



Menu Planning and Meal Ideas



This Menu Planning and Meal Ideas presentation included attendee participation. Attendees broke out into groups and spent time sharing ideas with each other on 8 different menu planning and meal idea topics and writing these ideas down on paper. After all topics were discussed among all groups, the ideas were shared with the group.

This presentation includes ideas shared at the trainings, as well as additional information on each topic.

List of ideas shared is posted on the CACFP Training Webpage



Menu Planning and Meal Ideas

Below is the list of ideas shared by attendees during the 2023 CACFP Training Meal Planning and Meal Ideas session. We hope you are inspired by many of the ideas.

When menu planning, remember, all foods served to meet CACFP meal pattern requirements must be creditable and amounts served must meet [CACFP meal pattern minimum serving sizes \(CACFP Adult Day Care Meal Pattern\)](#).

Some of the meal ideas shared during the session include commercially prepared / store-bought combination foods and processed meat/meat alternates. These items require a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) to credit the item to the CACFP meal pattern.

Homemade dishes with two or more components and/or other ingredients require a recipe to show how the dish meets the CACFP meal pattern (i.e., how much to serve to each participant, how the amount served meets CACFP meal pattern requirements, and whether additional foods must be served as part of the meal to meet the minimum amounts for each component). See the [CACFP Training Spotlight: Recipes for Foods Prepared From Scratch](#) for information.

VARIETY AND CONTRAST

What are some ways to add variety, color, contrast, and texture, etc. to menus?

- Varied vegetables (raw versus cooked)
- Make the foods of different colors
- Crackers with soup*
- Celery in casseroles
- Different colors
- Different textures
- Different shapes (use cookie cutters)
- Add vegetables to the main dish
- Use spices for color and flavor
- Use garnishes
- Be aware of how cut impacts taste
- Fruit salads
- Color milk (e.g., green milk for St. Patrick's Day)
- Serve chicken tenders* in different ways, i.e., in a wrap, on a bun, in a salad
- Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Prepare foods that are liked the most with new items
- Always serve a colorful fruit or vegetable
- Pasta salad with lots of colorful vegetables
- Use a variety of condiments

VEGETARIAN

What vegetarian meals (meat alternates) do you currently serve? Or what vegetarian meals can you think of that could be served?

- Cheese Quesadillas
- Vegetarian Lasagna (Cheese, Cottage Cheese and/or Ricotta Cheese as meat alternate)
- Cheese Sandwiches / Grilled Cheese
- Red Beans And Rice
- Lentil Soup
- Tofu, Orange Tofu, BBQ Tofu, Lemon Baked Tofu
- Cheese, Cottage Cheese, String Cheese
- Black Beans, Chick Peas (Garbanzo Beans)

*Commercially prepared/Store-bought combination foods and processed meat/meat alternates are only creditable with a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) that provides information on how the item contributes to the meat/meat alternate component of the CACFP meal pattern.

The list of ideas shared is posted on the CACFP 2023 Training Webpage under the presentation slides and handout.

Inspire Others!

Cultural / Ethnic Meals

Fun Names for Foods

Favorite Meals and Snacks

Time Saving Meals

Foods not served

Variety

Fruits and Vegetables

Vegetarian

The topics discussed during the session are on this slide.



VARIETY AND CONTRAST

What are some ways to add variety, color, contrast, and texture, etc. to menus?

The first topic is Variety and Contrast. What are some ways to add variety, color, contrast, and texture, etc. to menus?

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Variety and Contrast

- Include different foods daily over a week's time
 - Do not repeat the same food item in the week
 - Serve different foods at lunch and dinner
- Vary the main dish (different meat/meat alternate each day of the week)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cheese	Chicken	Beans/ Legumes	Pork	Eggs
Cod	Ground Beef	Turkey	Yogurt	Nut/seed butter
Chicken	Hummus	Shrimp	Ham	Beef Roast
Eggs	Turkey	Beans/ Legumes	Tilapia	Ground Beef
Yogurt	Chicken	Tofu	Nut/seed butter	Cheese

One way to have variety and contrast with menus is to serve different foods every day over the course of the week.

- Try to not repeat the same food item in the week.
- If you serve lunch and supper, serve different foods at these meals (do not repeat the same food item at both meals).
- Vary the main dish served by serving a different type of meat/meat alternate each day of the week. The chart on the slide provides an example. You can see that there is no repetition of the meat/meat alternate served each week.

Variety and Contrast

- Include a variety of colors (at least 2-3 colorful foods per meal)



Foods are all similar in color



Incorporate colorful fruits and vegetables at each meal and snack

Another way to have variety and contrast is by including a variety of colorful foods at each meal and snack.

The fruits and vegetables on the left side of the slide are similar in color. When added to a plate they do not provide variety or contrast. The pictures of fruits and vegetables on the right are full of color. Try to add a colorful fruit or vegetable to each meal to make the plate more vibrant and add excitement to the meal.

Variety and Contrast

- Include a variety of fruits and vegetables



Bad Cholesterol
Heart Disease Risk



Immune System
Eye Health



Heart Health



Memory



Cancer



Protect:
Bones, teeth, eyesight



In addition to providing color, fruits and vegetables provide a variety of vitamins and minerals which helps improve health.

Check out how each of the five different color categories of fruits and vegetables can benefit your health.

- Blues and Purples: Blueberries, blackberries, purple grapes, plums, raisins, eggplant. Benefits: Keep memory sharp and reduce risk of many types of cancer, including prostate cancer
- Greens: Kiwi, honeydew, spinach, broccoli, romaine lettuce, Brussels sprouts, cabbage. Benefits: Protect bones, teeth, and eyesight
- Whites: Pears, bananas, mushrooms, cauliflower, onions, garlic. Benefits: Lower LDL cholesterol and reduce risk of heart disease
- Yellows and Oranges: Oranges, grapefruit, peaches, cantaloupe, mangoes, pineapple, squash, carrots. Benefits: Boost immune system and help prevent eye disease
- Reds: Watermelon, strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, cherries, tomatoes, radishes, red apples. Benefits: Help prevent Alzheimer's disease and improve blood flow to the heart

Variety and Contrast



Set a goal to serve different fruits and vegetables throughout the week



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pineapple	Kiwi	Blackberries	Honeydew Melon	Apple Slices
Green peas	Roasted Sweet Potatoes	Broccoli	Eggplant	Red Bell Pepper

Plan to serve a variety of fruits and vegetables. Have a goal to serve different fruits and vegetables throughout the week, and not repeat the same item in that week. On the slide is a week-long menu showing a variety of fruits and vegetables that could be served at a meal, such as lunch or supper. There is no fruit or vegetable repeated on this menu.

Variety and Contrast

Different textures



Not all food items on this slide are CACFP Creditable

Another way to add variety and contrast is to serve different textures. It's fun to experience different textures when you're eating a meal or even a single bite of food, such as smooth yogurt with crunchy granola, or tender pancakes with sticky maple syrup.

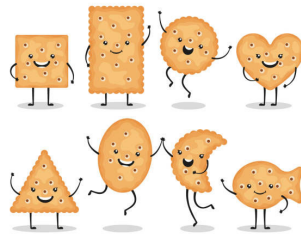
Try to create a snack or meal that includes at least three different textures.

Note: Not all food items in the picture on the slide are CACFP Creditable. However, the picture shows a variety of textures found in foods.

Variety and Contrast

Different shapes

- Breakfast cereals
- Crackers
- Noodles
- Pretzels



Another way to provide variety is to serve different shapes of foods. Foods such as breakfast cereals, crackers, noodles, and pretzels come in a variety of shapes. Change up the shape of food items you serve to provide variety. For example, if you always serve elbow macaroni noodles, try serving penne noodles.

Different flavors

Seasoning and Spices

- Garlic Herb
- Lemon
- Parmesan
- Mrs. Dash
- Italian Seasoning
- Adobo
- Sazon
- Cajun
- Old Bay
- Cinnamon

Sauces

- Tomato/Marinara
- Alfredo
- Cheese
- Teriyaki
- Soy
- BBQ
- Buffalo
- Gravy
- Dressing
- Salsa
- Tzatziki

Name	Form	Taste	Uses
Anise seed	Whole, ground	Sweet licorice flavor	Cookies, cakes, fruit mixtures, chicken
Basil	Fresh, dried chopped leaves	Mint licorice flavor	Pizza, spaghetti sauce, tomato dishes, vegetable soups, meat pies, peas, zucchini, green beans
Bay leaves	Whole, ground	Pungent and sharp with a slight bitter taste	Fish, soups, tomato juice, potato salad dressing
Caraway seed	Whole	Sharp and pungent	Baked goods such as rye bread, cheeses, sauerkraut dishes, soups, meats, stews
Celery Seed	Whole, ground	Flavor distinctly different from celery	Fish, soups, tomato juice, potato salad
Chives	Fried, freeze-dried	In the onion family; delicate flavor	Baked potato topping, all cooked green vegetables, green salads, cream sauces, cheese dishes
Cilantro	Fresh, dried	Sweet aroma, mildly peppery	Ingredient in Mexican foods
Coriander seed	Whole, ground	Pleasant, lemon-orange flavor	Ingredient in curry; ground form used in pastries, buns, cookies, and cakes; in processed foods such as frankfurters
Cumin	Whole seeds, ground	Warm, distinctive, salty-sweet, resembles caraway	Ingredient in chili powder and curry powder; German cooks add to pork and sauerkraut, and Dutch add to cheese
Dill	Fresh, dried, seeds	Aromatic, like caraway but milder and sweeter	Dill pickles; seeds in meats, sauces, salads, coleslaw, potato salad, and cooked macaroni; dill weed in salads, sandwiches, and uncooked mixtures
Fennel seed	Whole	Flavor similar to anise, pleasant sweet licorice	Bread, rolls, apple pies, seafood, pork and poultry dishes; provides the distinctive flavor to Italian sausage

Another way to add variety is to serve a variety of flavors. Use seasonings, spices, and sauces to create completely different meals. The handout, *Cooking with Herbs and Spices*, shown on this slide is included in a handout posted on the CACFP 2023 Training Webpage. This handout lists many different herbs and spices and ways to use them in your meals.

