

Special Foods Contest Handbook

Goals and Objectives:

Goal:

4-H'ers will learn to provide meals and snacks that satisfy aesthetic, psychological, nutritional, and individual needs by choosing and preparing a recipe from any one of the five food groups.

Nutritional Objectives:

- To know MyPlate Plan, food groups and amount/number of servings needed for one's own age and activity level.
- To prepare foods that meet basic nutrient needs of the body.
- To be able to list and discuss the functions of the six major nutrients present in the food groups and specifically those found in the food prepared and the menu.
- To recognize and categorize foods in the recipe into the food groups.
- To be able to discuss key nutrients present in the food prepared and the body's need for these nutrients.

Menu Planning Objectives:

- To demonstrate how to increase interest in a meal by varying color, shape and form of menu items.
- To demonstrate how contrasts in a menu's flavors, temperatures and textures contribute to its total quality.
- To use the menu chosen to establish preparation methods and equipment use patterns.

Aesthetics Objectives:

- To coordinate a table setting cover into an attractive, aesthetically pleasing manner based on the menu.
- To demonstrate the importance of arrangement and garnishing in overall appearance of the food being served.

Time Management Objectives:

- To identify and implement time management strategies, appropriate equipment and appliances to prepare the recipe within 1 1/2 hours.

Food Safety & Sanitation Objectives:

- To observe personal hygiene habits to ensure a safe and sanitary food.
- To be able to discuss and implement general kitchen practices that are routine in the interest of safety and sanitation.
- To discuss and implement recommendations for avoiding bacterial hazards when purchasing, storing, thawing, cooking, and serving food.

Food Principles Objectives:

- To discuss the food principles and preparation techniques applied in the recipe prepared.
- To evaluate the finished product based on eye appeal, flavor, texture, and taste.

Juniors:

Special Foods Contestants may choose to make a product from any one of the five food groups from MyPlate.

One serving of the dish must provide one serving of a food from the food group in which it was entered. For example: if a casserole is entered in the milk, cheese, and yogurt group, it could contain 1 cup of milk or 2 oz. processed cheese or a combination of foods (Example: 1/2 cup milk and 3/4 oz. natural cheese).

The recipe is to be prepared and ready to serve within 90 minutes.

Eligibility:

- Junior contestants are 8–10 years old as of January 1 of the current year.

Appearance:

- Contestants should be poised and well groomed. Wear washable clothing and a smock top or apron. Hair should be away from the face using a scarf, ribbon, rubber bands, hairnet, cap, barrettes, comb etc. Clean hands are important!

Recipes:

- Nutritious drinks are acceptable recipes in the Beginner division only. Drinks should be served from a pitcher, not the blender. The pitcher does not stay at the place setting so it does not have to coordinate with the dinnerware.

Menu/MyPlate:

- Junior Special Foods contestants must have a written one-meal menu with at least four of the five food groups used OR a snack menu with at least two different food groups. The special foods recipe must be one of the menu items.
- One copy of the menu is needed for the contest. Menus will be laid at the place setting. Write your name, county, and menu occasion in the upper right hand corner.
- Create your personalized MyPlate printout by going to www.MyPlate.gov. You will need to enter your age, gender, and activity level. The Web site will create a personalized plan for healthy eating. Print this and learn to use at contests.

Technique:

- Contestants are to bring all supplies needed to prepare and serve the recipe they have selected. This includes the ingredients, cooking utensils, serving utensils, and everything needed for a place setting.
- Three ingredients must be measured during the contest. A maximum of two ingredients may be pre-cooked or pre-measured prior to the contest. All other preparation needs to be done at the contest.
- Contestants need to: 1) use correct measuring, mixing, and preparation techniques; 2) know food safety involved in food preparation techniques. (Time, temperature, and personal sanitation); 3) name the five food groups from the Food Guide Plate plus the oils group; 4) know the six basic nutrients;

Place Setting:

- Contestants will display a place setting that coordinates with the recipe and menu chosen. All dishes and utensils needed to consume the foods in the menu should be included with the setting. A centerpiece is not required for Beginners.

