

Food Bridge: Linking International Students with Local Nutrition Resources



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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Peer Health USask



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WELCOME TO SASKATCHEWAN!



PURPOSE OF THIS PACKAGE

The purpose of this package is to provide you with resources to help you transition and understand food culture in Canada. It can be hard to access familiar, nutritious foods in grocery stores, and some newcomers may face challenges finding stores which carry their cultural foods in Saskatoon.

CONTENTS OF THIS PACKAGE



- EXPERIENCES SHARED FROM CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
- EATING HEALTHY IN CANADA
- UNDERSTANDING CANADA'S FOOD SYSTEM
- NUTRITION TIPS
- GROCERY STORE MAP
- AVAILABLE NUTRITION RESOURCES



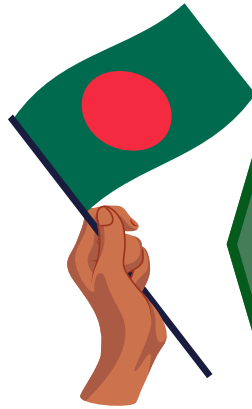
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WORDS FROM CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

“**Eating out in Saskatoon is more expensive** compared to larger cities like Toronto and Vancouver, and there's limited availability of restaurants, particularly offering Bangladeshi cuisines such as fuska, chatpati, puri, and nihari. While there are a few Indian and Pakistani options, **the taste is quite different from what I'm accustomed to back home.**” - Student from Bangladesh

“I haven't found many Bengali food options in Saskatoon; while there are plenty of South Asian culinary offerings, **Bengali cuisine seems to be less represented.**”
-Student from Bangladesh

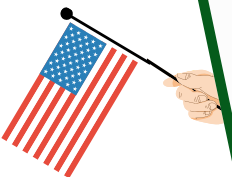


“As a Muslim, I wish I had known before arriving in Saskatoon that **halal options are more limited and often pricier** compared to bigger cities.”
-Student from Bangladesh

“I wish I had known more about the local food scene and grocery options. Exploring diverse cuisines and understanding where to find specific ingredients would have made settling into Saskatoon much smoother. Having **insights into affordable and authentic places to eat would have helped me feel more at home.**”
- Student from Bangladesh



“I wish I had known that it is **difficult to find and afford fresh produce in Saskatoon. Produce does not last as long because it is imported.** So it **needs to be replenished often**, which is **especially difficult if you rely on public transportation.**”
- Student from the United States



“Back home, red meat is consumed pretty much every day and is much more affordable, so the idea of only eating white meat for extended periods never crossed my mind. Also, **cultural foods are very expensive in Saskatoon** as there is basically **only one store offering Latin food from countries beyond Mexico.**”
- Student from Brazil



WORDS FROM CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



“I am a lacto-vegetarian. I love eating bakery foods like muffins or cakes but they were readily available without eggs in India and after arriving in Saskatoon, mayonnaise, cakes, breads, ice-creams, and many other foods have eggs as an ingredient. So, I do not have many options to choose from. I definitely miss my street-food snacks or sweet dishes, Although I can find some at Walmart or other places, they are expensive.”

- Student from India



Here is a video testimonial from a current International student!

“I miss Arabic platters along with Kerala spices. I would like to suggest to newcomers to bring the authentic flavours along with you in a powdered or freeze dried form. **Food here can be costly.**”

- Akhila Thomas Choondal

“The thing I would like to have known prior to arriving in Saskatoon is where I could find affordable groceries and where I could find authentic Indian grocery stores.”

- Student from India



WORDS FROM CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

“The one thing that has completely shocked me about food in Saskatoon is the **quality of the fresh produce in big grocery stores**. When I first tried it, it tasted like plastic to me. **Only later I learned about the farmers markets where one can buy better quality produce** (farmers markets that some people enjoy shopping at, they have fresh and local food in the summer).”

