

## Culinary Challenge ..... HOW IT WORKS

### THE MENU

Plan a menu for an indoor or outdoor meal. Try to have variety in color, shape, texture, and temperature. Also, be sure it is a well-balanced meal nutritionally. Write or type a menu card and make sure to list the occasion. (Example: lunch for bike hike.) The judge may ask questions about the time schedule. The 4-H'er may also have the time schedule written or typed on a card.

### THE FOOD

Prepare (at home) one of the foods from your menu and bring it to the contest. It should be a food that can be kept at room temperature for several hours as the judge will probably want to sample. The food may be an individual or family size serving. You may use a recipe from a project manual, a cookbook, magazine, a family recipe or any other source. You can even create your own dish! Be sure to bring a copy of the recipe.

### THE TABLE SETTING

Bring along a table setting for one or two people. This should include a table (portable, like a card table), tablecloth, runner or placemats, napkins, dishes, silverware and a centerpiece or the table setting may be on a blanket, etc. on the floor if that is more appropriate for the theme. Your table setting should be appropriate for the menu you are planning. For example, an outdoor cooking menu may have a table setting of paper plates and a fancy meal may use china and silver.

### HOW THE CONTEST WORKS

Displays will be set up by the 4-H'er the day of the contest. The judge will talk to each participant as their entry is judged. The food, menu and the table setting are all of equal importance in the judging. Explain to the judge why you did something or ask his/her opinion of a better way to do something to get new ideas. In order to highlight knowledge and skills acquired during pre-contest preparation, youth will utilize technology as part of their interview.



# Table Settings

Do you know that you can be a designer each time you set the table? An attractive table setting makes any meal more enjoyable. Can you set such a table? Let's learn how.

**ON YOUR MARK** - Wash your hands before handling any dishes. Determine how many people will be served.

**GET SET!** - The Table Cover - The table covering is the background for the food. It protects the table and makes for less noise. Placemats or tablecloths may be used. Sometimes the table is left bare. Be sure that the covering or table is clean.

**GO!** - Place Setting - Allow at least 20 inches for each person's dishes. This is called a "cover" and each cover is set exactly the same. A cover contains only the dinnerware and flatware for the meal served.

1. Put the plate in the center of the cover about 1 inch from the edge of the table.
2. Place the knives and spoons on the right side, the forks on the left about 1 inch from the plate and 1 inch from the edge of the table. Turn the cutting edge of the knife towards the plate. If there is more than one piece in each cover, such as one dinner fork and a salad fork or one teaspoon and a soup spoon, determine which one will be used first and place it outside the other one.
3. The napkins are usually folded into oblongs, and placed next to the forks. The fold of the oblong should be to the left so it opens like a book.
4. The beverage glass is placed about 1 inch above the tip of the knife.
5. If coffee or tea is served, the cup is placed on the saucer and set to the right of the spoon 1 inch from the edge of the table. Have the handle pointing to the right.
6. Salad and dessert bowls may be placed left of the forks and napkin or at the tip of the fork.



**Centerpiece:** The centerpiece should be coordinated with the table appointment and be appropriate for the occasion. If a centerpiece is used, it should not obstruct anyone's view.

**Meal Planning:** When planning a menu, first decide on the main dish. Select appropriate vegetables, appetizer, soup or salad. Add a bread, dessert and beverage, if desired. To plan menus for a whole day, plan the largest meal first. Plan the other meals next and include between-meal-snacks last. Use the ChooseMyPlate website at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov> to plan nutritious meals.

## Ideas for Writing a Menu

1. List the foods in the order in which they are served. Every menu will not include all the foods listed.

Appetizer  
Main dish  
Starch vegetable  
Other vegetable(s)  
Salad  
Bread  
Dessert  
Beverage

Example:  
  
Broiled Ham  
Grilled Pineapple Slices  
Cole Slaw  
Hot Gingerbread with Applesauce  
Coffee  
Milk

2. Use capitals for all words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.
3. When a food is commonly prepared in more than one way, avoid confusion by describing the method of cooking, such as:  
  
(A) Roast Turkey                      (B) French Fried Potatoes
4. List each food with the exception of butter, cream, sugar or salad dressing, unless it is something special, such as Honey Butter, or Poppyseed Dressing.