Intermediates:

Special Foods Contestants may choose to make a product from any one of the five food groups from the MyPlate. One serving of the dish must provide one serving of a food from the food group in which it was entered. For example: if a casserole is entered in the milk, cheese, and yogurt group, it could contain 1 cup of milk or 2 oz. processed cheese or a combination of foods from one group (Example: 1/2 cup milk and 3/4 oz. natural cheese) to provide 1 serving.

The recipe is to be prepared and ready to serve within 90 minutes.

Eligibility:

- Intermediate contestants must be 11–13 years old as of January 1 of the current year.

Appearance:

- Contestants should be poised and well groomed. Wear washable clothing and an apron or smock top. Hair should be away from the face using a scarf, ribbon, rubber bands, hairnet, cap, barrettes, comb etc. Clean hands are important.

Recipes:

- Nutritious drinks are acceptable recipes in the Junior division only.

Menu/MyPlate/Worksheets:

- Create your personalized MyPlate print out by going to www.MyPlate.gov. You will need to enter your age, gender, and activity level. The Web site will create a personalized plan for healthy eating. Print this plan and submit with your entry.
- Junior special foods contestants must have written one meal menu with at least four of the five food groups. The special foods recipe must be one of the menu items.
- One copy of the menu is needed for the contest. It will be laid at the place setting. Write your name, county and menu occasion in the upper right hand corner.

Technique:

- Three ingredients must be measured during the contest. A maximum of two ingredients may be pre-cooked or pre-measured prior to the contest. All other preparation needs to be done at the contest.
- Contestants need to: 1) use correct measuring, mixing, and preparation techniques of the product; 2) know food safety involved in food preparation. (Time, temperature, and personal sanitation); 3) have a good understanding of the five food groups from the MyPlate and be able to explain each food group's contribution to the diet; 4) know the six basic nutrients and why they are needed by the body; 5) know the specific vitamins and minerals that are present in the ingredients used.
- Contestants are to bring all supplies needed to prepare and serve the recipe they have selected. This includes the ingredients, cooking utensils, serving utensils, and everything needed for a place setting.

Place Setting:

- Contestants will display a place setting that coordinates with the recipe and menu chosen. All dishes and utensils needed to consume the menu should be included in the setting. **Centerpieces are required for Intermediates.** See the Place Settings section for definition.

Seniors:

Special Foods contestants may choose to make a product from any one of the food groups from the MyPlate.

One serving of the dish must provide one serving of a food from the food group in which it was entered.

For example:

if a casserole is entered in the milk, cheese, and yogurt group, it could contain 1 cup of milk or 2 oz. processed cheese or a combination of foods from one group (Example: 1/2 cup milk and 3/4 oz. hard, natural cheese) to provide one serving.

The recipe is to be prepared and ready to serve within 1 and 1/2 hours.

Eligibility:

- Senior contestants must be 14 years of age or older as of January 1 of the current year.

Appearance:

- Contestants should be poised and well groomed. Wear washable clothing and an apron or smock top. Hair should be away from the face using a scarf, ribbon, rubber bands, hair net, cap, barrettes, comb etc. Clean hands are important!

Recipes:

and serving size guide listed in the Special Foods Handbook to determine if the recipe is eligible for the contest.

- Nutritious drinks are acceptable recipes in the Junior division only.

Menu/MyPlate/Worksheets:

- Create your personalized MyPlate printout by going to www.MyPlate.gov. You will need to enter your age, gender, and activity level. The Web site will create a personalized plan for healthy eating. Print this plan.
- Senior Special Foods contestant must have a written one-day menu that reflects the personalized MyPlate plan.
- The menu must include the number of servings from the personalized MyPlate print out. Menus should take into consideration the 2005 Dietary Guidelines (available on the internet at www.MyPlate.gov).

