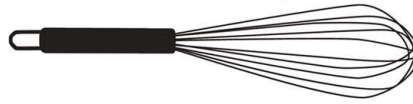


REAL SCHOOL FOOD CHALLENGE

A program of Chef Ann Foundation



Competitor Handbook

Creating your Recipe and Challenge Guidelines

Creating Your Recipe

For this challenge, you are creating a **nutritious, tasty** and **kid-friendly** school lunch (no dessert included!), which you will cook and sample out to guests at the Real School Food Challenge. Remember, this is a (friendly) competition, so the guests will be tasting your recipe and judging it against the other competitors' creations. You can choose to either participate alone, or with a partner/team.

This challenge is designed to educate and inform the public about what it takes to create a USDA compliant school meal from scratch. The below requirements have been adapted from USDA school lunch guidelines and are meant to give you a simplified idea of what schools must take into consideration when developing compliant recipes.

Do your best to follow these guidelines and give yourself at least a week to develop your recipe. You will submit a Recipe Entry Worksheet to your event host two weeks before the competition.

Recipe Requirements

1. Cost Requirement

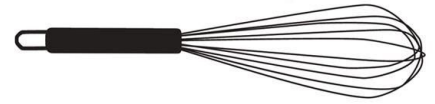
Each full serving of your recipe should cost no more than **\$1.25***

*This is based on a national average of what schools have to spend on food. A free school lunch is reimbursed by the government at \$3.43, and the Student Nutrition Association [reports](#) that on average, 44.7% of that is used for food cost (the rest is spent on labor, supplies and other costs associated with running a school meal program). Since food service departments pay lower, wholesale prices for ingredients than home consumers, subtract 30% from your total retail purchases for a baseline estimate of food service wholesale costs.

2. Nutrient Requirement

Meet the USDA Meal Nutrient Standards for a High School meal serving:*

- o Sodium: <740 milligrams
- o Calories: 750-850 calories
- o Saturated fats: <10% of total calories



- o Trans fat: 0 grams per serving

*See resource link below to help you calculate this!

3. Meal Component Requirement

Meet the USDA Meal Guidelines for the food items required for a daily High School lunch:

1. **Meat or Meat Alternates**– A 2-ounce serving of protein, which can be made up of:
 - o Meat*
 - o Cheese
 - o Tofu
 - o Egg (one large, whole egg equals a 2-ounce serving)
 - o Beans (1/2 cup cooked beans equals a 2-ounce serving)
 - o Yogurt: (8-ounces or 1 cup of yogurt equals a 2-ounce serving)

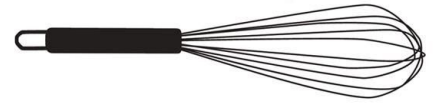
*The USDA requires you base your weight measurement on the “cooked, edible portion” of meat. A 2-ounce portion of raw meat will shrink when it’s cooked, and bones should not be counted towards the total either. Plan for a 25% cooking loss. That means you’ll need to buy 2.5-ounces of boneless meat for a 2-ounce cooked portion.

2. **Grains/Breads** – A 2-ounce serving, which can be made up of:
 - o Grains: Rice, Pasta, Noodles, Barley, etc. (2-ounces of dry grain equals 1 cup of cooked grains)
 - o Breads: rolls, buns, tortillas, pita, biscuits, etc. (a 2-ounce portion of any of these items counts as one compliant serving)
 - o At least 51% of grains/breads used must be whole grain
3. **Fruits/Vegetables:** – A ½ cup serving, which can be made up of:
 - o ½ cup vegetable
 - o ½ cup fruit
 - o ½ cup blend of fruits and veggies
4. **Milk:** One cup of fat free or 1% milk

Recipe Preparation

Once you have your recipe developed, you’ll need to start thinking about how you will prepare it for the event. Here are some things to keep in mind:

1. Ask your event host how many guests they are planning to have. You will need to prepare enough food to hand out samples to each guest. Guests will not need a full High School lunch serving, since they’ll need to leave room for the other recipe samples. Plan for 1 sample to be approximately ⅓ of a High School lunch serving.



2. Your event host will be giving you a \$50 gift card to Whole Food Market to help you purchase the ingredients for the event.
3. You will be preparing the majority of your recipe at home, saving final prep and assembly for the event location. Here are some tips for what should be prepped before the event:
 - o Do any and all cutting/chopping at home and package things up separately (in Tupperware, baggies etc.)
 - o Make any sauce at home and package separately.
 - o Cook anything that can be pre-cooked at home, and make sure to properly cool it before packaging.
 - o Bring things that need to stay cool in your own cooler with ice (or check with your event host to see if they have space in their fridge).
 - o If elements of your recipe need to be cooked/heated right before serving, plan on doing that at the event.

Day of the Event

- Plan to arrive 1 hour before the event starts
- You will have time to finish your recipe and prepare for sampling once you arrive. Set up a “serving station” where you can easily portion out samples to the guests.
- Create one presentation plate that you display next to your serving station so guests can judge the appearance of the meal.
- Before the tasting begins, you will have the opportunity to tell the group about your recipe and what you learned from the experience.

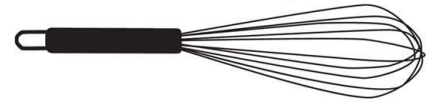
Judging

Guests will be judging your recipe based on the following criteria:

1. Appearance: Is the meal plated well? Does it have a variety of colors? Does it look appetizing?

2. Taste: Is the dish pleasing to the taste buds? Is it seasoned properly? Do the ingredients complement one another? Was any component over or under cooked? Would students purchase this dish if it were on the lunch menu?

3. Scalability: Can this dish be replicated in a school district? Would they have the time and labor to replicate this for large batch cooking? For example, if your recipe



requires the cook to individually prep each serving unit (like stuffing a pasta shell or dumpling) that may not be a practical recipe for expanding from 12 servings to 13,000 servings.

Resources

- **Entry Form:** Download the Recipe Entry Worksheet [here](#).
- **Nutrition Analysis:** Use a reputable nutrition data website such as [Calorie Count](#) to find out the nutrition facts for your recipes.
- **Meal Costs:** Use a website like [Cook Keep Book](#) to help with the cost breakdown. Remember to subtract 30% from the retail value of each ingredient for an estimate of food service wholesale purchasing prices.