VEGETARIAN

What vegetarian meals (meat alternates) do you currently serve?
Or what vegetarian meals can you think of that could be served?

The second topic is Vegetarian meals. What vegetarian meals (meat alternates) do you currently serve? Or what vegetarian meals can you think of that could be served?

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Vegetarian

CACFP Training Spotlight: Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP

Vegetarian Meals: Serving a meat alternate for the meat/meat alternate component

CACFP TRAINING Spotlight
DPI COMMUNITY NUTRITION TEAM

IN THIS HANDOUT:
Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP

This handout provides information on vegetarian meals for programs that accommodate participants requesting a vegetarian diet and/or programs that want to incorporate vegetarian meals as part of the regular menu.

Types of Vegetarian Diets
All vegetarian diets consume plant-based foods including grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, soy, nuts, and seeds. In addition, the following vegetarian diets consume additional foods:

- Ovo-vegetarian: Eggs
- Lacto-vegetarian: Dairy products
- Lacto-ovo vegetarian: Eggs and dairy products
- Pescatarian: Fish. May or may not consume eggs and dairy products
- Semi-vegetarian: Small amounts of meat, chicken, fish, dairy products, and eggs
- Vegan: Consume only plant-based foods. They do not consume animal products.

Menu Planning for Vegetarian Meals
Because all types of vegetarian diets eat foods from the vegetable, fruit, and grain components, only the milk and meat/meat alternate (MMA) components may need adjustments.

- Milk: If cow's milk is not a part of the participant's vegetarian diet, a non-dairy beverage nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk can be served as a creditable substitute. Refer to the [Creditable Non-Dairy Beverages](#) handout for a list of creditable non-dairy beverages.
- MMA: Foods served as a meat alternate must be creditable to the CACFP meal pattern. Refer to the next page for list of creditable meat alternate options.
 - Note: Meatless substitutes made with alternate protein products, grain ingredients, vegetables, etc. are only creditable when accompanied by a Child Nutrition (CN) label or a Product Formulation Statement (PFS).

IN THIS HANDOUT:
Jobs are below and on the next 2 pages.
Units: AUC for required amounts to serve.

up to 3 times/week.

Thursday	Friday
Cherries Banana Milk	Breakfast burrito Hashbrowns Milk



Brook
soybean and water in a large, covered pot.
about. Reduce heat to low.
in covered for 10-15 minutes until water
is absorbed. If full, let stand for 10 min.
pot, add oil and crumbled tofu. Heat
of over medium heat for 2-3 minutes.
occasionally.
2. Corn, hot pepper flakes, salt, pepper,
bell peppers, and onions. Heat uncovered
heat for 1-2 minutes, stirring
often. Combine mixture over quinoa.
to combine.
with 6 flour spoons (1/4 cup).

(25.50 servings)
Label (25.50 servings)
Label (25.50 servings)



Serving vegetarian meals means serving a meat alternate for the meat/meat alternate component. The CACFP Training Spotlight: Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP was distributed during training. It can be found at the link on this slide. The handout has a lot of information and menu ideas for serving vegetarian meals.

Eggs

- Scrambled, hard boiled, ingredient in breakfast burrito, egg muffins

Legumes

- Soups, casseroles, tacos, burritos, quesadilla

Nuts/Seeds/their Butters

- Sandwiches

Tofu

- [Tofu Recipes](#) (GM 12/M/MA tab)

Meat Alternate	Additional Information
Alternate Protein Products (AAP) (e.g., burgers or links made from soy or other vegetable protein sources)	A Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) from the manufacturer is required
Eggs	
Cheese	Refer to Creditable and Non-Creditable Cheeses . Not Creditable: Imitation cheese (e.g., soy, almond, and other vegan cheeses)
Legumes (cooked dry beans and peas, lentils) Black Beans, Black Eyed Peas, Kidney Beans, Cannellini Beans, Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans), Lentils, Lima Beans, Navy Beans, Northern Beans, Pinto Beans, Refried Beans, Soybeans, Split Peas	One type of legume may not be served as both a meat alternate and vegetable in the same meal. If serving two different types of legumes, one may credit as a meat alternate and the other as a vegetable.
Nuts and Seeds, and their Butters Almonds, Peanuts, Cashews, Hazelnuts, Macadamia Nuts, Chestnuts, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts, Pumpkin Seeds, Sesame Seeds, Sunflower Seeds, Soy Nuts, Tahini (soy nut butter)	Nuts and seeds may be used to meet no more than half of the M/MA component at lunch/supper. Some participants may have nut/seed allergies or intolerances which require meal accommodations to ensure participants are receiving a safe meal. Nuts and seeds can pose a choking hazard for children under four years of age.
Pasta made of 100% bean/legume flour(s)	May not be served both a meat alternate or vegetable in the same meal. 1/2 cup cooked bean/legume pasta = 2 oz m/ma. Must be served with another 0.25 oz of visible meat alternate (ex. cheese).
Tempeh (Commercially Prepared)	
Tofu (Commercially Prepared)	2.2 oz (¼ cup) of commercially prepared tofu must contain at least 5 grams of protein
Yogurt (Dairy or Soy) (Commercially Prepared)	No more than 23 g of sugar per 6 ounces

The Training Spotlight includes a table listing creditable meat alternate foods. A few examples of main dishes that can be made with each meat alternate food item are on the slide.

If you are interested in serving tofu, check out the Tofu Recipes handout, linked to on the slide.

Vegetarian

- **Meatless Mondays!**
Serve meat alternate foods at all meals and snacks on Mondays
- **BREAKFAST: Serve meat alternates in place of the grain component at breakfast up to 3 days per week**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Southwest Tofu Scramble Kiwi Milk	Oatmeal Blueberries Milk	Cottage cheese Pineapple Milk	Cheerios Banana Milk	Breakfast burrito Hashbrowns Milk

If you are wondering how you can incorporate vegetarian meals into your menus, one idea is to do Meatless Mondays! This is when you serve only meat alternate foods at all meals and snacks on Mondays.

Another way to incorporate more vegetarian meals is by serving a meat alternate in place of the entire grains component at breakfast. This is allowed up to 3 days/week.

The menu on the slide is a sample menu showing a meat alternate being served in place of the grains component 3 days/week. The breakfast burrito served on Friday could include eggs, beans, tofu and/or cheese. The possibilities are endless.

The CACFP Training Spotlight: Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP includes a recipe that can be served at breakfast, and links to other vegetarian recipes that can be served at breakfast.

Vegetarian

SNACK: Serve meat alternate foods at snack

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cheese cubes Baby tomatoes	Nut/seed butter Apple slices	Hard-boiled egg Toasted bagel	Hummus Baby carrots	Yogurt Strawberries
Pureed beans Toasted pita	Cottage cheese Diced peaches	Baked tofu Banana slices	Grilled cheese sandwich	Pancake topped with nut/seed butter

Here are some examples of snacks that include meat alternates. The CACFP Training Spotlight: Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP includes a recipe and links to other vegetarian recipes that can be served at snack.

Vegetarian

LUNCH/SUPPER: Incorporate vegetarian recipes

Many recipes linked to in [Training Spotlight: Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP](#)

Additional Lunch/Supper Recipes to Try:



- [Bean Burrito Bowl \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Chinese Style Vegetables with Tofu \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Purple Power Bean Wrap \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Sauteed Tempeh with Vegetables \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- [Vegetable Chili \(6 servings\) \(25/50 servings\)](#)
- Recipes from DPI's [CACFP Tofu Recipe Guide](#)

Incorporate vegetarian recipes into lunch and supper meals. There are many USDA CACFP recipes for vegetarian dishes that can be found on the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) website. A few other these are linked to from The CACFP Training Spotlight: Vegetarian Meals in the CACFP.

Plan vegetarian meal once a week, once a day, or more!

MULTICULTURAL MEALS

What are some cultural and ethnic meals your program incorporates into its menus?