## Suggestions for Writing a Recipe

Many food entries for the fair call for the exhibitor to include the recipe used. Here are some tips for writing a good recipe.

1. It should be accurate and complete. It should list all ingredients in the order used.
2. It should give exact measurements in the easiest unit (i.e. 1/4 cup, not 4 tbsp).
3. If possible, do not abbreviate.
4. Use weight or fluid measure of canned foods (do not say "one can pineapple, "say - one 12 ounce can of pineapple").
5. Use short sentences and clear, simple directions.
6. Specify pan sizes.
7. Give number of servings in the recipe and state serving size.

## 4-H Culinary Challenge Contest Scoresheet

Team Member Names \_\_\_\_\_

Table # \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Score Points
<b>Food Preparation</b> Appropriate for age, ability, interest. Knows procedures for preparing food. Understands principles of food preparation for their age. Food has pleasing flavor, texture, and quality. Food is appropriate for judging and principles of food safety are considered with choosing the food prepared.				15
<b>Menu</b> Foods fit the meal/occasion and are fully explained in their presentation. Variety in: texture, flavor, color, shape, temperature. Recipes and menu presented in the correct format. Includes challenge ingredient in some way.				15
<b>Nutrition</b> Knows nutritional contribution of food choices on their menu. Understands how the meal fits MyPlate recommendations. Is aware of ways to reduce fat, sugar, salt, etc. in the meal, if needed.				15
<b>Menu Management</b> Understands and incorporates the principles of time management and food preparation into presentation. Shows evidence that they know how to prepare items on menu. Is aware of the cost of preparation of menu.				15
<b>Theme/Table Setting</b> Overall effect coordinates with table setting. Centerpiece and table covering appropriate for theme. Theme and occasion obvious "at a glance".				10
<b>Information on Challenge Food</b> Presentation contained facts about Challenge Food Item accurately and correctly. Information shared on Challenge Food relates to the overall presentation.				10
<b>Presentation/Interview</b> Presentation should (but is not limited to) include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Technology or multi-media. Presentation should include video, pictures, or other appropriate form to convey message.</li> <li>• Presentation:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to convey an accurate message with confidence.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Both team members share the presentation equally.</li> </ul>				20
<b>RIBBON PLACING:</b>				

## Here is a list of possible questions the judge may ask:

1. How did you prepare this food?  
Where did you get the recipe?  
Have you changed the recipe? If yes, how?
2. Why did you choose this food?  
How often have you prepared it?
3. How does this food fit your ability and interests?
4. Would it take a long time to prepare this menu? Why or why not?  
In what order would foods be prepared? Why?  
Is the menu expensive? Why or why not?  
Is this menu easy to prepare? Why or why not?  
What skills are needed?  
How could this menu be varied so it would take less time to prepare?  
Cost less?  
Be easier?
5. What nutrients does the food provide?  
Is the menu balanced so it includes all foods listed in MyPlate?  
How could the menu be varied to provide more nutrients?
6. Does the food fit the menu?  
Does the menu have variety of texture, flavor, color, temperature and nutrients?
7. Does the food look good? Have good flavor? Have good texture? Have good color? Have good shape? Is it safe to eat?
8. Is the table setting attractive? Appropriate to the casualness or formality of the menu? Correctly arranged?



## **Checklist of Items to bring to the Culinary Challenge**

- Menu
- Individual or family size serving of one food item from your menu
- Recipe
- Table (we can also provide, if needed)
- Table setting for one or two people
- Centerpiece or table decorations

Call the Polk County Extension Office at (402) 385-5088 if you have any questions!