- Student from the Ukraine



“I have been struggling to find food that is not highly processed and is affordable. **It has been nice having the gift of options and the chance to try a lot of new things.** I wish I knew **where to do my shopping and the places that are affordable.** I also wish I knew about food marketplaces and **where to go to get fresh fruit and veggies straight from farmers.** I have **difficulty finding Zimbabwean snacks** in general, and when I do find them they are very expensive.”

- Student from Zimbabwe



“In Ecuador, the food is flavourful but not spicy, I've noticed that Canada, with its diverse immigrant population, **offers many cuisines known for their spiciness.** Even a mild level of spice can be too much for me. Therefore, **I always inquire about the spiciness of a dish before ordering.** People often describe dishes as 'a little spicy,' but what may be mild for them is too much for me.”

- Student from Ecuador



There is a leaf we call "Kontomire" (Cocoyam/Taro leaves) used in preparing soups and stews back home in Ghana. **Most people have been replacing it with spinach here, but it is never the same! I really wish there was a way it could be grown here in Saskatoon.**

- Student from Ghana



EATING HEALTHY IN CANADA



“WESTERN DIET”

- Many people in Canada eat a “Western diet.”
- The Western diet contains large portions, red meat, animal fats, desserts, salt, fast food, and highly processed grains.
- This diet pattern can increase risks of heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.
- However, there are many ways to eat a healthy diet while living in Canada.



HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES

- Healthy diets include balance, variety, and moderation.
- Choose to eat your cultural foods whenever possible.
- Eat more plant-based foods and less highly-processed foods.
- Eat many fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and proteins like nuts, seeds, legumes, fish, tofu, eggs, poultry, low-fat dairy, and lean red meats.
- Drink water often.
- Try to prepare most of your meals at home.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- It is hard to get enough vitamin D in Canada during colder months. Vitamin D is found in dairy, salmon, egg yolks, and some mushrooms.
- Consider a vitamin D supplement from November-April.
- Many Canadians eat too much salt. Try to reduce your amount of processed foods to limit your salt intake.
- Many Canadians do not eat enough magnesium, calcium, vitamin A, fiber, and potassium. Eating a healthy diet can help you get all the nutrients you need.

Canada's Food Guide

The Canada Food Guide is an online resource which highlights general elements to healthy eating.



Image obtained from <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Cook more often at home.

Check out the map at the end of this resource package to find local grocery stores. This may help you decide where in Saskatoon you might want to live.

Be mindful of eating habits.

Canadians may share similar or have different eating habits from your home country. It is important to remember your cultural foods and food practices are an important part of your wellbeing.

However,
healthy eating is more
than the foods we eat!
Canada's Food Guide
suggests to:

Enjoy the foods you eat! This means including familiar foods you enjoy such as your cultural foods from home!

Limit processed foods and be aware of marketing advertisements

Eat meals with others!

Check out the student groups within the USASK International Student and Study Abroad Centre.

There are many spots to eat on campus. Feel free to share your food with fellow classmates, teach them about your culture, and talk about what is meaningful to you about your food!

Usask is an inclusive environment and encourages cultural diversity and celebration.

The food guide is an evidence based document which serves as general guideline for all people. However, it is not culturally specific but it is available in 31 different languages. Additionally, it offers over 120 recipes which can be filtered to search for:

- freezer friendly
- made in 30 minutes or less
- no cooking required
- kid friendly
- vegetarian

Click here to
[Explore](#)
[Canadas Food](#)
[Guide](#)



Understanding the Canadian Food System



Information to help make it a little less complicated...

Safety First

Canada, among many other countries in the world, has a very safe and reliable food system. It is highly regulated by both Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

CFIA is organization is dedicated to ensure food is safe and people remain well because of it.

For more information, check out what CFIA is all about.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Common Allergens

In Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency requires associations, distributors, food manufacturers and importers to ensure complete and appropriate labelling of all foods. Did you know approximately 7% or 3 million Canadians have a self-reported food allergy?