The third topic is Multicultural Meals. What are some cultural and ethnic meals your program incorporates into its menus.

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Cultural / Ethnic Meals

Cultural and Ethnic Meals

- Celebrate different cultures
- Create a sense of belonging
- Families share recipes
- Include festivals and celebrations



Incorporating cultural and ethnic meals into menus can help participants from different cultures celebrate their own uniqueness and create a sense of belonging for everyone who attends the meal.

Encourage families and staff to bring in recipes and share traditions associated with their culture.

Cultural / Ethnic Meals

Around the World Sample Cycle Menu with creditable recipes. Remember to check with your spouse for any additional restrictions to your menu planning.

DAY 1	TUESDAY - DAY 2	WEDNESDAY - DAY 3	THURSDAY - DAY 4
Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)	Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)	Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)	Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)
Sweet Potato Hash Sweet Potato	Sweet Potato Hash WGR Naan	Star Fruit	Strawberry Parfait Strawberries
Sweet Potato Hash Eggs	WGR Naan	WGR Naan	Strawberry Parfait Yogurt
Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)	Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)	Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)	Whole (age 1) or Low/Fat Free Milk (2-5)
Watermelon	Watermelon	Kiwi	Grapes
Rice Rice Rice Beans	TN Chicken/Veggie Couscous Carrots, Onion, Olives	Asian Chicken Wraps Cabbage, Carrots, Lettuce	Celery
	TN Chicken/Veggie Couscous WGR Couscous	Asian Chicken Wraps WGR Tortilla	TN Creamy Wild Rice Brown & Wild Rice
	TN Chicken/Veggie Couscous Chicken	Asian Chicken Wraps Chicken	TN Creamy Wild Rice Turkey
Apples	Orange Wedges	Samurai Banana Sushi Roll Bananas	Cantaloupe
Apples	TN Veggie Mash Up Swiss Chard, Potato, Peas, Corn	Samurai Banana Sushi Roll WGR Tortilla	TN Squash Eggs

- 10 days of menus
Team Nutrition
Multicultural recipes
- **Around the World Wednesday**

[Around the World Menu](#)
[USDA Multicultural Recipes](#)


This slide shows part of a 10-day menu that incorporates meals from around the world and includes standardized recipes from Team Nutrition’s Multi-cultural Child Care recipes.

Using these menus and recipes, you could implement “Around the World Wednesday” and feature a new ethnic/cultural dish each Wednesday or start with doing a new ethnic/cultural dish one Wednesday/month.

Both menus and recipes can be found at the links on this slide.

USDA Multicultural Recipes

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Preparation Time: 30 Minutes Cook Time: 30 Minutes



Tabbouleh

Tabbouleh is a popular Middle Eastern salad that is served as part of a meze (assortment of appetizers). A primary ingredient in Tabbouleh is bulgur, which is a whole grain.


CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION
 1/2 cup (No. 8 scoop) provides 1/4 cup vegetable and 1/4 oz equivalent grains.

SOURCE
 Team Nutrition CACFP Multicultural Recipe Project.

INGREDIENTS	25 SERVINGS		50 SERVINGS		DIRECTIONS
	Weight	Measure	Weight	Measure	
Water	32 oz	1 qt	64 oz	2 qt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In a small stockpot, bring water to a rolling boil. Add bulgur, cover, and turn heat off. Leave the stockpot on the hot burner. Keep covered, and let stand for 30 minutes. Drain any excess liquid, fluff with a fork, and allow bulgur to cool. Critical Control Point: Cool to 40 °F or lower within 4 hours. In a large bowl, mix together cooled bulgur, cucumber, tomato, parsley, mint, green onions, and garlic.
Bulgur, dry	12 1/4 oz	2 cup	1 lb 9 oz	1 qt	
*Cucumber, fresh, peeled, 1/2" diced	1 1/4 oz	3 cup 2 Tbsp	1 lb 13 oz	1 qt 2 1/2 cup	
*Tomatoes, fresh, 1/2" diced	1 lb 7 oz	3 cup 2 Tbsp	2 lb 14 oz	1 qt 2 1/2 cup	

Food and Nutrition Service Page 1 of 3

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Preparation Time: 20 Minutes Cook Time: 1 Hour 35 Minutes



Arroz Con Pollo

Arroz Con Pollo (Rice With Chicken) is a classic dish that is enjoyed throughout Spain and Latin America. Each country has its own version, but it remains a family favorite. Try this hearty, flavorful recipe today.

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION
 1 chicken tenderloin and 1/2 cup (No. 8 scoop) rice and vegetable mixture provides 1 1/2 oz equivalent meat, 1/4 cup vegetable, and 1/4 oz equivalent grains.

SOURCE
 Team Nutrition CACFP Multicultural Recipe Project.
<https://teammnutrition.usda.gov>

INGREDIENTS	25 SERVINGS		50 SERVINGS		DIRECTIONS
	Weight	Measure	Weight	Measure	
Brown rice, long-grain, uncooked	12 1/2 oz	2 cup	1 lb 9 oz	1 qt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preheat oven to 400 °F Combine brown rice and water in a large stockpot. Stir once. Heat on medium-high heat to a rolling boil. Cover and reduce heat to medium. Cook for 20-30 minutes over low heat until water is absorbed. Fluff the rice gently with a fork. In a small bowl combine seasonings: salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and cumin.
Water	32 fl oz	1 qt	64 fl oz	2 qt	
Salt, table		2 tsp		1 Tbsp 1 tsp	
Black pepper, ground		2 tsp		1 Tbsp 1 tsp	
Garlic powder		2 tsp		1 Tbsp 1 tsp	
Cumin, ground		1 Tbsp 1 tsp		2 Tbsp 2 tsp	

Asia and Pacific Islands Recipe

Central and South America Recipe

On this slide are two of the many USDA Multicultural Child Care Recipes available. Recipes are for 25 or 50 servings, which can be adjusted for the number of participants you are serving. The recipes include CACFP Crediting Information (i.e. serving size and how that serving amount contributes to the CACFP meal pattern)

TIME SAVING / QUICK MEALS

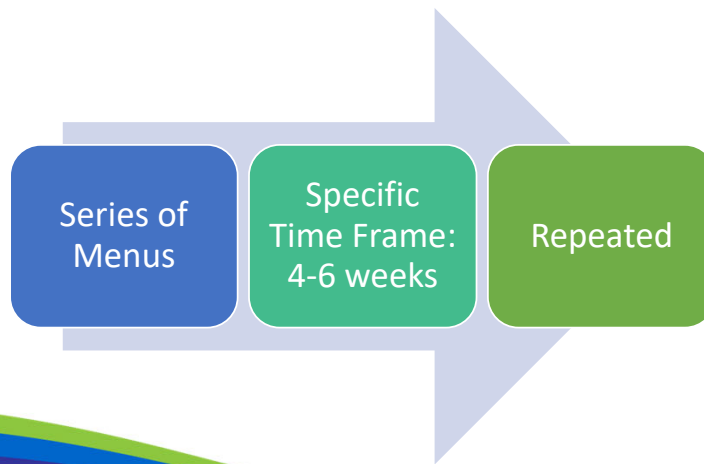
How do you save time when preparing meals?
What are some easy, quick meals made at your program?

The fourth topic is Time Saving / Quick Meals. How do you save time when preparing meals? What are some easy, quick meals made at your program?

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Cycle Menus



One way to save time with meal planning and preparation is to have a cycle menu. A cycle menu is a series of planned menus that are served for a specific amount of time, usually 4-6 weeks, and then repeated.

Time Saving / Quick Meals



Cycle menus are recommended because they save programs time and money by planning a set of menus once and repeating them. This prevents the need to spend time creating new menus every week or month.

It also helps make food shopping more efficient with repeat grocery or vendor orders (time saving), which also helps with predicting food costs and possibly saving money.

It also helps make food preparation more efficient because you are repeating the same recipes and meal production on a regular basis. They become familiar to you.

Last, cycle menus help provide variety, as cycle menus often do not repeat the same foods and/or meals.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Batch Cook / Freeze

- Hamburger / Turkey
- Chicken breast
- Soups / Casseroles
- Waffles / Pancakes
- Muffins
- Grains (rice, quinoa)

Next, we will go through some ideas that can be time saving when preparing meals.

First, batch cook are freeze foods. This is when an individual makes double or triple what is needed for a meal, and freezing the extra to be used the next time the food item is needed, or the meal is on the menu. For example, cook more ground hamburger or ground turkey than needed for a meal (for example, spaghetti). Freeze the extra cooked hamburger/turkey to use another day when making a dish such as sloppy joes or a casserole. Time will be saved because you do not have to cook raw hamburger/turkey, but just take the cooked hamburger/turkey out of the freezer and reheat.

The same can be done with chicken breast, soups, casseroles, waffles, pancakes, muffins, and even grains such as rice and quinoa.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Convenience Foods

Pre-Cooked Foods

Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement



Next, consider integrating convenience foods into your menu. Convenience foods require little preparation time so you can use the time normally spent preparing more labor-intensive menu items to prepare other components of the meal, prep for the next day, plan future menus, create a shopping list, etc.