Technique:

- Contestants are to bring all supplies needed to prepare and serve the recipe they have selected. This includes the ingredients, cooking utensils, serving utensils, and place setting appointments.
- Three ingredients must be measured during the contest. A maximum of two ingredients may be pre-cooked or pre-measured prior to the contest. All other preparation needs to be done at the contest.
- Contestants need to: 1) use correct measuring, mixing, and preparation of product and know why; 2) know food safety involved in food preparation techniques. (Time, temperature, and personal sanitation); 3) have a good understanding of the five food groups and be able to explain each food group's contribution to the diet. Seniors should have a good understanding of nutrients in foods and why they are needed by the body; 4) know the six basic nutrients and be able to explain their importance to the body in greater depth than the Juniors; 5) know the specific vitamins and minerals that are present in their recipe, ingredients used and their importance to the body.

Place Setting:

- Contestants will display a place setting of the meal in which the Special Foods recipe appears on the menu. All dishes and utensils needed to consume the meal should be included with the setting. **A centerpiece is required.** See the Place Setting section for definition.

Garnishes:

Before we taste food, our eyes often "feast" upon what is set before us. This helps to excite our appetite. Good cooks always invest a little extra attention to make their dishes look special with a garnish.

A garnish is any edible decoration added to a dish. It can be placed on or around the dish. It can also be added to the individual serving. Garnishes can be as simple as a dash of paprika or as elaborate as a food sculpture that garnishes the table.

Variety and contrast in color, form, and texture are important to remember when deciding on a garnish for your dish. Garnishes should be appropriate to the food with which they are served and should harmonize in flavor.

Parsley is a typical garnish. But try to use your imagination and come up with something unique. An ingredient from your dish can be used in an interesting way as a garnish.

For the contest, the place setting with one serving of the food you prepared on it should be garnished.

The serving dish must have eye appeal and be well presented. A garnish may add to the eye appeal and, therefore, you may choose to garnish the serving dish but a separate garnish is not required.

Place Settings:

A “cover” means everything used at each individual’s place setting. The “cover” includes the dinnerware, glasses/cups, flatware, tablecloth or placemat, and napkin used at each individual place setting. The recipe and menu you have chosen influence the type of items you will use in your cover.

A child’s birthday party would probably have bright colors while an adult dinner party would probably use neutral and subdued colors.

The purpose of setting the table cover is to make the act of eating as easy as possible. Common sense and courtesy dictate that place settings include whatever is necessary for eating a meal, and that they be placed conveniently. It discourages the display of non-essential utensils and dishes. For instance, if you are not serving coffee, you would not set a cup and saucer at the place setting.

Centerpieces:

Centerpieces are another way to show your creativity. Juniors do not have to bring a centerpiece for this contest. Intermediates and Seniors must have a centerpiece with their table settings.

Basic Principles

- Simplicity is the key to beauty. Do not overdo it.
- Try unique items. Candles and flowers are good options but also consider unusual items, such as pinecones, fresh fruits/vegetables, or small decorative objects.
- Be sure that items are not offensive where people are eating, such as very strong aromas. Watch for bugs or other foreign matter when using natural objects.
- Centerpieces can consist of more than one item, but all items should coordinate and not be too spread out.
- Remember that a centerpiece is viewed from all sides. The centerpiece should be equally visible to all people seated at the table.
- Create a mood with the centerpiece and table appointments. Consider establishing a theme around the type of meal and foods that are being served. For example, if you are serving fish, you might choose a nautical theme or beach theme.
- Consider the height of the arrangement. Keep the view and conversation zones open. All guests should be in clear view of each other to promote conversation.
- Candles. Candles should be lit when they are used as a centerpiece; however, for this contest, DO NOT LIGHT the candles. Use an appropriate height of candles so that when lit, they will not interfere with the view of the guests.
- A mat of some kind is usually placed underneath the centerpiece to “ground” it. This mat or fabric should coordinate with the place setting. It could be the same kind of placemat or napkin as the one used for the place setting.

