



## POLK COUNTY 4-H COMPANY'S COMING CONTEST

**The Menu** Plan a menu for an indoor or outdoor meal. Try to have a variety of color, shape, texture, and temperature. Pay attention to keeping the meal nutritionally balanced. Make sure to note the occasion at the top of the menu card. (ex. Lunch for Dad in the Field or Mother's Day Brunch, etc.) You may write, type, or use a computer for the menu card, but it should be done by the 4-H'er. The correct information, neatly put, is more important than pretty paper or pictures.

**The Food** Prepare one of the foods from the menu and bring it to the contest. There is refrigeration available at the Exhibit Building and a microwave for your use. There is no stove. Please plan your food choice accordingly. Keep in mind that it needs to hold up until the time your table is judged. It may be an individual or family sized serving. You may even create your own recipe!

**The Tablesetting** Bring along a tablesetting for one or two people. This should include a card table, tablecloth, runner or placemats, napkins, dishes, silverware, and a centerpiece. Your tablesetting should be appropriate for the menu you are planning. For example, an outdoor cooking menu may have a tablesetting of paper plates and a fancier meal may use china and formal silverware.

**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 4-H'er individually as the entry is judged. The food, menu, and table setting are all judged equally. Make sure to explain to the judge why you did what you did and ask questions! The judge will give you written comments as well as discuss with you things that you may be able to improve your tablesetting. Ribbon placings will be given out at the end of the event. All Grand and Reserve Champions will have their tablesettings on display at the Polk County Fair in the Exhibit Building (without the food item).

### Questions the Judge May Ask

Tell me about your tablesetting.

Why did you choose this theme?

Where did you get your recipe?

How long would it take to make your menu items?

How do you make your menu items?

In what order do you prepare your foods?

Is this an expensive menu? How could you reduce the cost?

What skills are needed to make your menu?

What nutrients are in your foods?

Is the menu balanced?

Does the menu have a variety of textures, flavors, colors, temperature, and nutrients?

Have you prepared this before?

How could you vary the menu? Can you reduce the calories?

Why did you set the table the way you did?

If you could change the tablesetting or menu, what would you do?

## CREATING YOUR COMPANY'S COMING TABLE!

Food should look and taste good together! Flavor, taste, texture, color, shape and temperature all affect the way food influences us.

These five basic factors for menu planning can make your meal looking as good as it tastes! Use the following menu tips when deciding your menu plan.

**Flavor** is thought of as mild, strong, bitter, sweet, salty, or sour. One distinct flavor in a meal is recommended. Different flavors in a meal are usually appreciated rather than repeating the same flavor.

**Texture** can be soft, chewy, moist, dry, or crisp. A variety of textures in meals makes a great plate! This can add a lot of interest to a meal.

**Color** makes meals look as good as it tastes! Pay attention to colors to make sure they don't clash or blend into each other. You can also emphasize colors with the plates and tables linens to complement the foods that you serve.

**Sizes and Shapes** include foods that are sliced, diced, striped and mashed! Meals that have different sizes and shapes are more appealing than one that is all the same size. Leave some foods whole and serve others in cubes or slices. Try not to have too many mixed dishes in a meal.

**Temperature** can vary from hot to cold or at room temperature. Remember to serve hot foods hot and cold foods well chilled. Some foods do better at room temperature. Try to plan both hot and cold foods in one meal.

Start your menu by design. Use the following as your guide for what to include. Start with the main entrée, and then add in the others.

Main Entrée: \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetable/Fruits: \_\_\_\_\_

Breads: \_\_\_\_\_ Dessert: \_\_\_\_\_

Beverage: \_\_\_\_\_

Look at the meal you planned. How does it meet the five basic factors of menu planning? Is there one distinct flavor and others that enhance this flavor? Is there a variety of textures, colors, sizes, shapes and temperatures?

Flavor: \_\_\_\_\_ Texture: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Size and Shape: \_\_\_\_\_

Temperature: \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMON MENU MISTAKES

Boring meals usually happen because of the following mistakes. Keep these in mind as you plan your meal!