The first group of convenience foods we will discuss are pre-cooked foods that only need to be heated. These include commercially prepared foods like chicken nuggets, fish sticks, pizza, etc. or precooked processed meats such as meat balls. These items help food preparers save time because it does not take long to place these items on a pan and into the oven. While these items are cooking, prepare the other components of the meal.

Remember! You must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) for store-bought combination foods and processed meats to credit them to the CACFP meal pattern. Only serve these items if you have a CN label or PFS for the specific item being served.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Convenience Foods

Frozen Foods

- Pancakes
- Waffles
- Fruits / Vegetables

Canned Foods

- Canned vegetables and fruit
- Fruit in individual cups
- Canned beans



Other types of convenience foods include frozen and canned foods. These items also only need to be thawed and/or heated.

- Frozen pancakes and waffles can be heated in an oven.
- Frozen fruits can be left in the refrigerator to thaw.
- Frozen and canned vegetables, and beans just need to be opened and placed in a large pot and heated.
- Consider serving fruit in individuals portioned cups. There is no prep time when serving individually-portioned foods.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Convenience Foods

- Pre-sliced cheese
 - Creditable: Pasteurized Process
 - Not Creditable: Cheese Product
- Cheese sticks
- Yogurt (tubs or individual cups)



[Creditable and Non-Creditable Cheese](#)

Next, serve cheese! This is Wisconsin!

- Pre-sliced cheese
 - Make sure that only creditable cheese is served. On this slide are two pictures of pre-sliced cheese. One is labeled Pasteurized Process and one is labeled Cheese Product. Any cheese labeled with the term 'Product' is not creditable to the CACFP meal pattern.
- Serve cheese sticks / string cheese

See the Creditable and Non-Creditable Cheese handout, linked to at the bottom of this slide, for more information on cheese.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Individual Pre-packaged items:

- Popcorn
- Rice Cakes
- Graham Crackers
- Muffins



More convenience foods include individual pre-packaged items such as crackers, muffins, rice cakes, and other common grain items. When serving these items, there is no need to open larger bags or boxes and portion the item out yourself.

Time Saving / Quick Meals

Canned meats

- Tuna
- Chicken
- Salmon



Also consider serving canned meats such as tuna, chicken, or salmon.

Time Saving / Quick Meals



Crockpot

- Roasts
- Chicken (baked/shredded)
- Soups (recipes)
- Meatballs (CN/PFS)
- Oatmeal

Last, prepare foods in a crockpot or similar appliance. There is often very little meal prep time associated with using a crockpot. The crockpot does all of the work!. Items you can prepare in a crockpot include roasts, chicken, soups (use a recipe that provides CACFP crediting information), meatballs (remember to get a CN label/PFS), and oatmeal.



The fifth topic is Award Winning Meals. What are some favorite meals or snacks your program makes (and why)?

The information shared by the group for this topic can be found on the list of ideas posted on the CACFP 2023 Training Webpage under the presentation slides and handout.

Note: Homemade meals must meet CACFP meal pattern requirements. This means that the amount of the item served to each participant must include enough of the food component(s) it contains to provide the CACFP meal pattern minimum required amounts. If the item does not include enough of the food component(s) to provide the CACFP meal pattern minimum required amounts additional foods must be served alongside the dish.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

What are creative ways your program prepares fruits and vegetables to make them exciting, tasty, etc.? Or what creative ways can you think of?

The sixth topic is Fruits and Vegetables. What are creative ways your program prepares fruits and vegetables to make them exciting, tasty, etc.? Or what creative ways can you think of?

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Breakfast

• Smoothies



Teddy Bear Smoothie

<https://www.cacfp.org/recipes-menus/recipes/>

CACFP Smoothies in the CACFP

Smoothies prepared by the program:

- Milk, fruit, vegetables, fruit/vegetable juice and yogurt can credit in a smoothie
- Milk used in smoothies must meet the federal requirements of fluid milk for each age group
- Pureed fruit and vegetables **credit as juice** when served in a smoothie
 - Amount based on volume after pureeing, before including in smoothie
 - Juice can only be served at one meal or snack per day, this includes when served in a smoothie
- Yogurt may be regular or soy
 - Yogurt credits as meat/meat alternate, not fluid milk
 - Yogurt must meet the sugar limits of no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces
- Grains and other meat/meat alternates (such as peanut butter or tofu) do not credit to the meal pattern when served in a smoothie, but may be included to improve flavor and consistency
- All components must be offered in the required quantities to meet the meal pattern requirements
- Smoothies may be served at any meal or snack
 - Breakfast, Lunch and Supper: A smoothie containing milk, fruit/vegetable and yogurt may count towards three meal components
 - Snacks: A smoothie containing fruit/vegetable and milk can credit as either juice or milk, not both. There must be a separate, second creditable component served in addition to the fruit/vegetable and milk smoothie. Juice may not be served when milk is the only other component.

Recipe for a Creditable Smoothie

Ingredients
4 fluid oz. fat free milk
1/2 cup blueberry puree, frozen
4 oz. low fat yogurt
Crediting Information
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup fruit juice
1 oz. meat alternate

*Refer to the CACFP meal pattern for required minimum amounts for each age

Commercially-prepared smoothies:

- May credit towards the meat/meat alternate (yogurt only), fruit, vegetable, and milk components
- Must have a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS) from the manufacturer to credit to the CACFP meal pattern

Probiotic dairy drinks, drinkable yogurt, and yogurt drinks are not creditable.

Rev. 8/2021 This institution is an equal opportunity provider

Smoothies in the CACFP

- One way to incorporate fruits and vegetables is in smoothies. You can use fresh or frozen fruit and add a handful of vegetables such as spinach or kale.
- The DPI has a *Smoothies in CACFP* handout, linked to on the slide, that provides a creditable smoothie recipe and information on how fruit, vegetables, and other ingredients in smoothies credit to the CACFP meal pattern.
- Find other smoothie recipes at the web address on the slide.
- Remember, pureed fruit and vegetables credit as juice when served in a smoothie, and juice can only be served at one meal or snack per day, this includes when served in a smoothie.

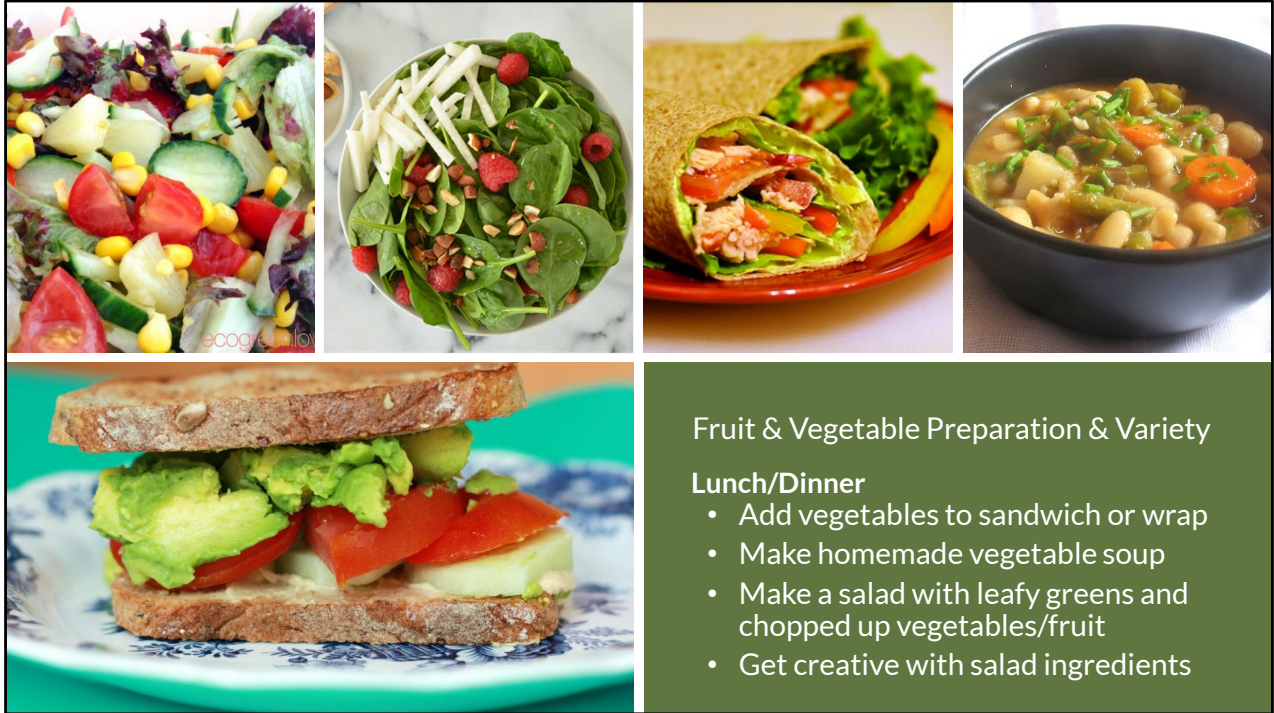
Fruits and Vegetables

Breakfast



- Make it a topping!
Waffles, pancakes, oatmeal, yogurt
- Add peppers, tomatoes, or spinach to omelets, eggs, hash browns, breakfast potatoes
- Add avocado and tomato to eggs
- Breakfast tacos with fruits or vegetables
- Fruit “roll-up” (tortilla with fresh fruit) or fruit pizza

- Another idea for breakfast is to make fruit a topping! Top pancakes or waffles with mixed berries and chopped fruits. Top cereal, oatmeal or yogurt with berries, peaches, apples and bananas.
- Add vegetables, such as peppers, onions, and spinach to omelets, scrambled eggs, hash browns and breakfast potatoes (remember, potatoes are also a vegetable in the CACFP).
- Add avocado and tomatoes to eggs
- Make breakfast tacos loaded with fruits or vegetables
- Make a fruit rollup: start with a whole wheat tortilla, spread with nut or seed butter, then add fresh fruit.