Common food allergens in Canada are:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|--|
| • crustaceans | • gluten | • soy | • tree nuts (almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, |
| • molluscs | • milk | • sesame | macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio nuts, |
| • eggs | • mustard | • sulphites | and walnuts) |
| • fish | • peanuts | • wheat | • triticale |

Note that if you are arriving to Saskatoon with children, some schools and daycares may have restrictions on certain allergens. This means you cannot pack that food item in their lunch. It is best to:

- Check with your child's school policies for lunches and allergen foods.
- Don't pack food into your child's lunch with ingredients that are restricted at the school.
- Look for warning statements such as "may contain" if you or your child has severe allergies.
- If a restricted allergen is a staple food in your culture, talk to your school or daycare about the food or with a Registered Dietitian to help you navigate ways to include it safely.

Food Labels and Food Longevity

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 12 crackers (30 g) pour 12 craquelins (30 g)	
Calories 107	% Daily Value* % valeur quotidienne*
Fat / Lipides 1 g	1 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 27 g	
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	4 %
Sugars / Sucres 3 g	3 %
Protein / Protéines 3 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 370 mg	16 %
Potassium 50 mg	1 %
Calcium 10 mg	1 %
Iron / Fer 2 mg	11 %

* 5% or less is a **little**, 15% or more is a **lot**
* 5 % ou moins c'est **peu**, 15 % ou plus c'est **beaucoup**

Ingredients: Enriched wheat flour • Sugars
(glucose, barley malt extract) • Salt •
Vegetable oil • Soda

1 Find the amount of food

2 Use % daily value

3 Read the list of ingredients

Image obtained from <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/use-food-labels-make-healthier-choices/>

1 - Food Labels

In Canada, many food products found in grocery stores or supermarkets have a Nutrition Facts label. This is to help buyers understand the nutritional composition of the food. The image on the left suggests how to read them but here are a few additional tips to better understand them.

- 1. Look at the serving size (the amount)** these do not always reflect how much a typical person would eat.
- 2. Calories** (Kj/kcal) is the energy the food provides.
- 3. Sodium** - it is recommend in Canada to keep sodium consumption below 2300 mg or 2.3 g per day. Be mindful of foods that have a lot of sodium.

2 - Percent Daily Value

This is a tool to help people identify if a food has a little or a lot of a specific food component.

For some foods, such as salt, sugar, and saturated fats a little is better because over the day they add up to what is safe to consume.

However, some foods ideally should have a lot because the daily requirements are greater, such as potassium.



Image obtained from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/understanding-food-labels/percent-daily-value.html>

Best Before Dates Vs Expiry Dates

SIMILAR BUT NOT THE SAME

Best Before Date

The best before date (BBD) tells you how long a product will keep the freshness, taste, nutritional value, or any other qualities claimed by the manufacturer so long as the food is unopened and properly stored.

Only foods with a shelf life of 90 days or less except for fresh fruits, vegetables, and certain other products are required to have a BB date.

It is not illegal for stores to sell food beyond the BB date. Similarly, you can buy and eat foods after the date has passed however the food may lose some freshness, flavour, or nutritional value.

These are not an indicator of food safety.

Expiry Date

Expiration dates are required on foods which have nutritional requirements which might not be met after the expiration date. typically should not be consumed after expiry because their intended effect may be compromised.

Examples of foods with an expiry date:

- Nutritional meal replacement shakes
- Nutritional supplements such as vitamin D
- Infant formulas



Other date labels used:

Freeze by:

Sell by:

Prepared on:

Manufactured on:

Check out [Health Canada](https://www.healthcanada.ca) for more information on understanding date labels.

Grocery Stores In Saskatoon

There are many great grocery stores in Saskatoon that offer a variety of food products!

TOP TIPS



- When you find a grocery store that works best for you, look into their loyalty and rewards program. By staying with a specific chain of grocery stores, you may be able to earn points towards free items!
- Almost all grocery stores in Saskatoon have apps. This is a great way to keep track of flyers, compare costs of different items, and find the best deals!

Stores that have great flyer/weekly deals

No Frills
Independent
Safeway
Save on Foods
Superstore
Shoppers Drug Mart
Sobeys
Walmart



Apps and non-affiliated memberships

Flashfood App

- An app that alerts you when foods at different grocery stores are being offered at discounted prices because they are nearing their best-before dates.
- Using the app, you can find delicious foods near you and save some money!
- A variety of grocery stores in Saskatoon partake in this app, including NoFrills, Your Independent Grocer, and more!



