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HOW TO BALANCE STYLE AND COMFORT AS A BUSY COLLEGE STUDENT

Sneha Nalluri | Contributor

Whether you are a seasoned fashionista, a casual trend-follower or just looking to spice up your wardrobe without breaking the bank, these tips will guide you through some of the best ways to be stylish without sacrificing comfort during these chilly months.

1. Essentials are essential

Before styling anything, having a reliable set of basics is crucial to building any outfit you'd like. Start

by finding your essentials — think classic tank tops, short sleeves and long sleeves. Consider neutral tones, black and white, or go with your favorite colors that compliment your skin tone. These versatile pieces will be the foundation of many of your outfits year-round.

2. Master the art of layering

Winter is all about layering, a skill that every college student should master. Matching sweat sets create a cozy yet coordinated look, perfect for those long hours studying

in the library or grabbing dinner in the dining hall. Puffer vests and flannels are versatile additions that can be layered over hoodies or your favorite athleisure top with leggings or pants, giving you an effortlessly stylish vibe. Embrace leather jackets for a sleek appearance on a night out, or opt for the sophistication of a knit sweater or cardigan to give you that bookish, academic look. Trench coats are back in and are not just for battling this bitter cold; they add a polished touch to any outfit. Further, explore the preppy



Rue Thi/Niner Times

side of fashion with quarter zips and shackets. Do not forget the power of a nice graphic sweatshirt—a quick fix for a stylish look while displaying your personal interests.

3. Finding your fit 'bottoms up'

Jeans are a timeless staple that can be tailored to any style that looks the most flattering on you, from bootcut, straight-leg, skinny, skater, or ripped; there is no end of options for the style of jeans that look the best on you. Cargos add a street-wear aesthetic and have many pockets that incorporate style and convenience so you can carry all your essentials. Sweatpants, being the obvious choice for these cold days, can add a comfort that comes second to your bed when paired with a coordinated top. For the ladies, leggings are a go-to choice for style, color and versatility without the weight of having on denim.

4. Accessorize like a pro

Accessories can make or break an outfit, so do not be shy about using them. Baseball caps are perfect for those unruly hair days, while bean-

ies can help you with the same thing but with added warmth. Earmuffs can not only keep you cozy but can also double as the perfect set of headphones for the winter if they have Bluetooth capabilities. Scarves are both fashionable and practical as they help you bundle up and elevate your outfit — a must-have for winter. Lastly, everyone can wear jewelry to make their outfits more put-together; stacking necklaces and rings can transform even the simplest outfit into a fashion statement and do not forget your earrings.

5. Get involved with campus fashion

Take your love for fashion beyond your wardrobe by joining campus fashion organizations. Join campus clubs like 3 Stars (@3stars_uncc), the Niner Fashion Collective (@ninerfashioncollective), Fashion Advocates for Sustainable Holistic Outfits (@charlottefasho) and Epochal N.I.N.E. Modeling Troupe (@epochal9_), to explore and celebrate style trends. Charlotte's Midas Magazine (@midas.mag) is also an excellent platform for fashion

enthusiasts to contribute to, connect with and stay updated on the latest trends and campus events.

Attend fashion-related workshops, fashion shows, and meetups that these clubs host to network with like-minded individuals and immerse yourself in the world of fashion here on campus.

6. Think about sustainability and availability

As a final tip, consider the sustainability and the availability of the clothing you choose. Opt for clothing aligning with ecological and ethical practices and support brands prioritizing eco-friendly materials. Look at the materials that a piece is made of and see if it is long-lasting and not just something that will hold up until the next trend rolls around — this holds especially true for basics. Many fashion-related student organizations listed previously explore thrifting, clothing swaps, vintage markets and upcycling. Being mindful of the environmental impact of your wardrobe choices adds another layer of consciousness to your personal style.

INTERESTED IN LIVING OFF CAMPUS?

► Start your search with the Niner Choice Program!

The Niner Choice Program is a safety initiative designed to help students and families make informed decisions about off-campus living options.

You can find helpful tools and resources (including a sample lease, information on tenant's rights, safety tips, as well as campus and community resources) on the Niner Choice website: housing.charlotte.edu/niner-choice.