Fruit & Vegetable Preparation & Variety

Lunch/Dinner

- Add vegetables to sandwich or wrap
- Make homemade vegetable soup
- Make a salad with leafy greens and chopped up vegetables/fruit
- Get creative with salad ingredients

Here are some ideas for lunch or supper:

- Add vegetables to a sandwich or wrap.
- Make homemade vegetable soup.
- Build a salad with leafy greens and add chopped up vegetables for added flavor.
- Add variety to salads. Salads can be more than lettuce and tomatoes. Think about adding, jicama, broccoli, avocado and fruits such as raspberries or blueberries.



Lunch/Dinner

- Stir fry
- Top a baked potato with salsa or broccoli
- Add to pasta sauces, casseroles
- Steam, microwave, or roast vegetables

- Make a stir fry with lots of vegetables.
- Top a baked potato with broccoli, beans, and salsa.
- Add extra vegetables to pasta sauces and casseroles. Mix onions, peas, beans, tomatoes, peppers and spinach into these dishes.
- Steam, microwave or roast vegetables for an easy side dish. You can use either fresh or frozen veggies.

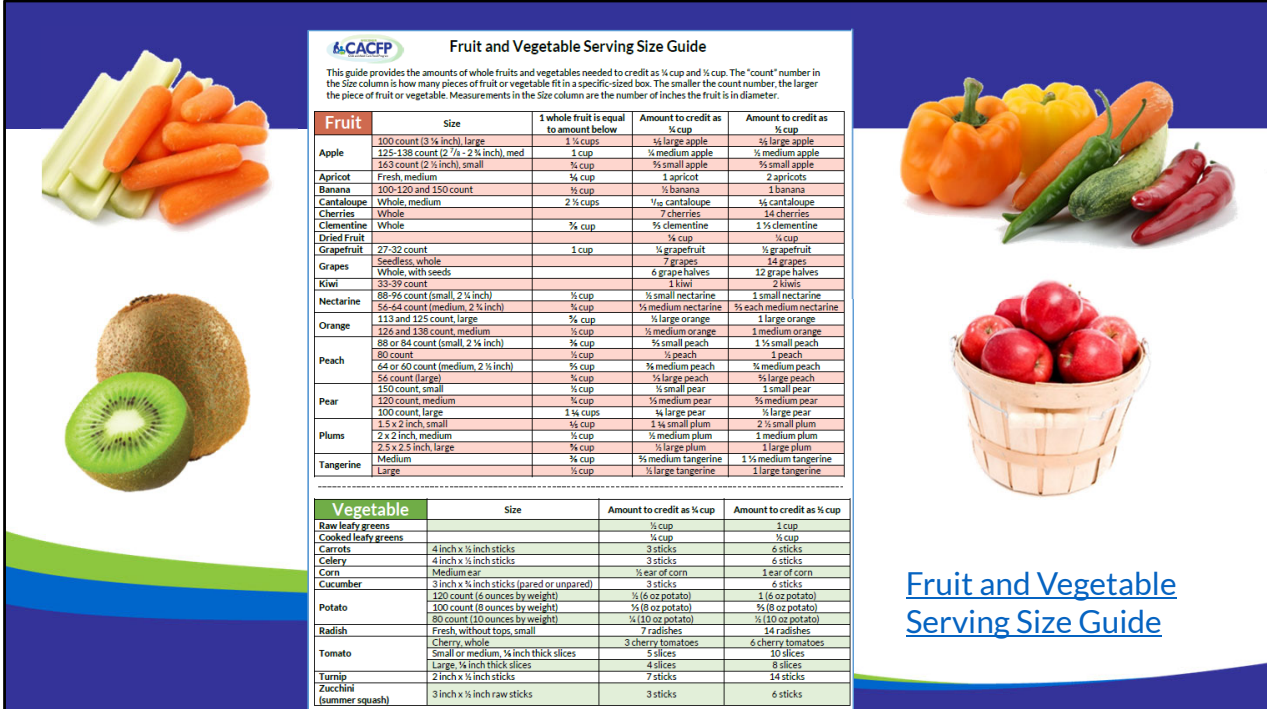
Snacks

- Dippers: Apples slices, carrots and celery sticks, cucumbers in yogurt, hummus, nut or seed butters
- Fruit or vegetable kabobs
- Fruit pizza
- Baked fruit (cinnamon apples)
- Look in *Snack Inspiration*



And last, here are some ideas for snacks. Serve:

- Fruits and veggies with a dip, such as apple slices with nut or seed butter, or carrot or celery sticks with hummus or yogurt.
- Colorful fruit and vegetable kabobs
- Fruit pizza, such as watermelon slices with additional fruit topping.
- Baked fruit, such as baked apple slices with cinnamon
- There are more ideas in *Snack Inspiration*, which is a new resource with 240 different snack ideas, including a recipe for crockpot apples with cinnamon. We will talk about *Snack Inspiration* later in the presentation.



CACFP **Fruit and Vegetable Serving Size Guide**

This guide provides the amounts of whole fruits and vegetables needed to credit as ½ cup and ¼ cup. The “count” number in the Size column is how many pieces of fruit or vegetable fit in a specific-sized box. The smaller the count number, the larger the piece of fruit or vegetable. Measurements in the Size column are the number of inches the fruit is in diameter.

Fruit	Size	1 whole fruit is equal to amount below	Amount to credit as ½ cup	Amount to credit as ¼ cup
Apple	100 count (3 ½ inch) large	1 ½ cups	¼ large apple	¼ large apple
	125-138 count (2 ¾ - 2 ½ inch), med	1 cup	½ medium apple	½ medium apple
	163 count (2 ½ inch), small	¾ cup	⅓ small apple	⅓ small apple
Apricot	Fresh, medium	¼ cup	1 apricot	2 apricots
Banana	100-120 and 150 count	¼ cup	½ banana	1 banana
Cantaloupe	Whole, medium	2 ½ cups	⅓ cantaloupe	¼ cantaloupe
Cherries	Whole	¾ cup	7 cherries	14 cherries
Clementine	Whole	¾ cup	½ clementine	1 ½ clementine
Dried Fruit			¼ cup	¼ cup
Grapefruit	27-33 count	1 cup	¼ grapefruit	¼ grapefruit
Grapes	Seedless, whole		7 grapes	14 grapes
	Whole, with seeds		6 grape halves	12 grape halves
Kiwi	33-39 count		1 kiwi	2 kiwis
Nectarine	88-96 count (small, 2 ¼ inch)	¾ cup	⅓ small nectarine	1 small nectarine
	56-64 count (medium, 2 ½ inch)	¾ cup	⅓ medium nectarine	⅓ each medium nectarine
Orange	113 and 125 count, large	¾ cup	⅓ large orange	1 large orange
	126 and 138 count, medium	¾ cup	⅓ medium orange	1 medium orange
Peach	88 or 84 count (small, 2 ¼ inch)	¾ cup	⅓ small peach	1 ½ small peach
	80 count		½ peach	1 peach
	64 or 60 count (medium, 2 ½ inch)	¾ cup	⅓ medium peach	⅓ medium peach
Pear	56 count (large)	¾ cup	⅓ large pear	⅓ large pear
	150 count, small	¾ cup	⅓ small pear	1 small pear
	120 count, medium	¾ cup	⅓ medium pear	⅓ medium pear
Plums	100 count, large	1 ¼ cups	¼ large plum	¼ large plum
	1 ½ x 2 inch, small	¾ cup	1 ½ small plum	2 ½ small plum
	2 x 2 inch, medium	¾ cup	½ medium plum	1 medium plum
Tangerine	2 ½ x 2 ½ inch, large	¾ cup	⅓ large plum	1 large plum
	Medium	¾ cup	⅓ medium tangerine	1 ½ medium tangerine
	Large	¾ cup	⅓ large tangerine	1 large tangerine

Vegetable	Size	Amount to credit as ½ cup	Amount to credit as ¼ cup
Raw leafy greens		¼ cup	1 cup
Cooked leafy greens		¼ cup	¼ cup
Carrots	4 inch x ½ inch sticks	3 sticks	6 sticks
Celery	4 inch x ½ inch sticks	3 sticks	6 sticks
Corn	Medium ear	½ ear of corn	1 ear of corn
Cucumber	3 inch x ½ inch sticks (pared or unpared)	3 sticks	6 sticks
	120 count (6 ounces by weight)	½ (6 oz potato)	1 (6 oz potato)
Potato	100 count (8 ounces by weight)	½ (8 oz potato)	½ (8 oz potato)
	80 count (10 ounces by weight)	½ (10 oz potato)	½ (10 oz potato)
Radish	Fresh, without tops, small	7 radishes	14 radishes
	Cherry, whole	3 cherry tomatoes	6 cherry tomatoes
Tomato	Small or medium, ½ inch thick slices	5 slices	10 slices
	Large, ¾ inch thick slices	4 slices	8 slices
Turnip	2 inch x ½ inch sticks	7 sticks	14 sticks
Zucchini (summer squash)	3 inch x ½ inch raw sticks	3 sticks	6 sticks

[Fruit and Vegetable Serving Size Guide](#)

To help know how much to serve of certain fruits and vegetables, we have a resource called the *Fruit and Vegetable Serving Size Guide*, linked to on this slide.