### Flavor

- ✓ All bland flavors
- ✓ Too many strong flavors
- ✓ Repetition of food or flavors
- ✓ No tart or acid flavor
- ✓ Too many sweet or too many sour foods

### Temperature

- ✓ Too many foods of the same temperature
- ✓ Hot foods not hot
- ✓ Cold foods not cold

### Color

- ✓ Too many foods of the same color
- ✓ No contrast or variation
- ✓ Clashing or unpleasant colors

### Size and Shape

- ✓ Too many mixed dishes
- ✓ Too many small pieces the same size
- ✓ Too many similar shapes
- ✓ Lack of variety in sizes

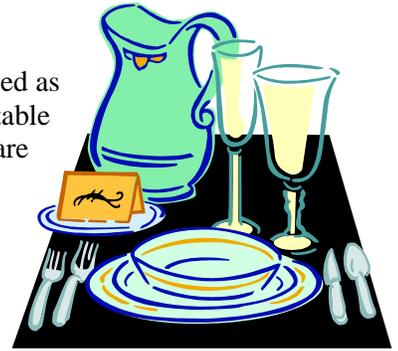
### Texture

- ✓ Too many soft foods
- ✓ Too many chewy foods
- ✓ Too many crunchy or crispy foods
- ✓ Lack of variety in texture

As you look at your menu, think about your main entrée. What additional flavors would complement it? For color, remember that the more fruits and vegetables you have in your menu, the more colorful your plate. Thinking about textures helps you include different kinds of foods according to MyPlate. No one likes all soft and mushy foods or foods that are all crunchy. Add chewy breads, crunchy vegetables and soft and tender pasta. These can also add different sizes and shapes to your plate. What about the temperature? Are they all chilled? Hot and steamy? Think about what it takes to prepare your menu and if this can be done to get the meal out on the table.

## TIPS FOR SETTING A TABLE

- The table should be clean; it can be left bare or a table covering can be used as the background for the food and the items may be placed on top of it. A table covering helps protect the table and muffles the noise of clanking glassware and dishes.
- Placemats or tablecloths can be used for special occasions.
- Dinnerware and flatware should be chosen as appropriate for the occasion and that complement each other. Matching or blended colors or textures in the dishes or contrasting something different makes a tablesetting look attractive.
- Tablesetting items should be appropriate for the meal served. Snacks on paper plates are appropriate while home-cooked dinner should be served on attractive dishes to help show it off.
- The napkins are usually folded into oblongs, and placed next to the forks. The fold of the oblong should be to the left so that it opens like a book.
- The beverage glass is placed about one inch above the tip of the knife.
- If coffee or tea is served, the cup is placed on the saucer and set to the right of the spoon one inch from the edge of the table. Have the handle pointing to the right.
- Salad and dessert bowls may be placed left of the forks and napkin or at the tip of the fork.
- Only the utensils needed are placed on the table.
- Place the main dish in front of the head of the family. If it is hot, it needs a table protector or trivet with it.
- Foods that are used together should be placed together, such as bread and butter or potatoes and gravy.
- Serving spoons should be placed on the table beside the food bowls rather than in them until you begin serving the food.
- The centerpiece should be attractive. Simple ones, such as fresh flowers, a plant, or fruit can be used. If candles are used, they should be of the length, so that if they tilt, they would be above eye level.
- The centerpiece should be low enough so that the people at the table can see over it; it should be colorful and blend with the tablecloth and the dishes; and be fresh and clean looking.
- When a food is commonly prepared in more than one way, avoid confusion by describing the method of cooking, such as **ROAST TURKEY** or **FRENCH FRIED POTATOES**.
- List each food with the exception of butter, cream, sugar or salad dressing, unless it is something special like **HONEY BUTTER** or **POPPYSEED DRESSING**.
- List beverages last.
- Plan the spacing and arrangement of the items on the menu so that the written menu is symmetrical.