SPC Program

- The Student Price Card (SPC) costs \$11.99 for a one-year membership. It offers a 10-20% discount on more than 450 partner stores (including fast food franchises, online meal kit subscriptions, and a variety of non-food brands).
- For a list of SPC partner stores,

[visit spccard.ca](http://visit.spccard.ca)



Memberships and Reward Programs

PC Optimum

- Independent
- No Frills
- Real Canadian Superstore
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Wholesale Club

Scene+

- FreshCo
- Safeway
- Sobeys



Stores that offer student discounts

Bulk Barn

- 15% discount every Wednesday
- Must show student ID

Pitchfork Market and Kitchen

- 15% discount every Wednesday
- Must show student ID

TooGoodToGo App

- Allows you to purchase food at a discount, that restaurants, cafes and stores don't want to waste
- Promotes sustainability, reduces food waste and saves some money!
- Stores that take part in this app are:

- Citizen cafe
- Serene Tea
- 7-eleven
- The Safari Market
- The Prairie Donut and Poutine
- Market of Asia.



Budget - Shop - Prep

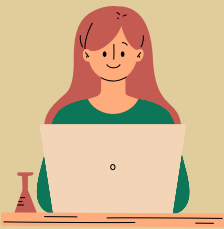
HELPFUL TIPS

Budget

There are many apps and online budgeting tools you can explore through a simple online search. Explore budgeting ahead of time if it is a new concept. To make a budget you need information!



1 RESEARCH



Identify current costs of living in Saskatchewan to help plan how much money you need for your daily living.

FIND OUT MORE

Food prices - check out food prices from local grocery stores to see how much it would cost for common ingredients. Compare them to other stores to see which is less expensive.

2 PLAN

Check out what budgeting apps might help you be successful such as Mint, You Need a Budget, Wally, and Goodbudget.



3 TRACK, TEST, AND REVIEW



Successful food budgeting will not likely come on the first try. Since food prices fluctuate, tracking total costs over a period of time is necessary to know how much money is being spent on food as an average. Use that data to inform your budget, test it out for a period of time, and review. Did it work? Was what you planned for enough money to cover your food needs?

Plan - Shop - Prep

- Make a grocery list based on your meal plan and stay true to the list.
- Include plant-based meals when planning meals.
- Shop the perimeter of the grocery store. Fresh foods are typically on the outside, while more processed foods are down the center aisles.
- Buy smart! Stock up on non-perishable items when on sale.
- Look at the cost per 100g on the food item label when buying.
- Cook and eat at home, or pack a lunch to bring to school or work as much as possible. Try to avoid spending money on eating out.
- When shopping, consider bringing a reusable shopping bag. Many stores do not provide bags or will charge extra for paper or reusable bags.