Fruit and Vegetable Serving Size Guide



This guide provides the amounts of whole fruits and vegetables needed to credit as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. The "count" number in the Size column is how many pieces of fruit or vegetable fit in a specific-sized box. The smaller the count number, the larger the piece of fruit or vegetable. Measurements in the Size column are the number of inches the fruit is in diameter.

Fruit	Size	1 whole fruit is equal to amount below	Amount to credit as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup	Amount to credit as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Apple	100 count (3 1/4 inch), large	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ large apple	$\frac{1}{4}$ large apple
	125-138 count (2 7/8 - 2 1/4 inch), med	1 cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ medium apple	$\frac{1}{2}$ medium apple
	165 count (2 1/2 inch), small	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ small apple	$\frac{1}{4}$ small apple
Apricot	Fresh, medium	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1 apricot	2 apricots
Banana	100-120 and 150 count	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ banana	1 banana
Cantaloupe	Whole, medium	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	$\frac{1}{10}$ cantaloupe	$\frac{1}{5}$ cantaloupe
Cherries	Whole		7 cherries	14 cherries
Clementine	Whole	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{3}$ clementine	1 $\frac{1}{3}$ clementine
Dried Fruit			$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Grapefruit	27-32 count	1 cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ grapefruit	$\frac{1}{2}$ grapefruit
Grapes	Seedless, whole		7 grapes	14 grapes
	Whole, with seeds		6 grape halves	12 grape halves
Kiwi	33-39 count		1 kiwi	2 kiwis
Nectarine	88-96 count (small, 2 1/4 inch)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ small nectarine	1 small nectarine

The guide has information on amounts to serve to provide $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup serving and includes approximate yield amounts for some of the fruits when a whole fruit is served.

Some of the fruits and vegetables in this chart have a count number. This number pertains to the size of the item.

Let's go through an example. Using apples and looking at the 125-138 count, which is a medium-sized apple, the chart shows that you need to serve $\frac{1}{4}$ of a medium-sized apple to get a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and $\frac{1}{2}$ of a medium-sized apple to get a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

Please note that the serving sizes and yields are approximate, and you should double check to ensure your serving sizes meet meal pattern requirements.



For items not on the previous chart, such as broccoli and blueberries, the best way to serve these is to use measuring cups to measure the correct amount for each participant. For example, use $\frac{1}{4}$ cup measuring cup to serve $\frac{1}{4}$ cup blueberries to 3-5-year-olds at lunch/supper.

Fruits and Vegetables: Credit Different

Fruits and Vegetables	Crediting Information
Raw leafy green vegetables (ex. spinach, kale, collard greens, and lettuce)	Credit for half of the amount served 1 cup raw spinach = ½ cup vegetables
Cooked leafy green vegetables	Credit for entire amount served 1 cup steamed spinach = 1 cup vegetables
Dried fruits and vegetables (ex. raisins, craisins, sun-dried tomatoes)	Credit for twice the amount served ¼ cup raisins = ½ cup fruit
Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on their whole food equivalency	1 Tablespoon tomato paste = ¼ cup vegetable 2 Tablespoons tomato puree = ¼ cup vegetable

This slide shows serving size information for fruits and vegetables that are credited differently. Some of these items do not credit amount for amount.

- Raw leafy green vegetables such as spinach and kale credit for half the amount served. So, 1 cup raw spinach credits as ½ cup vegetable.
- In comparison, cooked leafy greens credit for the entire amount served. So, 1 cup steamed spinach credits as 1 cup vegetable.
- Dried fruits and vegetables such as raisins credit for twice the amount served. ¼ cup raisins credit as ½ cup fruit.
- Tomato paste and tomato puree credit based on their whole food equivalency. 1 Tablespoon tomato paste credits as ¼ cup vegetable and 2 Tablespoons tomato puree credits as ¼ cup vegetable.



Disguise Fruits and Vegetables

- Pureed or finely chopped vegetables into soups, sauces and casseroles
- Mashed black beans, added to ground beef (chili, burgers, meatloaf, meatballs)
- Cauliflower crust, rice, mashed “potatoes”
- Salsa
- Smoothies

Pureed vegetables or fruits may contribute to the CACFP meal pattern if the dish also provides $\frac{1}{8}$ cup or more of visible, creditable fruits or vegetables

Pureed vegetables or fruits may contribute to the CACFP meal pattern requirements if the dish also provides an $\frac{1}{8}$ cup or more of visible, creditable vegetables or fruits. For example, in a macaroni and cheese made with pureed carrots, the pureed carrots can count toward the vegetable component if there is at least an $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of a visible vegetable, such as whole peas or squash, in each portion of the macaroni and cheese dish.

Some ideas include:

- Pureed and finely chopped vegetables in soups, sauces and casseroles.
- Pureed black beans added to ground beef for homemade burgers, chili, meatloaf or meatballs. Include whole black beans the visible vegetable.
- Pureed cauliflower as pizza crust along with visible vegetables as a topping. Serve cauliflower rice along with stir-fry vegetables. Serve cauliflower ‘mashed potatoes’ mixed with peas.
- Puree fruits and vegetables into a smoothie. Just remember when pureed as a smoothie, the fruit/vegetable counts as juice

While disguising fruits and vegetables is one way to help children eat more of these foods, it is important to remember that meals served in the CACFP are part of a nutrition education opportunity to help children learn how to build a healthy plate. It is important for young children to be able to identify the components in a healthy meal.



Fun and Creative Veggies and Fruits

- Serve vegetable noodles or mix with pasta
- Veggie Pizza
- Mini fruit pizzas
- Roast/bake veggie “fries”
- Colorful fruit kabobs

Also try these tips to serve fruits and vegetables in fun, creative ways:

- Serve vegetable noodles such as zucchini noodles in place of pasta or mix vegetable noodles in with pasta
- Make Veggie pizza
- Mini fruit pizzas such as cored apple slices topped with nut or seed butter and berries
- Roast or bake vegetable sticks to serve as “fries”- such as sweet potatoes, zucchini, jicama
- Serve colorful fruit kabobs

Also try these tips to serve fruits and vegetables in fun, creative ways:



Add Flavor!

- Add flavors: Parmesan cheese, Cinnamon, Soy sauce
- Roast vegetables
- Bake fruit



Another idea for serving fruit and vegetables is to pack on the Flavor: Many kids simply do not enjoy the tastes of some vegetables, so adding flavors such as Parmesan cheese on broccoli, cinnamon to carrots, or soy sauce on asparagus may increase acceptance of these foods.

Also, some kids do not like the texture of certain vegetables. So, you can try roasting vegetables to make them crisp or soft and add seasoning for flavor. Roasting vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower or Brussels sprouts tames their strong bitter flavors. Baking fruit like bananas and pineapples evokes an extra sweetness that kids will love.

Knife Skills Videos

- Cutting Bell Peppers
- Cutting Vegetables Slicing and Rocking Method
- Dice and Julienne Onions
- Kiwis and Oranges
- Dicing Tomatoes
- Peeling and Cutting Squash
- Watermelon and Cantaloupe

[Oregon Department of Education CACFP Training Center Culinary Skills Videos](#)



And if you are wondering how to cut or prepare certain fruits and vegetables, we recommend searching for videos on how to cut them. The Oregon Department of Education has videos on how to cut the fruits and vegetables listed on the slide.