**NINER
CHOICE**



A OF THING IN AND NEAR

Sunnya Hadavi | Editor-in-Chief

Charlotte has a lot, and it can be hard to navigate for those new to the city. This guide provides ideas for activities from A to Z in and around Charlotte.

A - Amusement park

Carowinds is a 400-acre amusement park in Charlotte with over 60 thrill rides, a water park and multiple food options.

B - Brakemans Coffee

For a new place to try coffee, Brakemans Coffee is located right outside of South Charlotte in Matthews.

C - Crowders Mountain

Crowders Mountain State Park is 32 miles west of Charlotte and has a great view of the region. In addition to hiking, you can go camping, paddling and fishing.

D - Discovery Place

Discovery Place Science Museum is in Uptown Charlotte, featuring an aquarium and other exhibits.

E - Exit Strategy escape rooms

Exit Strategy is one of the spots

in Charlotte where you can do an escape room. Exit Strategy's north location is near UNC Charlotte and has five games.

F - Farmers markets

Charlotte has many farmers markets around the city. Some markets include Charlotte Regional Farmers Market, Uptown Farmers Market, North End Farmers Market and Kings Drive Farmers Market.

G - Golf

Most notably, Topgolf is located near UNC Charlotte. However, Monster Mini Golf is even closer to campus. Frankie's Fun Park also offers mini golf and other activities like laser tag and go-karting.

H - Hall of Fame (NASCAR)

The NASCAR Hall of Fame is located in Uptown and showcases the history of NASCAR. The Hall features classic and present-day cars in addition to racing simulators.

I - Ice skating

For the chance to skate throughout the year, Extreme Ice Center or Pineville Ice House are Charlotte's two spots for ice skating.

J - Jeni's Ice Creams

Jeni's Ice Creams is an ice cream shop with four locations in Charlotte (South End, NoDa, Blakeney and Park Road). It is a great way to explore Charlotte's other neighborhoods.

K - Karaoke

There are many spots for karaoke around Charlotte's different neighborhoods. Seoul Food Market Co. has two locations, one in South End and one in the Mill District..

L - Lazy 5 Ranch

North of Charlotte, Lazy 5 Ranch is a drive-through animal park with over 750 animals from 6 continents. The animals include giraffes, bison and llamas.

M - MacTabby Cat Cafe

MacTabby Cat Cafe is the best place for cat lovers. Book a reservation to play with the adoptable cats in their cat lounge, or come by for the coffee.

N - NoDa

NoDa, which stands for North Davidson, is Charlotte's arts district.

2 SS TO DO CHARLOTTE



The area features murals and art from local artists and places to eat and shop, making it a nice place to walk around and take photos.

O - Optimist Hall

Optimist Hall is a dining hall right off the light rail with over 20 food stalls, a brewery and places to shop. The location of the dining hall was originally home to Charlotte's largest textile mill.

P - Parks

There are many parks throughout Charlotte that are ideal for hikes and picnics. In Uptown Charlotte, Freedom Park and First Ward Park provide greenspace in the city. Other parks, like Colonel Francis J. Beatty Park near South Charlotte, are much more secluded.

Q - Quarry at Carrigan Farms

The Quarry at Carrigan Farms is a local farm with options for strawberry picking in late April, open swimming and sunflowers during the summer.

R - Reed Gold Mine

Located east of Charlotte, Reed Gold Mine is the location of the

first documented gold found in the United States. You can go on guided tours of the historic structures, pan for gold and hike the trails there.

S - Sleepy Poet Antique Mall

For those interested in thrifting and antiques, Sleepy Poet Antique Mall sells unique items from various vendors.

T - Tiger World

Tiger World Endangered Wildlife Preserve is open to the public for educational guided tours and walk-about self-guided tours. The non-profit animal conservation center rescues, rehabilitates and preserves many exotic animals, including tigers.

U - U.S. Whitewater Center

The U.S. Whitewater Center is an outdoor center with ample opportunities to run, paddle and climb. Activities at the Whitewater Center include ziplining, whitewater rafting and rock climbing.

V - Visulite Theater

Visulite Theatre is one of the many spots in Charlotte for live music performances. They have per-

formances slotted throughout each month to attend.

