

Culinary Inspired  
**PLANT-BASED TOOLKIT**  
*for k-12 Schools*



In the United States, more than 30 million students eat lunch every day. If schools incorporated more plant-based meals (meals consisting largely or entirely of foods derived from plants, rather than animal products) into their operations, the impact on the environment, student health, and school food finances could be substantial. Because schools serve such a large population, serving a plant-based entree once a week or even once a month is still beneficial.

Plant-based, also sometimes referred to as plant forward, meals focus on fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains to introduce students to a healthy diet at a young age. A diet focused on plants is also better for the environment, as plants take fewer resources to produce than meat.

To support schools in offering more plant-based, scratch cooked options we developed new recipes that fit USDA meal requirements and have been tested in school kitchens and taste-tested by students. We also developed educational and eye-catching marketing materials to show why plant-based meals are so important and the impact on both the environment and student health.

This plant-based toolkit provides all the necessary resources to set you up for success: examples of kid-approved recipes, tips on sampling new menu items and marketing tools to share with your audience.



## Suggested Recipes

## Menu Tastings



## Lunchroom Tips

## Marketing Materials



## Social Media Examples

# CHANA MASALA

YIELDS 96 SERVINGS

## Instructions:

1. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add chili powder and curry powder to skillet and warm for 1 - 2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add chopped onions, garlic, and ginger and sauté for 3 - 5 minutes until fragrant.
4. Once soft, puree mixture with an immersion blender until smooth. Tomato liquid can be added to help puree.
5. Add tomatoes and cook for another 2 - 3 minutes.
6. Stir enough tomato liquid into the mixture to get a thick gravy, bring to a boil and stir the chickpeas into the gravy.
7. Reduce heat to medium and cook until chickpeas are heated through, 5 - 7 minutes.
8. Stir in baby spinach at the last minute just to wilt.
9. Garnish with cilantro.

## Ingredients

- 32 lb garbanzo beans
- 1 C vegetable oil
- 16 lb diced tomatoes
- 7 lb red onion, chopped
- 6 oz + 7g ginger root
- 7 lb jalapeño, sliced
- 2 oz garlic, chopped
- 2 Tbsp chili powder
- 3 oz curry powder
- 3 lb baby spinach
- 1 Tbsp kosher salt
- 1 lb cilantro



# HUMMUS VEGGIE WRAPS

YIELDS 100 SERVINGS

## Instructions:

1. Place room temperature tortilla on work station.
2. Spread a 3oz scoop of hummus on the tortilla.
3. Sprinkle 3oz scoop of garbanzo beans on the hummus.
4. Arrange a row of cucumber, tomatoes and avocado down the center.
5. Cover with 1/4 C lettuce and 1/4 C fresh spinach.
6. Roll the wrap up "burrito style" ending with the seam side down. Cut wrap in half on bias.

### Built to Order:

- Serve immediately .

### Bulk:

- Assemble in a 2" serving pan.
- Cover with plastic wrap and CCP - hold wraps refrigerated at 40F or below for service.

## Ingredients

- 100 tortillas (10")
- 18 lbs + 12 oz of beans, garbanzo
- 3 qt + 1/2 C cucumber, sliced
- 3 qt + 1/2 C tomato, sliced
- 18 avocados
- 1 gal + 2 qt of lettuce, iceberg, shredded
- 1 gal + 2 qt spinach
- 18.5 lb of hummus, plain



# LENTIL CRUMBLE NACHOS

YIELDS 96 SERVINGS

\*See avocado cream sauce recipe [here](#)

\*\*See pico de gallo recipe [here](#)

## Instructions:

For Lentil Crumbles:

1. Combine lentil crumbles, un-drained pinto beans and water in a saucepan.
2. Cook for 12 minutes or until the consistency of a thick sauce.

For Nachos:

1. Sauté diced onions in oil until translucent.
2. Add lentil crumbles and combine.
3. Add oregano, paprika and water. Simmer until mixture reaches a chili-like consistency.
4. Serve over 2 oz of chips.
5. Top with homemade pico de gallo and avocado cream sauce (optional).

## Ingredients

For Lentil Crumbles:

- 12 lb lentil crumbles
- 8 gal water
- 11 lb pinto beans

For Nachos:

- 8 lb tortilla chips
- 1/4 cup oregano
- 1/4 cup paprika
- 1 lb yellow onion, diced
- 12 oz avocado cream sauce\*
- 12 lb pico de gallo, homemade\*\*



# TOFU HUEVOS RANCHEROS

YIELDS 100 SERVINGS

\*See ranchero sauce recipe [here](#)

## Instructions:

For Tofu Huevos:

1. Place drained tofu in a bowl. Add turmeric and curry and crumble with a fork mix with a whisk.
2. Sauté tofu until lightly browned and scrambled egg consistency.