Best Practices for Fruits & Vegetables

Serve a fruit or vegetable for at least one of the two components of snack



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Mini cheddar rice crisps topped with Slices of natural cheese	WGR tortilla chips Refried beans and salsa mix	Oatmeal Peaches	Deviled eggs Yellow cherry tomatoes	Honeycrisp apple Roasted soy nuts
Carrot coins Kiwi slices	Ham and cheese rollup on WGR tortilla	Warmd bread sticks Baked spaghetti squash (with marinara & cheese)	Whole grain cereal Craisins	Baked Zucchini 'Chips' Deli ham or turkey slices
Blueberry yogurt Crushed pineapple	Sliced bell peppers Strawberries	Cheese sandwich on WGR bread (hot or cold)	Rice cake topped with Tomato slices and corn salsa	Cantaloupe Banana Chip Muffins*
Vegetarian baked beans Scrambled eggs	Raspberries Cheese cubes	Peach slices Roasted edamame	Breakfast burrito: WGR tortilla with cheesy scrambled eggs	Roasted Cauliflower 'Popcorn' Bread 'sticks' (WGR bread toasted and cut into sticks)
Homemade pumpkin muffin Fresh pear slices	White Bean Ranch Dip* Dipping veggies (carrot sticks, celery, pears)	Fruit Salad* Canadian bacon	Minty Watermelon Cucumber Salad*	Vanilla yogurt Granola or other WGR cereal
Sweet potato grain bowl: Quinoa and roasted diced sweet potato	Raisins Mini bagels (spread cream cheese or nut or seed butter on bagel)	Baked zucchini spears Cheese stick	Canned peaches Cottage cheese	Crockpot Apples with Cinnamon* Tomato wedges
Mini chocolate rice crisps Vanilla yogurt	Whole Wheat Corn Bread* Roasted asparagus spears	Oatmeal with Cinnamon applesauce	Sweet potato 'fries' Hard-boiled egg	Honeydew melon Shredded cheese

KEY: ■ Meat/Meat Alternate & Grain ■ Vegetable & Grain ■ Fruit & Grain ■ Vegetable & Meat/Meat Alternate ■ Fruit & Meat/Meat Alternate ■ Fruit & Vegetable
WGR = Whole Grain Rich *Snack Inspiration Recipe

[Snack Inspiration](#)

Next, let's go over some best practices for serving fruits and vegetables.

The first is to serve a fruit or vegetable for at least one of the two components at snack.

If you need snack ideas, *Snack Inspiration* (linked to on slide) has 240 different snack ideas and many of them include fruits or vegetables. Snack ideas are color coded, so you know which components are included in the snack. At the bottom of each menu page is a Key that identifies the components.

There are also recipes in *Snack Inspiration* for fruits and vegetables such as Baked Zucchini Chips, Roasted Cauliflower popcorn, and Fruit Salad.

Best Practices for Fruits & Vegetables

Serve a variety of whole fruits (fresh, canned, frozen, or dried) more often than juice



The second best practice is to serve a variety of fruits and choose whole fruits (fresh, canned, frozen, or dried) more often than juice.

Best Practices for Fruits & Vegetables

One serving of the following vegetables each week:

- Dark green
- Red and orange
- Beans and peas (legumes)
- Starchy
- Other vegetables

[Vegetable Subgroups](#)

CACFP **Vegetable Subgroups**

Below are lists of vegetables categorized into five subgroups. It is best practice to serve vegetables from different subgroups. For information about crediting and yields, visit the [USDA Food Buying Guide](#).

Dark Green	Other	Red/Orange	Beans and Peas (Legumes)	Starchy	
Fresh, frozen, and canned	Fresh, frozen, and canned	Fresh, frozen, and canned	Canned, frozen, or cooked from dry	Fresh, frozen, and canned	
Beet greens Bok choy Broccoli Broccolini Chicory Collard greens Endive (escarole) Grape leaves Kale Lettuce (e.g., butterhead, bibb, Boston, arugula, spring mix, etc.) Mustard greens Spinach Swiss chard Romaine lettuce Turnip greens Watercress	Artichokes Asparagus Avocado Bamboo shoots Bean sprouts (cooked for food safety) (e.g., mung) Beets Bell peppers (green, yellow) Breadfruit Brussels sprouts Cabbage (green, red, celery, napa) Cactus (nopales) Carrots, rainbow (e.g., purple, yellow) Cauliflower Celery Chayote (mirafita) Cucumbers Eggplant Green beans Green chilies (anaheim, jalapeño)	Acorn squash Bell peppers (orange, red) Butternut squash Carrots Cherry peppers Hubbard squash Pimientos (pimientos) Pumpkin Salsa Spaghetti squash Sweet potatoes Tomatoes Tomato products (e.g., puree, paste, sauce, juice)	Baked beans Black beans Black-eyed peas Edamame (soy beans) Garbanzo beans (chickpeas) Great northern beans Kidney beans Lentils Lima beans Mung beans Navy beans (pea bean) Plink beans Pinto beans Red beans Refried beans Soy beans Split peas White beans	Green onions Iceberg lettuce Kohlrabi Mushrooms Okra Olives Onions (white, yellow, red) Pepperoncini Pickles (cucumber) Radishes Rutabagas Sauerkraut Seaweed Snow peas Sugar snap peas Tomatillo Turnips Wax beans Yellow summer squash Zucchini squash	Cassava (yuca) Corn Green peas Hominy, canned Lima (soy bean) Parsnips Plantains Potatoes Taro (malanga) Water chestnuts Yautia (tannier)

The next best practice is to provide at least one serving each of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables once per week. To help with this, refer to the *Vegetable Subgroups* handout which is a list of vegetables in each of these five subgroups. Following this best practice will help you serve a variety of vegetables each week.

Best Practices for Fruits & Vegetables

Incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods

[Cycle Menus for Child Care](#) (GM 12)

Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables

The infographic is titled "Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables" and is divided into four columns, each representing a season. Each column has a corresponding photograph of seasonal produce at the top: Spring (carrots), Summer (cucumbers and tomatoes), Fall (cabbages), and Winter (a variety of fruits like apples, oranges, and pears). Below each photograph is a list of seasonal items.

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Apricots • Asparagus • Avocados • Bananas • Blueberries • Broccoli • Cabbage • Carrots • Celery • Corn • Collard Greens • Garlic • Kale • Kiwifruit • Lemons • Lettuce • Limes • Mushrooms • Onions • Peas • Pineapples • Radishes • Rhubarb • Spinach • Strawberries • Swiss Chard • Turnips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Apricots • Avocados • Bananas • Beets • Bell Peppers • Blackberries • Blueberries • Cantaloupe • Carrots • Celery • Cherries • Corn • Cucumbers • Eggplant • Garlic • Green Beans • Honeydew Melon • Lemons • Lima Beans • Limes • Mangos • Okra • Peaches • Plums • Raspberries • Strawberries • Summer Squash • Tomatillos • Tomatoes • Watermelon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Bananas • Beets • Bell Peppers • Brussels Sprouts • Cabbage • Carrots • Cauliflower • Celery • Collard Greens • Cranberries • Garlic • Ginger • Grapes • Green Beans • Kale • Kiwifruit • Lemons • Limes • Onions • Parsnips • Pears • Peas • Pineapples • Potatoes • Pumpkin • Radishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Avocados • Bananas • Beets • Brussels Sprouts • Cabbage • Carrots • Celery • Collard Greens • Grapefruit • Kale • Kiwifruit • Leeks • Lemons • Limes • Onions • Oranges • Parsnips • Pears • Pineapples • Potatoes • Pumpkin • Rutabagas • Sweet Potatoes & Yams • Swiss Chard • Turnips • Winter Squash

The next best practice is to incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods.

Purchasing seasonal foods can help keep food costs down as foods in season usually cost less than when purchasing them during off-season. They are also often fresher, tastier, and have higher nutritional content.

There is a list of seasonal fruits and vegetables in the *Cycle Menus for Child Care* resource.



Best Practices for Fruits & Vegetables

Limit serving pre-fried foods to no more than one serving per week (ex. store-bought frozen French fries)



The last best practice is to limit serving pre-fried foods to no more than one serving per week. Pre-fried vegetables include store-bought frozen potato products such as French fries, tator tots and hashbrowns. These are considered pre-fried because they have already been fried by the manufacturer before being packaged and frozen. So, even when you bake them, they are still pre-fried foods.

WHAT IS A FOOD YOU HAVE NEVER SERVED.... BUT WANT TO

What is a food or meal you have never served but want to?
Bonus points for including why you haven't served it yet!

The seventh topic is What is a Food You Have Never Served....But Want To?

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Foods Not Served and Why?

- Find recipes or inspiration for an ingredient

Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Recipe Box (<https://theicn.org/cnr/>)

USDA Recipes



One reason for not having served a specific food item is lack of knowledge; i.e., you are not sure what to do with it or how to prepare it. One recommendation is to search out recipes. The Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN) Recipe Box has CACFP recipes. You can search for recipes by food item.

