



CULINARY  
INSTITUTE OF  
CHILD NUTRITION

# CULINARY QUICK BITES

KNIFE SKILLS: HOW TO SLICE ONIONS



# **CULINARY QUICK BITES**

## **KNIFE SKILLS: HOW TO SLICE ONIONS**

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Key Area: 2 – Operations

**USDA Professional Standards Code**  
Food Production – 2100

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# TRAINING OVERVIEW

The Culinary Quick Bites training series is a tool to help child nutrition professionals develop and refine their culinary skills. Each lesson is designed to last approximately fifteen minutes. Each lesson should be facilitated (led) by the person responsible for overseeing food production at a meal site, service area, or the district level.

Training facilitators should review the training, in its entirety, prior to conducting the training.

This training has been developed to address a variety of learning styles. The training includes an overview of the topic presented by the facilitator, an infographic to reinforce the training topic visually, a video to demonstrate the topic, and an activity to reinforce learning.

Please contact the Institute of Child Nutrition Help Desk at 1-800-321-3054 or [helpdesk@theicn.org](mailto:helpdesk@theicn.org) if you have any questions about how best to facilitate this training.

## KEY AREA

Key Area: 2 – Operations

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

### FOOD PRODUCTION – 2100

Employee will be able to effectively utilize food preparation principles, production records, kitchen equipment, and food crediting to prepare foods from standardized recipes, including those for special diets.

2130 – Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

## FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This training counts for 15 minutes of training credit under USDA Professional Standards learning objective 2130 – Develop culinary skills necessary for school meal preparation.

The activity at the end of the lesson involves slicing an onion. This activity helps reinforce knowledge and skills learned during this lesson. The onion prepared during this lesson may be included in the next day's menu production.

Before the training, prepare for the lesson activity and set up the kitchen workstation as described on page 11.

Deliver the lesson/training to participants:

- Read the lesson overview to the participants.
- Discuss the infographic and how it relates to the training topic.
- View the instruction video with participants.
- Answer any questions participants may have on the lesson, infographic, and video.

Complete the activity as instructed on page 11.

## MATERIALS NEEDED



- Anti-slip mat – 1 per person
- Cutting board – 1 per person
- Chef knife – 1 per person
- Washed onion – at least 1 per person
- Waste pan – as needed
- Food pan – as needed
- Infographic: How to Slice Onions – 1 per person
- Access to a screen to show the training video. Possible options include:
  - Site computer monitor with sound
  - Projector with sound
  - Tablets and smartphones
    - A QR code has been provided for quick access to the video on handheld devices.

# LESSON OVERVIEW

## OBJECTIVE:

At the end of this lesson, participants will be able to demonstrate how to slice onions.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ONIONS

- There are many varieties of onions. The type of onions we will be focusing on today is called bulb onions but are also referred to as common onions.
- The most readily available types of bulb onions are named after their unique characteristics: red, sweet, white, and yellow. These types of onions contain a balance of sweet and astringent flavors.
  - The word astringent, when referring to taste and smell, means the product has bitter and acidic properties.
- When onions are cooked, the astringent flavor mellows and the sweetness begins to shine through. Onions have natural sugars that become more pronounced as they cook.
- Onions have several health benefits as they are packed with nutrients including vitamin C, B vitamins B6 and B9, and the mineral potassium.

## USES

- Onions can be used in a variety of ways: cooked as a base flavor in a soup or stew, raw as a garnish or topping to chili and sandwiches, added to condiments like salsa, guacamole, and chutney, and even pickled with other vegetables in salads and relishes.
- Getting children to try onions may be a little challenging so knowing how to prepare them correctly is important.
- Due to the astringent characteristics of onions, you want to be sure to prepare them, so they don't overpower the dish or the students' taste buds.
- One of the ways to ensure the onion isn't overpowering is to cut it the correct way. Large chunks and pieces of onion can be difficult to chew. By dicing the onion into uniform (similar-sized) pieces, you will have better control of how much onion is in every bite.

## HOW TO DICE AN ONION

- Utilizing the infographic, review the process for slicing onions.
- Review the embedded training video.