For Tofu Huevos Rancheros:

1. On a hot skillet, heat tortillas on both sides until warm and soft.
2. Lay 2 tortillas on serving vessel as a base.
3. Top tortillas with the following:
  - #16 scoop (1/4 cup) lentil crumble
  - #16 scoop (1/4 cup) tofu huevos
  - 1/2 cup ranchero sauce
4. Serve immediately.

## Ingredients

For Tofu Huevos:

- 25 lb tofu, firm
- 1 Tbsp + 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 Tbsp + 1 tsp turmeric

For Tofu Huevos Rancheros:

- 200 6" tortillas
- 12 pounds lentil crumbles
- 13 pounds tofu huevos
- 25 pounds ranchero sauce\*



# MENU TASTINGS & LUNCHROOM TIPS

One of the biggest tasks with introducing new menu items is encouraging kids to enjoy unfamiliar food offerings. But don't get discouraged, we have found that tasting, tasting, and more tasting is a great method to overcome their reluctance!

## Fresh Produce Tasting

Kids need a connection to real food. Tasting fresh, raw produce is a great way to experience food in its unprocessed state. Here are some ways to engage students in a fresh produce tasting:

- Do side-by-side taste comparisons of different varieties of produce (i.e. tomatoes, peppers, and greens).
- Engage their senses when evaluating the produce. Ask students to touch, taste, smell, and visually describe the item both in its whole form and sliced.
- Coordinate tastings in conjunction with a Harvest of the Month program.
- Invite a local farmer to the event and ask them to bring a case of one of their crops, such as ripe peaches or freshly picked cherry tomatoes. Highlight the importance of local and sustainable farming by making your farmer a hero.



## Menu Item Tasting

Participation is incredibly important to any school lunch program, but sometimes kids are afraid or hesitant to try the school lunch. Here are some ways to engage students in a menu item tasting:

- Plan a menu item tasting the day before the item is being served so you can encourage kids to buy school lunch the next day.
- Bump up your orders for the next day to ensure that you have enough food to serve existing and new school lunch participants.
- Have a parent volunteer or teacher help collect feedback from students so they can vote on which new menu items they liked.

For additional menu tasting tips, [click here!](#)

# POSTERS & SIGNS





## More Plants Please!




Now Serving: Plant Forward Meals!

We are bringing some new recipes to the lunchroom! These recipes are part of a plant forward initiative to bring more plant-based foods into our school meals for students and staff.




### What is Plant Forward?

-  These meals emphasize plants as foundational to a healthy diet that consists of whole, fresh foods.
-  Plant forward is inclusive, which means adding more plants into meals, rather than eliminating foods.

### How to Eat Plant Forward?

-  Eat **ONE** meal per week that is made entirely from plants.
-  Fill half your plate with plants first. Choose from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
-  Eat the rainbow by getting as many colors onto your plate as possible.

### Why Eat Plant Forward?

-  Plant forward meals help cultivate life long eating habits that can prevent disease.
-  Plant forward meals have little or no processed ingredients because they start with fresh whole foods.
-  Filling our plates with more foods that come directly from plants ensures we use our resources most efficiently.

Support Healthy Eating  
Encourage Our Students to Eat Plant Forward!

Note: Click images for downloadable posters!



# More Plants Please!

Choices with Impact: Save Water

It Takes...




**VS.**




**Swap your beef for chickpeas just once a week and save roughly 263 gallons of water!**

# SOCIAL MEDIA EXAMPLES




Did you know that 31 million school lunches are served each day in the United States? We see that statistic as 31 million opportunities to improve child nutrition across the country. By scratch-cooking with fresh, whole ingredients, our schools provide delicious, nutritious meals that directly combat diet-related medical problems AND promote environmental sustainability. 🌍

**JUST NOW**



One of the accomplishments we're proudest of is incorporating plant forward menu options in our school lunch program. Plant-forward meals help the environment, improve student health, and even our program's finances!

Like Comment Share



On the menu this week: teriyaki tofu bowls! This is one of our favorite scratch-cooked, healthy, and #plantforward meals. Our kids love this dish! 🥕

Like Comment Share



This week's #SustainabilityShoutout goes to Oakland Unified School District, who saved \$42,000 by purchasing 30% less meat and dairy while upping their spend on produce and legumes by 10% over two years. 🌱 OUSD also spent 1% less per meal, reduced their carbon footprint by 14% and decreased water usage by nearly 6%.

Source: One Meal a Day  
👩‍🍳 Food Management

**JUST NOW**





# SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE

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- On the menu this week: teriyaki tofu bowls! This is one of our favorite scratch-cooked, healthy, and #plantbased meals. Our kids love this dish!
- One of the accomplishments we're proudest of is incorporating plant-based menu options in our school lunch program. Plant-based meals help the environment, improve student health, and even our program's finances!
- This week's #SustainabilityShoutout goes to Oakland Unified School District, who saved \$42,000 by purchasing 30% less meat and dairy while upping their spend on produce and legumes by 10% in two years. OUSD also spent 1% less per meal, reduced their carbon footprint by 14% and decreased water usage by nearly 6%.

Source: One Meal a Day