Design Elements

- Keep the centerpiece in proportion to the size of the table. Do not choose a centerpiece that is too large or too small for the table. If it is too large, it will overpower the space. If it is too small, the centerpiece will seem lost and insignificant.
- Color is one of the most important considerations. The centerpiece can help to draw the entire table setting together. Coordinate the colors in the centerpiece with the colors in the place setting.
- Select containers carefully. The container should be in proportion to its contents or the effectiveness of the arrangement may be lost.
- Use a variety of textures, colors, lines, shapes, and sizes in the centerpiece to make it interesting.

Beverage-ware:

Some type of beverage is usually served with the meal or snack. Therefore, at least one piece of beverage-ware (glasses/cups) should be included in your table setting.

If you list more than one beverage on your menu (for example, milk and fruit juice) then two appropriate glasses should be provided at the setting. If only one beverage is listed on the menu, (water is assumed to be served if nothing is listed on the menu for a beverage) then one piece of beverage-ware should be included in the table setting.

A water glass may or may not be included at the place setting in addition to other beverages listed on the menu. It is up to the host/hostess whether an additional glass for water is placed at the setting.

Water does not need to be written on the menu. It may be written on the menu if a glass is provided. If you do not list coffee on your menu, you do not need to put a cup and saucer at your place setting.

Serving Dishes and Utensils:

Table presentation of the food prepared is important for a successful and pleasing meal. Matching or coordinating serving dishes and utensils should be used for a unified look at the table.

Foods that are prepared in blenders, fry pans, grills, etc. should be transferred to an appropriate serving dish, plate, or pitcher.

Casserole-type foods, salads, etc. may be prepared and served in the same dish, if the dish is also a serving dish. The preparation/serving dish should be appropriate for the menu item and blend well with the other dishes used at the place setting.

The Cook:

There are several techniques you will want to consider for the Special Foods Contest. The following are some suggestions for you.

Appearance

Avoid long, flowing sleeves that may come in contact with your food or be a fire hazard.

Wear an apron or some type of protection for your clothing. Full-length aprons provide better protection than short aprons that leave the chest unprotected.

Wear comfortable close-toed shoes. Avoid open-toe sandals, as they do not protect your feet. There are many things that can happen when you are cooking that could injure your feet, so protect them!

Wear something on your head to pull back your hair such as a scarf, hair net, or cap. This is for cleanliness purposes and keeps your hair from falling in the food. Be clean and well groomed.

Wash your hands before beginning. Have a wet cloth at your workstation to periodically wipe your hands as you work. Be sure to wash your hands often while preparing your food, especially after coughing, sneezing, or handling raw meats.

Attitude

Relax and enjoy yourself. Smile and be friendly to the judges. The judges are understanding people and any suggestions they give are to help you learn and improve your skills.

Do your own work and be careful not to bother those around you. Many mistakes can be made in a recipe, so it is best to give all your attention to what you are doing.

Work Area: Organization, Neatness, and Safety

After you have set up your work area and are waiting to start, cover your equipment with clean towels.

This keeps your area looking neat. Keep your area neat by cleaning up after yourself. To make cleanup easier, you can cover your work area with wax paper.

Keep your work area orderly. Using trays or cookie sheets will help this. When you start, have all of your necessary items on one tray to one side. When you use the item and are done with it, transfer it to a tray on the other side.

This keeps you working neatly and also prevents mistakes. When you are done, your beginning tray should be empty. If it is not, you will know that you forgot something.

Stay within your area. Do not overlap into the area that belongs to someone else. Practice at home in a limited work space. When you are finished, make sure that your work area is completely clean.

To make it handy for yourself, tape a brown paper bag to the edge of the counter where you are working. This is handy for all garbage and when you are done, you need to make only one trip to the garbage can. If you need to walk some distance to use the stove or sink, be sure to walk carefully. Use dry potholders to prevent burns. If you are draining something, be sure to carry something underneath the item to catch all drips. Liquid on the floor is a hazard! Watch the traffic flow. This prevents traffic jams and accidents. If you have things on the stove, turn the handles inward to avoid spills and burns.