W - Wing Haven Gardens

Wing Haven is a garden and bird sanctuary located south of Uptown Charlotte in the Myers Park neighborhood.

X - Xtreme Xperience

Xtreme Xperience is an opportunity to drive supercars like a Ferrari 488 and Lamborghini Huracán at high speeds. The chance to race supercars happens twice yearly, at the Charlotte Motor Speedway near UNC Charlotte.

Y - Yellow Brick Road

Walk on the yellow brick road through North Carolina's Land of Oz. Land of Oz is a theme park that host. Dates for the park's events change yearly and have yet to be announced for 2024.

Z - Zoo

The North Carolina Zoo is perfect for a day trip further out from Charlotte. The zoo features animals from the African and North American continents.

NINER COOKBOOK: HOW TO MAKE ELEVATED RAMEN

Ruhshona Soledjonova | Opinion Editor

Illustration by Destiny Bridgers/Niner Times

It is not rare to see a college student eating ramen. Many live off less than a dollar ramen because it is affordable and easy to make. But why have the same old ramen cup when you can make a delicious recipe with far more flavor at an affordable price? This uses six ingredients to make a satisfying, cheap meal and takes about 20 minutes.

Ingredients

- 1 whole pack of ramen: Samyang buldak spicy carbonara chicken-flavored ramen is recommended for this recipe. Inside the packaging comes with a cheese powder packet and Samyang buldak sauce. However, any ramen could work.
- 1 egg
- A teaspoon of oil or butter
- 6 cut pieces of smoked beef sausage: Alternatives include pork, chicken or veggie sausage.
- ¼ a bag of frozen dumplings: The type of dumpling can be your choice of veggie, chicken or pork.
- ½ a cup of shredded Colby jack or mozzarella cheese
- Crushed-up nori (seasoned seaweed) and sesame seeds/oil: To be used as additional garnish and is optional.

Cooking directions

Step 1: Grab a sauce pot, fill it halfway with water, and bring it to a boil.

Step 2: Empty the ramen package and place noodles in the pot of boiling water, along with the dumplings of your choice, and let it cook for 5-8 minutes.

Step 3: While your noodles and

dumplings are cooking, take out a smaller frying pan, spray some olive oil or butter, and fry an egg. Then, place it on a plate to the side.

Step 4: Then fry the sausage pieces in the same pan on medium to high heat for 30 seconds to a minute, flipping them halfway through and placing them beside the fried egg afterward.