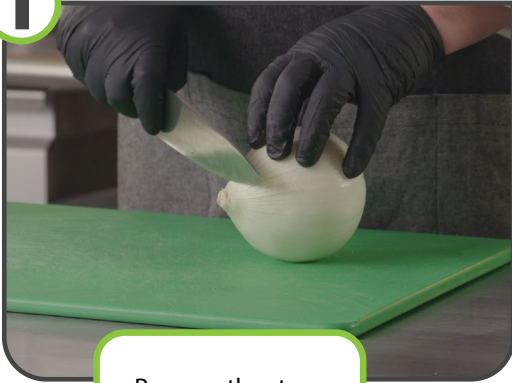
***After we review the infographic and video, there will be an activity to reinforce skills learned.***



## Culinary Quick Bites KNIFE SKILLS

## HOW TO SLICE ONIONS

1



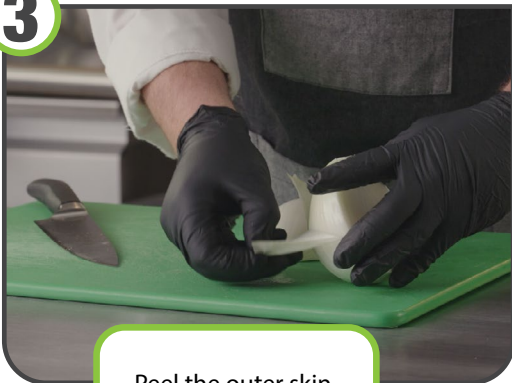
Remove the stem end of the onion.

2



Place onion cut-side down on the cutting board. Cut onion in half from the root end to the stem end.

3



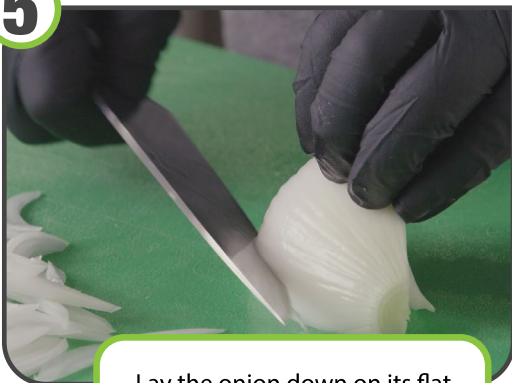
Peel the outer skin from each half.

4



Place onion half cut-side down on the cutting board. Begin slicing at a 45 degree angle across the onion starting on one side. Gradually straighten the knife to 90 degrees as you work toward the center of the onion.

5



Lay the onion down on its flat side and begin working from 45 degrees to 90 degree again.

6



Remove the root end.



# CULINARY QUICK BITES

## Knife Skills: How to Slice Onions

### WATCH THE VIDEO

<https://vimeo.com/695264263/12e49709cc>

### QR CODE

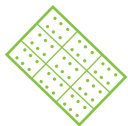
Utilize the QR code embedded to the right to share the video with staff utilizing handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets. Use the photo app on the smart device to scan the code to be directed to the video.



# ACTIVITY

## SETUP

### MATERIALS:



Anti-slip mat  
– 1 per person



Washed onion – at least  
1 per person



Food pan  
– as needed



Cutting board  
– 1 per person



Waste pan  
– as needed



Infographic: How  
to Slice Onions  
– 1 per person



Chef knife  
– 1 per person

**NOTE:** If your site does not have enough materials for all participants to complete the activity simultaneously, divide participants into groups based on your materials. Allow enough time for each participant to complete the activity.

## SETUP INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATOR

- 1** Prior to the training, gather all of the materials needed for the activity. Pre-wash the onions that will be used for the training. Set up a workstation for each participant with an anti-slip mat, cutting board, chef knife, and onion.
- 2** During the activity, remember to monitor and observe staff as they practice their culinary skills.

# ACTIVITY

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 1** Refer the participants to the infographic. Then read the instructions for the activity. Ask the participants if there are any questions before beginning the activity.
- 2** Instruct all participants to wash their hands and put on single-use gloves before starting the activity.
- 3** Each participant will slice one onion.
  - Instruct participants to take their time and practice their cuts carefully.
  - Discard waste.

## POST ACTIVITY

- After completing the hands-on activity, recap the lesson with the participants. Offer an opportunity for participants to share their learning experience during the training and highlight any tips or takeaways they want to share with the group.
- If time allows, facilitate a discussion with the participants. Suggested discussion topics include:
  - Ask participants to discuss current or possible menu items that use sliced onions.
- Ask if the participants feel more comfortable slicing onions or want more time to develop the skill further if time allows.
- Plan the next training session based on the needs of your staff.



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