to growing the experience, whether that includes live performances, educational booths, or pre-game activities," he says. "Jewish Heritage Night is a great tradition, and we are committed to making it even better."

Through food, tradition, and community, this special night continues to bridge the gap between the ballpark and the broader cultural landscape. It is a celebration where Jewish identity, public unity, and Muhlenberg's culinary excellence all come together.

A TASTE OF Germany

Muhlenberg College's dining program took another exciting step in global engagement last spring with a visit from Chef Julian Prakash, a Sodexo global chef from Germany. As part of Sodexo's global chef exchange, Chef Prakash's visit infused the campus with both flavor and cultural insight. He enriched the culinary landscape through a series of engaging events that involved students, staff, and the wider community.

His time on campus in late March included three special opportunities to share his cuisine. He prepared a featured meal for the Around the World in 16 Meals series, served a bratwurst dish in the General's Quarters, and participated in a meet and greet in the Language and Culture Commons. That final event, held with support from Muhlenberg's Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, gave students and faculty the chance to speak with Chef Prakash in German while enjoying traditional dishes like potato rösti, pretzels, and cheese. It was more than just a meal; it created a meaningful cultural exchange.

Executive Chef Michael Brack helped coordinate the experience. Before the visit, he traveled to Boston College to train with Chef Prakash as well as Sodexo chefs from Brazil, Great Britain, and across the United States. "I had the opportunity to taste authentic preparations from England, Brazil, and Germany," Brack says. "Each global chef visit brings something new. This time, we gave our customers three different ways to connect with Chef Prakash's cuisine. His braised pork knuckles in the Dining Commons were a huge hit, and the bratwurst in the GQ added great variety. But what stood out most was the chance for language students to engage di-

rectly with him. It was a memorable experience for everyone involved."

The global chef program offers much more than new recipes. Brandon Read, a team member who helped prepare and present the meals, found the experience exciting and meaningful. "It is good to see the world through someone else's perspective,"

Read says. "It encourages growth for all of us. For students, it adds energy and authenticity to their dining experience. For the school, it is an opportunity to break from routine and try something different while celebrating that change."

Read also reflected on the personal impact of meeting Chef Prakash. "I was lucky enough to have some extended conversation with him. It was inspiring to see the decisions he has made and the plans he has for the future. It made me more aware of the choices I have made and the path I am on. These moments are humbling. They remind me that every person around me has a life as detailed and meaningful as my own."

Brack echoes this appreciation for professional exchange. "Meeting new chefs and learning about their cuisine is always rewarding and inspiring," he says. "The

value to our staff, our customers, and our community cannot be overstated."

From language learning to shared meals, Chef Prakash's visit showed how food can create powerful connections. As Muhlenberg continues to bring global voices to campus through its dining program, events like this highlight an important truth: Every dish served can be a way to explore the world.



"Thanks for your great and warming welcome at Muhlenberg College last week and for making memorable days to me. It was such a pleasure and joy!"
~ Chef Julian Prakash

Q&A WITH MICHAEL MILLER

DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES

Question: What impact does the dining program have on the campus experience?

Michael Miller: The dining program impacts the campus experience by fostering a sense of community and belonging among students and providing convenient meal options that support their well-being. High-quality, diverse dining choices can positively impact both student retention and recruitment.

Question: What was your first impression of the Wood Dining Commons? Did it remind you of Hogwarts or a ski lodge?

Michael Miller: How big the WDC is was the first thing I noticed when I entered the space. When entering the food service area of WDC, how many choices there were to pick from for your meal was very surprising. With the fireplace in WDC, it does remind me of a ski lodge.

Question: If you were stranded on a deserted island, what one food could you not live without? What one food would you not want on the island?

Michael Miller: I enjoy buffalo wings, either boneless or bone-in wings. Hot is good, but some of those crazy hot sauces are too hot. I need to be able to eat them and enjoy them without burning my mouth. The one food I would not want is fish, like haddock, tilapia, etc. I like seafood but not fish.



Question: What is the most bizarre or adventurous food you have tried?

Michael Miller: Probably venison and pheasant. I have eaten both but not very often. I have friends who hunt and they will sneak those meats into stews or mix them with other types of meat.

Question: What is your favorite food to prepare at home?

Michael Miller: Anything I can make on the grill. I do not make a lot on the stove or in the oven, but I do enjoy grilling almost anything. Marinated chicken on the grill is one thing I do enjoy cooking during the summer.

Question: In terms of customer service, what can transform a good experience into a great or unforgettable one?

Michael Miller: Friendliness of the staff. It is always a pleasure to come to WDC and see Lois, Kelly, Gary, Sue, John, and the chefs making and serving the food. They are always smiling and friendly and make the dining experience a great time. I have become friends with many of them and enjoy talking with them and learning about their lives and families.

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