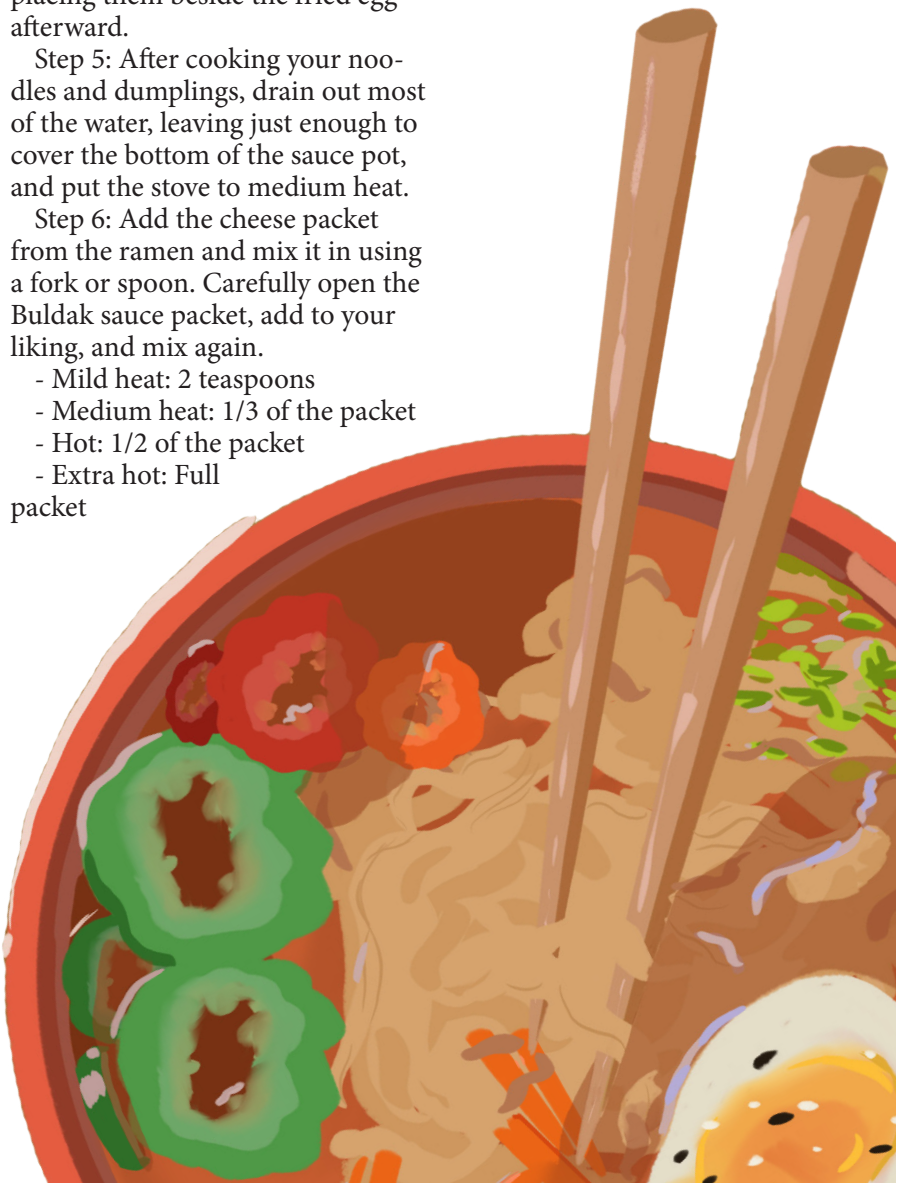
Step 5: After cooking your noodles and dumplings, drain out most of the water, leaving just enough to cover the bottom of the sauce pot, and put the stove to medium heat.

Step 6: Add the cheese packet from the ramen and mix it in using a fork or spoon. Carefully open the Buldak sauce packet, add to your liking, and mix again.

- Mild heat: 2 teaspoons
- Medium heat: 1/3 of the packet
- Hot: 1/2 of the packet
- Extra hot: Full packet

Step 7: Once a sauce is created and mixed in with the noodles and dumplings, add your sausage and egg on top. Evenly spread shredded cheese on top and cover for two minutes.

Step 8: Finally, uncover the sauce pot and serve.



5 MEMORABLE ART EXPERIENCES TO TRY IN CHARLOTTE

Hyacinth Powell | Staff Writer

UNC Charlotte is nestled northeast of the city center, convenient to some of the city's artsy hot spots. From eclectic tattoo parlors to creative dining experiences, the city is a canvas of culture pulsating with diversity, education and excitement.

NoDa Art District

NoDa (short for North Davidson) is Charlotte's art district and features a collection of galleries, creative dining, colorful murals, vendors and more. Venture into the neighborhood to check out the street art or participate in an art crawl. Gallery crawls occur twice a month, every first and third Friday from 6 to 9:30 p.m.

Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Art & Culture

Harvey B. Gantt Center is devoted to celebrating the contributions of African and African Americans to American culture. The Gantt Center is a museum in the center of Uptown Charlotte that provides unique experiences to explore African heritage. It features experiences ranging from Cultural Cuisine, a part of "Southern Culture on a Plate," curated dining to a creative Vinyasa Yoga flow on the rooftop.

Picture Project CLT Selfie Museum

Project CLT Selfie Museum is an interactive selfie museum with 4,000 square feet and 30 photo opportunities. This space features themed

backdrops (some of which change seasonally) that are accessible with the purchase of a ticket or package. The pictures are D-I-Y (do-it-yourself), so bringing a friend is recommended.

Canvas Tattoo & Art Gallery

Canvas Tattoo has been voted the Best Tattoo Shop in Charlotte by Expertise.com and featured at the top of Yelp's 10 Best Tattoo Shops list. Canvas Tattoo is located in the heart of NoDa Art District and features some of the best tattoo artists

in Charlotte, according to Axios Charlotte's best tattoo artists list.