Use correct measuring techniques. **BE SURE TO MEASURE AT LEAST THREE (3) INGREDIENTS**

DURING THE EVENT. The judges will want to see if you can use the proper measuring techniques.

Learn the difference between liquid and dry measuring.

Be sure to use a cutting board if you are doing any cutting or chopping. Make sure to wash the cutting board thoroughly in between if you will be cutting raw meat and then cutting another ingredient. This is to prevent cross-contamination.

Hard plastic boards are recommended over wooden boards.

THINK SAFETY! Learn how to use utensils and appliances properly. If you have any questions on how to operate the appliances (the stove, for instance), please ask for help.

Miscellaneous Tips

Bring along extra ingredients. If you spill or drop something, you will have enough of what you need if you bring extras.

Determine ahead of time how much of the food you prepare would be considered one serving. You may use the MyPlate for serving size guidelines. You will be asked to place one serving on your place setting dish for the judges. For example, if your dish serves four, then you place one fourth of it on the place setting dish.

Work in logical order. First prepare your dish so it has plenty of time to get done in the hour and a half. You can set your place setting while you are preparing. The only time you would set up your place setting first is if your food is prepared quickly and needs to be served quickly. If you have time in which you have nothing to do, stand quietly in your work area, or sit in a chair quietly.

The only food you need to prepare at the contest is your main dish, which is your selected entry. You DO NOT need to bring along the other foods on your menu, unless it is something that is needed for your dish. An example would be if you were preparing pancakes, then you would need to bring syrup or the topping that would be used.

Garnishes are good to use because they decorate the dish. A garnish can add interest, color, and design. Study and experiment with what makes a good garnish.

REMEMBER: All dishes must be prepared in 90 minutes.

Please bring ingredients in their original containers, whenever possible. In the past, we have recommended removing or covering brand names; however, in the interest of food safety issues, we want participants to bring ingredients in their original containers. There may be a few situations when this is not practical, such as flour.

At some time during the contest, you will need to plan when you will have your Nutrition interview with the judge.

Nutrition Knowledge for Juniors:

Nutrition knowledge helps you select food that will help you grow up healthy and strong. A large part of the Special Foods Contest will focus on the contestant's understanding of nutrition.

Listed below are the types of information that you should know for the contest. You will talk about this information with the nutrition judge.

MyPlate

For the contest you will have to be able to list the five food groups from the MyPlate. You will need to know:

- How many servings or amount you need per day from each of the food groups for your age and physical activity level. To find this visit the MyPlate website.
- Which food groups each of your ingredients fits into

Nutrition Knowledge for Intermediates:

Knowledge of good nutrition is important to help you grow up strong and healthy. A large part of the Special Foods contest will focus on the contestant's understanding of nutrition.

Listed below are the types of information you should know for the contest. Note that you will also need to know the Junior Nutrition Knowledge. You will talk about this information with the nutrition judge.

MyPlate

For the contest you will have to be able to list the five food groups from the MyPlate. You will need to know:

- How many servings you need per day from each of the food groups for your age and physical activity level
- Which food groups each of your ingredients fits into. A nutrient is something our body needs to grow properly. We get nutrients from the foods we eat daily. Each nutrient does a special job in our body to keep us healthy.

Nutrition Knowledge for Seniors:

Knowledge of good nutrition is important if you are to grow up strong and healthy. A large part of the Special

Foods contest will focus on the contestant's understanding of nutrition.

Listed below are the types of information you should know for the contest. You will talk about this information with the nutrition judge.

MyPlate

For the contest, you will also need to know the MyPlate knowledge from the Beginner and Junior section. You will also need to know strategies for implementing the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans into a diet.

- How many servings you need per day from each of the food groups for your age and activity level.
- Which food groups each of your ingredients fits into.

Nutrients

You must also know the nutrition knowledge from the Beginner and Junior sections. Seniors must know at least one function of each of the nutrients. You will need to know functions of specific vitamins and minerals present in your recipe.