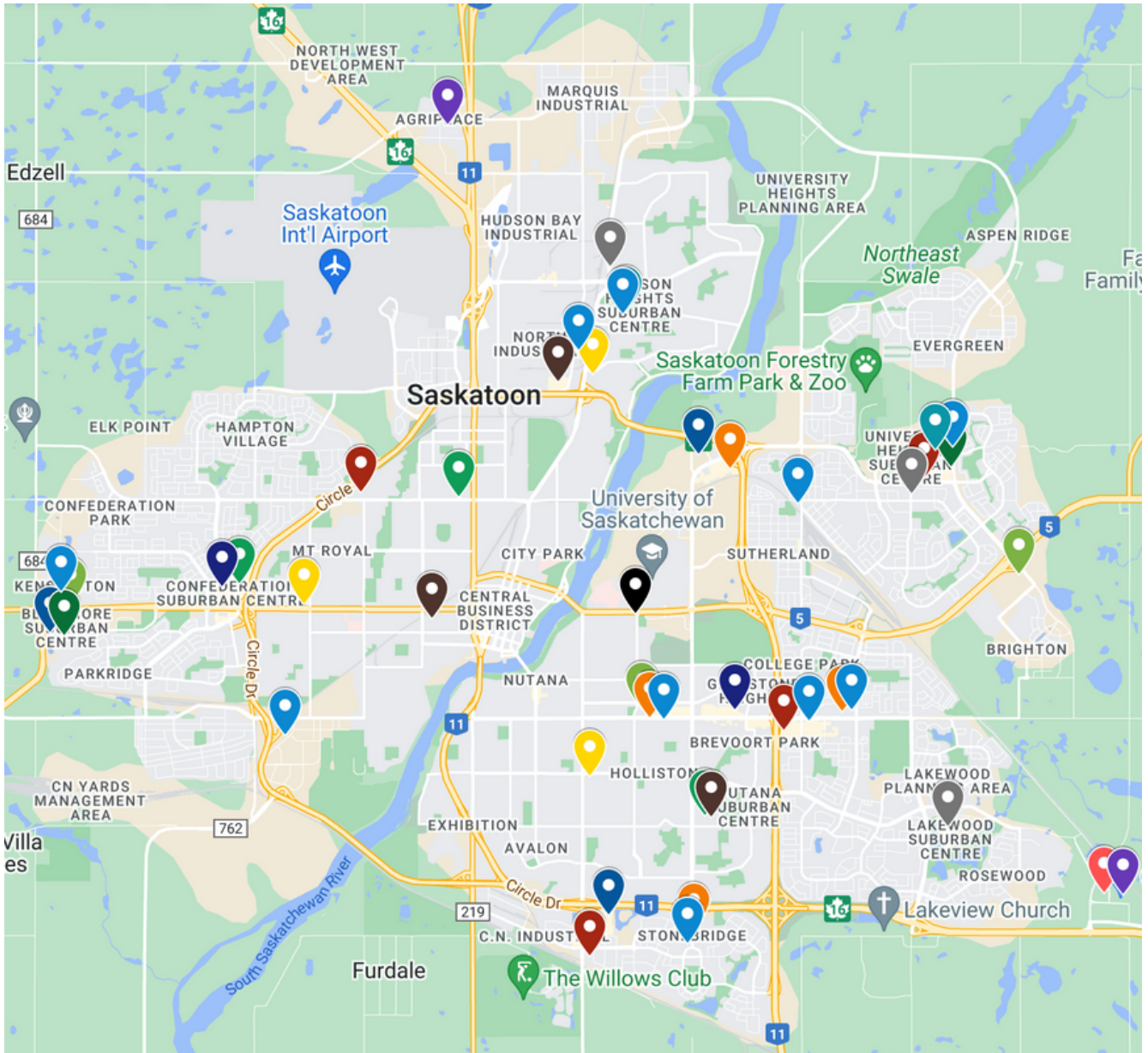
Check out these resources from UNLOCK FOOD for more information!



[Meal Planning Tips](#)