Deluxe Fun Dining

Deluxe Fun Dining has been recommended by Restaurant Guru four years in a row. The Charlotte Observer voted Deluxe Fun Best Fine Dining 2023, earning it a silver award. What sets Deluxe Dining apart is not just the culinary mastery but its elaborate artistic displays and props served with each dish. "Art is food, and food is art," as their website describes the experience.



Emma Toney/Niner Times File Photo

A UNC CHARLOTTE STUDENT'S GUIDE TO THE LIGHT RAIL

Jenny Kase | Asst. News Editor

Navigating the city as a UNC Charlotte student is easy with the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) light rail. The LYNX Blue Line connects the University to 26 stops of Charlotte's extensive urban communities.

The light rail offers students a host of advantages, including affordability, relief from parking and traffic congestion, consistency and environmental consciousness.

Getting to the light rail

Two light rail stops are available at students' convenience on the University's main campus.

The first station, UNC Charlotte Main Station, is near North Deck along Cameron Boulevard and across Wallis Hall. The second station, J.W. Clay/UNC Charlotte, is near the football stadium and behind the UNC Charlotte Marriott on North Tryon Street. UNC Char-

lotte buses can be used to get close to each of these stations.

The light rail arrives at the UNC Charlotte Main Station Monday-Sunday at approximately 4:58 a.m. and makes its last stop at 1:59 a.m. Riders can look at the Blue Line rail routes and schedules on the CATS-Pass App.

Tickets and light rail access

Students at Charlotte are granted a CATS All-Access Pass for unlimited rides on the CATS LYNX light rail. The pass also gives access to the trolley line, Special Transportation Service (STS), local and express bus routes and the Airport Connector.

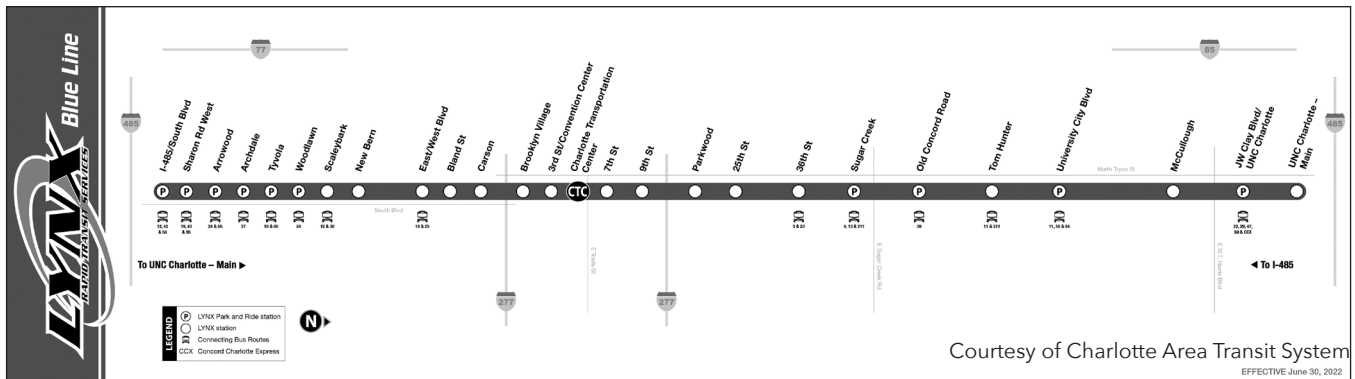
For the light rail, riders must have their University ID available as it serves as their ticket when boarding. Security officials will intermittently enter the light rail to ask for tickets. In these cases, students must show their ID, or they will have to get off at the next stop.

However, starting in fall 2024, students are required to use the CATS-Pass App to utilize the light rail and CATS buses.

While students can park on campus with permits, parking near most light rail stations is also available. There are 11 Park and Ride stations along the Blue Line. Parking is free at most stations, but CATS charges a \$10 exit fee at the J.W. Clay/UNC Charlotte and University City Boulevard stations unless passengers have a valid CATS pass.

Guests looking to purchase a ticket without the All-Access Pass can use the CATS-Pass app or buy a ticket at the ticket vending machine located at each station.

Questions and concerns regarding the LYNX Blue Line or other transportation services can be answered by the PaTS Communication Center at 704-687-0161 or pats@charlotte.edu.



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