## MAKING MEALTIME MANNERS MATTER!

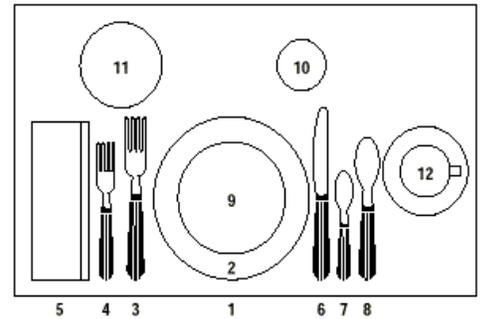
The following guide is a basic set of traditional rules for setting the table. Different cultures follow different rules for table etiquette – ask for clarification, if needed. This traditional example can be used in a formal as well as an informal one. To set the table, the 4-H'er needs a “place setting” for each person. Table setting contests will commonly require at least one table setting on display - check the county for specific details.

A table setting should include the following items:

- Dinnerware (plates, cups, saucers, and bowls)
- Glassware (glasses of all shapes and sizes)
- Flatware (forks, spoons, and knives)
- Napkins
- Centerpiece
- Placemats or tablecloths (optional)

The following rules for setting a table correspond to the numbers seen in the table setting illustration.

1. The flatware, plate, and napkin should be one inch from the edge of the table.
2. The plate is always in the center of the place setting.
3. The dinner fork is placed at the left of the plate.
4. If a salad fork is used, it is placed to the left of the dinner fork.
5. The napkin is placed to the left of the fork, with the fold on the left. It can also go under a fork, or on top of the plate.
6. The knife is placed to the right of the plate with the sharp blade facing in towards the plate.
7. The teaspoon is placed to the right of the knife.
8. If a soup spoon is needed, it is placed to the right of the teaspoon.
9. The soup bowl may be placed to the right of the teaspoon.
10. The drinking glass is placed at the tip of the knife.
11. If a salad plate is is used, place it just above the tip of the fork.
12. The cup or mug is placed to the top right of the spoons.



### Tips for setting a table

- The table should be clean; it can be left bare or a table covering can be used as the background for the food and the items may be placed on top of it. A table covering helps protect the table and muffles the noise of clanking glassware and dishes.
- Placemats or tablecloths can be used for special occasions.
- Dinnerware and flatware should be chosen as appropriate for the occasion and that complement each other. Matching or blended colors or textures in the dishes or contrast something different make a table setting look attractive.
- Table setting items should be appropriate for the meal served. Snacks on paper plates are appropriate while a home-cooked dinner should be served on attractive dishes to help show it off.
- Only the utensils needed are placed on the table.
- The centerpiece should be attractive. Simple ones, such as fresh flowers, a plant, or fruit can be used. If candles are used, they should be of the length so that if they were lit, they would be above eye level.
- The centerpiece should be low enough so that the people at the table can see over it; it should be colorful and blend with the tablecloth and the dishes; and be fresh and clean looking.

## WRITING THE WINNING MENU



An appropriately written menu should follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate. As a general guideline, a meal should have at least three different food groups to help balance out what the body needs every day to get all the nutrients needed. MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image—a place setting for a meal. Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl. There are three key messages with MyPlate:

- **Balancing Calories**
  - Enjoy your food, but eat less
  - Avoid oversized portions
- **Foods to Increase**
  - Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
  - Make at least half your grains whole grains
  - Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- **Foods to Reduce**
  - Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose foods with lower numbers
  - Drink water instead of sugary drinks

### Dairy Group

*Get your calcium-rich foods.* All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of this food group. Most Dairy Group choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) is also part of the Dairy Group. Eat the equivalent of 3 cups of foods from the Dairy Group each day.

### Fruit Group

*Focus on Fruits.* Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed. Eat the equivalent of 1 ½ - 2 cups of fresh, canned or frozen fruits per day.

### Vegetable Group

*Vary your veggies.* Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed. Eat the equivalent of 2 - 3 cups of raw or cooked vegetables per day.