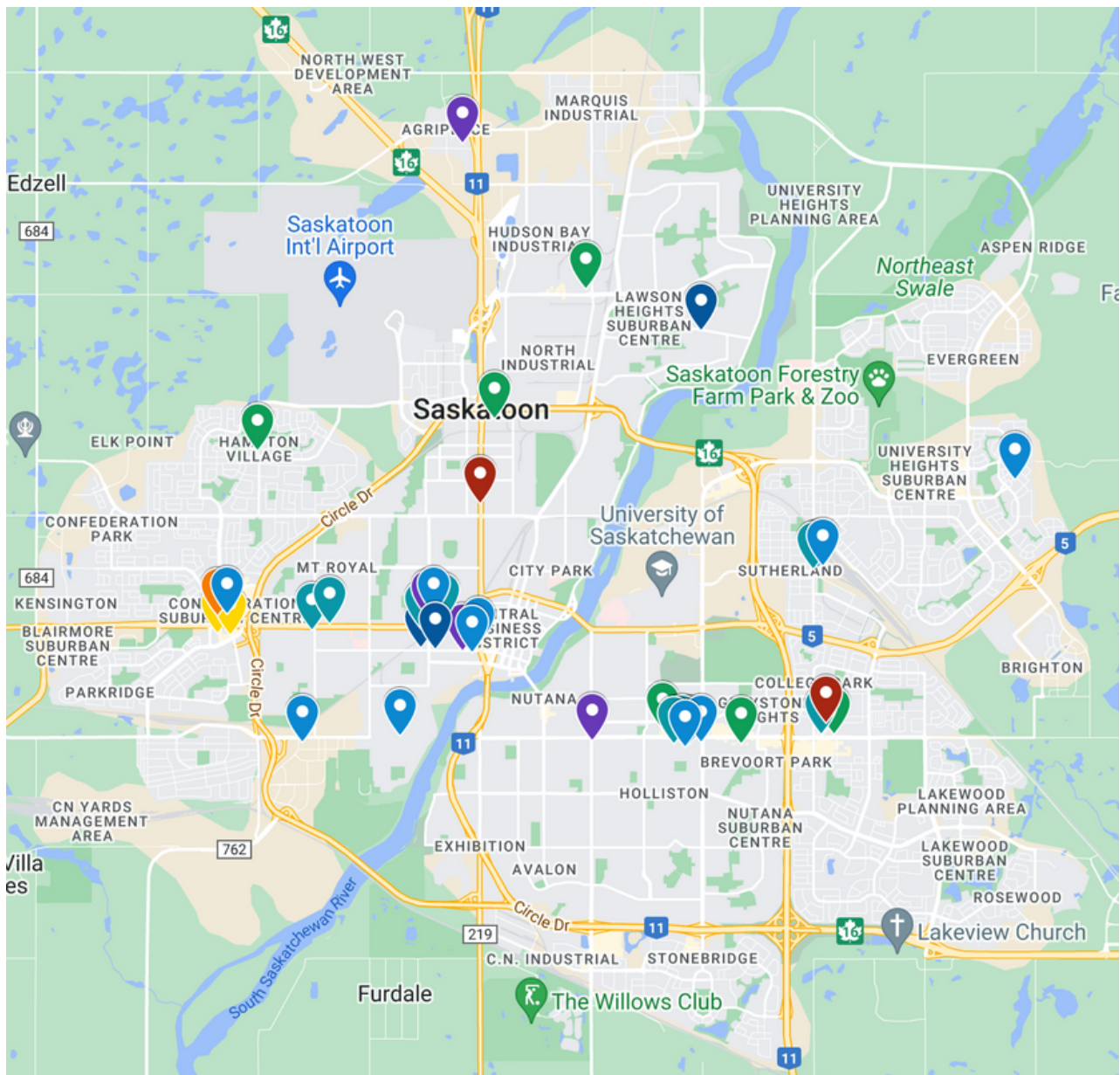
[Tips to Save on Groceries](#)









Supermarket Grocery Store Map



	Save-On-Food		Your Independent Grocer
	Co-op Food Store		NOFRILLS
	Sobeys		Wal-Mart Supercentre
	FRESH CO		Pitchfork Market + Kitchen
	Safeway		Giant Tiger
	Real Canadian Superstore		Bulk Barn
	Campus Confectionary		Costco
	Meats, fish, & premade meals		

Cultural Grocery Store Map



	African and Caribbean		Indian
	Asian		Latin American
	Eastern European		Middle East
	Filipino		Mixed Ethnic Food Store



More Nutrition Resources!



[Click Here](#)

To learn from the YMCA about healthy eating suggestions for newcomers to Canada



For tips from Canada's Food Guide on how to eat healthy within any budget:



[Click Here](#)

[Click Here](#)

For food security resources available at the University of Saskatchewan, such as food hampers and more culinary services:



For other food insecurity programs offered by Culinary Services at the University of Saskatchewan:



[Click Here](#)

[Click Here](#)

For a list of food access resources available in Saskatoon.



To learn about CHEP, a local organization dedicated to improving food security and access in Saskatoon:



[Click Here](#)

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