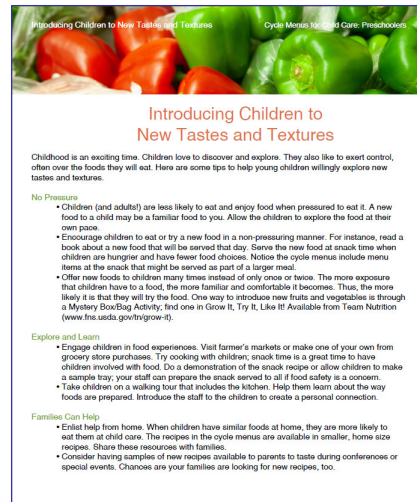
As an example, let's say that you have always wanted to serve beets at your program but are not sure what to do with them. Searching 'beets' on the ICN recipe box website resulted in this Local Harvest Bake recipe.

Foods Not Served and Why?

- **Exposing children to new foods is an ongoing effort!**

Children may need to be exposed to a new food 10-15 times before they decide to try it and/or like it.

- **Model positive eating behaviors: remember, kids learn from you!!**



Another reason you may have never served a specific food or meal is because you are concerned the participants will not like it or they have shown a dislike for something similar in the past.

Remember! Exposing children to new foods is an ongoing effort! Young children are experiencing new things all the time, and this includes new foods! It shouldn't be expected that they will all love every new food item you introduce them to the first time. Children may need to be exposed to a new food 10-15 times before they decide to try it, or decide they like it.

Also, remember to model positive eating behaviors and speak positively about foods. Just because an adult does not like a certain food does not mean that a child will not love it! Encourage children to try everything.

This handout, Introducing Children to New Tastes and Textures, is posted on the CACFP 2023 Training Webpage under the slides and handout.

RENAME A MEAL!

Do you have fun names for the foods you serve? What are they?

Or list a main dish or side dish served on your menu, then give it a fun name.
For example, 'Say "Cheese" Sandwich' or 'Monster Mashed Potatoes'

The eight and final topic is Rename a Meal! Do you have fun names for the foods you serve? What are they? Or, list a main dish or side dish served on your menu, then give it a fun name. For example, 'Say "Cheese" Sandwich' or 'Monster Mashed Potatoes'

The next few slides go through additional information shared at the training.

Rename a Meal / Food

Give menu items creative, descriptive names to increase excitement. It's cheap, easy, and effective--what more could you ask for?

Brainstorm fun names with kitchen staff and CACFP participants.



Cauliflower Clouds

Giving menu items creative, descriptive names is one of the most efficient ways to increase interest and entice excitement. It also costs nothing to get creative!

Brainstorm fun menu names with kitchen staff and your CACFP participants.

Here on the slide, we have 'Cauliflower Clouds' – what a fun name when serving cauliflower.

Rename a Meal / Food

Vegetables

- Tasty Tiny Tree Tops (Broccoli)
- X-Ray Vision Carrots
- Zesty Zucchini



Fruits

- All-Mixed-Up Fruit Cup
- Blueberry Bursts
- Perfectly Plump Peaches



Here are some more ideas for vegetables and fruits.

Rename a Meal / Food

Main Dish

- Fish Sticks Of The Sea
- Kickin' Chicken Nuggets
- Super Tuna Noodles



Milk

- Snowy White Milk
- Real Cold Cow's Milk
- White Moo Milk



And some ideas for main dishes and milk.

When naming an item, especially a main dish, strive to select a name that reflects what is being served. For example, stating 'Chef's magical dish' does not provide enough information as to what is in the dish. On the other hand, 'Chef's magical pancakes' explains what is in the dish.

Rename a Meal / Food

CREATIVE, FUN, AND DESCRIPTIVE NAMES



Giving menu items creative, descriptive names is one of the most efficient ways to increase sales in your lunchroom. It's cheap, easy, and effective-- what more could you ask for? Brainstorm fun names with kitchen staff, ask students to contribute their own unique ideas through a school- or class-wide naming competition, or take advantage of this handy list we've put together for you.

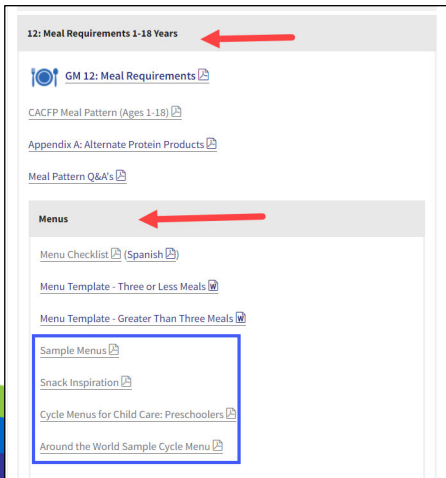
NUDGING CHILDREN TO EAT HEALTHIER
SMARTERLUNCHROOMS.ORG



- **Words in alphabetical order**
- **Words that reflect**
 - Positivity
 - Taste and aroma
 - Texture
 - Temperature
 - Taste
 - Appearance
 - Adverbs
 - Other

This handout, posted on the CACFP 2023 Training webpage under the slides and handout, provides multiple descriptive words to help make you menus fun!

Sample Menus



[Guidance Memorandum 12](#)

- 6-Week Sample Menu
- Snack Inspiration (240 snack ideas)
- Cycle Menu for Child Care: Preschoolers (four 4-week seasonal cycle menus) from the Institute of Child Nutrition
- Around the World Sample Cycle Menu

Last, the DPI CACFP does have a few other sample menus. These can be found under Guidance Memorandum 12 / Menu Tab.



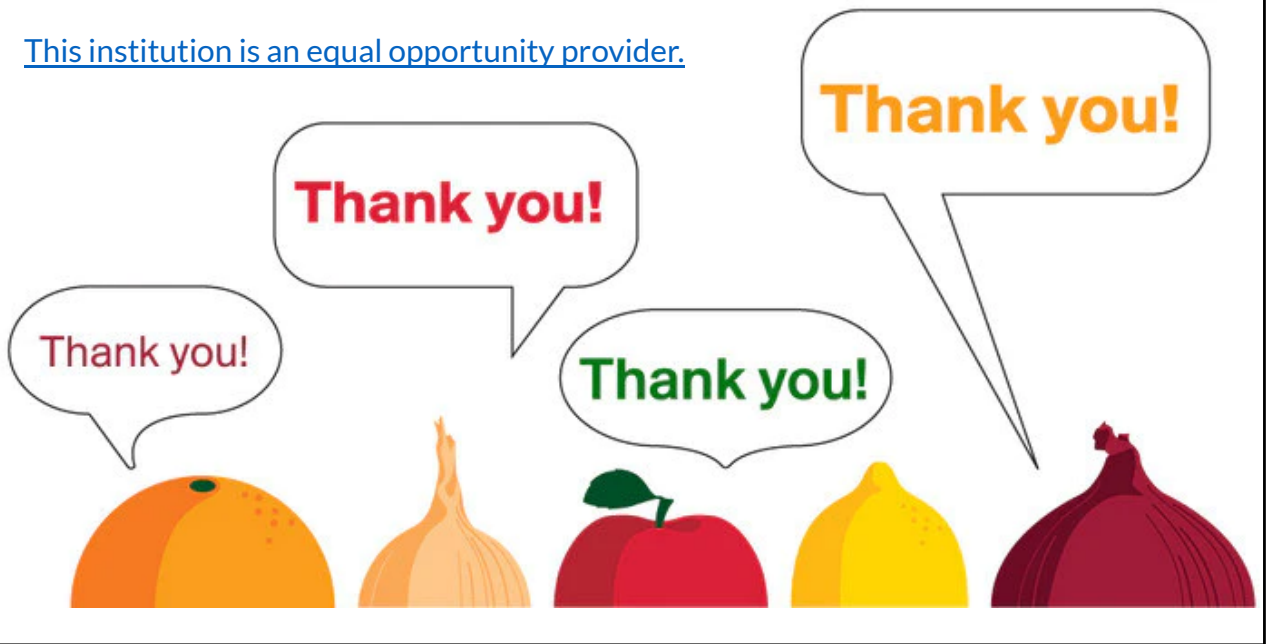
Final Thoughts

- Think Outside the Box
- Accommodate Special Dietary Needs
- Be Aware of Choking Hazards
- Serve Minimal Processed Foods

Now let's go over some final thoughts on menu planning:

- Think outside the box. Serve foods that you have never served before and try a new recipe. When doing so, serve new foods with foods that are familiar. Expect some hesitancy when introducing new foods or a new recipe. Don't give up!
- Have a plan for accommodating participants with special dietary needs. The CACFP requires that programs make accommodations for disabilities, however, think about what can be done when putting together your menus that could help address common special dietary needs. For example, do you want to adopt a "nut-free" policy? Not serve any pork? Or maybe you have a set of alternate menus for children who are vegetarian.
- Be aware of foods that are choking hazards. Toddlers and infants eating table foods cannot always eat the same things as older children. Modify foods for young children by cooking, chopping, cubing, grating or mashing.
- Aim to serve minimal processed foods, such as store-bought chicken nuggets, fish sticks, corn dogs, etc. These foods are higher in fat and salt. Serve homemade meals with chicken breast, fish, eggs, beans, and beef. Remember, you are not just feeding children, you have an opportunity to teach them about all kinds of foods and help them develop healthy habits for life.

[This institution is an equal opportunity provider.](#)



Thank you.