### Grain Group

*Make at least half your grains whole.* Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products. Eat 5 - 6 ½ ounce-equivalents with 3 ounce-equivalents or more of whole-grain products and the remaining grains should come from enriched or whole-grain products.

### Protein Group

*Go lean with protein.* All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group. Eat 6 ounce-equivalents each day. Choices need to be varied among fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds, as well as the lean meat and poultry.

**\*Serving sizes based on a 2,000 calorie/day diet plan. See following chart for more specific age-related recommendations.**

## DAIRY

Daily recommendation		
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	2 cups*
	4-8 years old	2 1/2 cups*
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	3 cups*
	14-18 years old	3 cups*
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	3 cups*
	14-18 years old	3 cups*

## FRUIT

Daily recommendation*		
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	1 cup**
	4-8 years old	1 to 1 1/2 cups**
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	1 1/2 cups**
	14-18 years old	1 1/2 cups**
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	1 1/2 cups**
	14-18 years old	2 cups**

## VEGETABLES

Daily recommendation*		
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	1 cup**
	4-8 years old	1 1/2 cups**
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	2 cups**
	14-18 years old	2 1/2 cups**
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	2 1/2 cups**
	14-18 years old	3 cups**

## GRAINS

		Daily recommendation*	Daily minimum amount of whole grains
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	3 ounce equivalents	1 1/2 ounce equivalents
	4-8 years old	5 ounce equivalents	2 1/2 ounce equivalents
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	6 ounce equivalents	3 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	8 ounce equivalents	4 ounce equivalents

## PROTEIN

Daily recommendation*		
<b>Children</b>	2-3 years old	2 ounce equivalents
	4-8 years old	4 ounce equivalents
<b>Girls</b>	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	5 ounce equivalents
<b>Boys</b>	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents
	14-18 years old	6 1/2 ounce equivalents

\*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

Source: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

## Menu Writing Guidelines

The following guidelines are suggested when writing or planning a menu:

- Descriptive terms should be used that give information about the temperature, texture, color, or other special characteristics of the food or method of preparation.

**Examples:** Chilled Apple Cider, Broiled Sirloin Steak, Cream of Asparagus Soup.

- Menus should be written in symmetrical arrangement on the page, with the foods listed in the order they are served.

**Examples:**

*Broiled Hamburgers*  
*Baked Potato Sour Cream*  
*Broccoli Glazed Carrots*  
*Hot Rolls*  
*Iced Tea*

- Words should be capitalized except articles and prepositions; words such as “or”, “and”, “of”, “with”, etc. should not be capitalized. Example: Cream of Mushroom Soup.

- Foods should be grouped by courses. The item of most importance should be listed first.

**Example:** Broiled Hamburgers.

- Foods served with an accompaniment should have the food listed first.

**Example:**

*Baked Potatoes Sour Cream*  
*OR*  
*Cheddar Cheese Cubes*  
*Rye Chips*

- When the main dish has two or more accompaniments, the main dish should be centered on one line and the accompaniments should be on the same line on either side or written on the line below.

**Example:**

*Rye Crisp Chicken Soup Saltines*  
*OR*  
*Chicken Soup*  
*Rye Crisp Saltines*

- Butter, cream, sugar, or salad dressings are not written on the menu unless they are special in some way.

**Examples:**

*Crusty Rolls*  
*Whipped Butter*  
*OR*  
*Wedge of Thousand Island*  
*Lettuce Dressing*

- The beverage(s) should be listed last.

**Example:** Iced Tea.

- Extra spacing should be allowed between courses. The following is an example of how a three course meal is properly written:

**Examples:**

*French Onion Soup*  
*Whole Wheat Wafers*  
*Celery Sticks Assorted Olives*

*Prime Rib of Roast Beef au Jus*  
*Potato Soufflé*  
*Asparagus with Hollandaise Sauce*  
*Mixed Green Salad*  
*Hot Rolls Whipped Butter*

*Lemon Ice*  
*Coffee Hot Tea*

