



CULINARY  
INSTITUTE OF  
CHILD NUTRITION

# CULINARY QUICK BITES

BASIC FOOD PREP SKILLS: HOW TO BUILD  
A GRAB-AND-GO SALAD



# CULINARY QUICK BITES

## BASIC FOOD PREP SKILLS: HOW TO BUILD A GRAB-AND-GO SALAD

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The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences  
[www.theicn.org](http://www.theicn.org)

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 at 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 this lesson involves making salads. You can use one of your recipes or find a Child Nutrition Recipe Box recipe. The activity helps reinforce knowledge and skills learned during this lesson. Salads 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 13.

## MATERIALS NEEDED



- Anti-slip mat – 1 per person
- Cutting board – 1 per person
- Chef knife – 1 per person
- Waste pan – as needed
- Food pan – as needed
- Containers for salads – as needed
- Salad recipe of your choice (Site recipe or CNRB recipe) – 1 per person
  - Note: For this lesson, you will need to choose a recipe from the site’s recipe catalog or choose a recipe from the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](https://theicn.org/cnr/) (<https://theicn.org/cnr/>).
- Food items for a salad based on the site’s selected recipe (possible items may include):
  - Lettuce
  - Cucumber
  - Cabbage
  - Tomatoes
  - Spinach
  - Chicken Breast
  - Scallion
  - Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- Infographic: How to Build a Grab-and-Go Salad – 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 the lesson, participants will be able to build a grab-and-go salad.

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO BUILD A GRAB-AND-GO SALAD

- Salads are a popular lunchtime menu item and are a great way to promote vegetable consumption encompassing all of the vegetable subgroups.
- Making salads visually appealing is a key element in promoting and marketing them to students.
- With properly prepared vegetables, you can easily create a visually appealing and delicious salad or salad bar.
- Providing the “colors of the rainbow” in the salad will increase their nutritional content. It is also a unique opportunity for students to try new vegetables.
- Using a variety of colors and textures creates an attractive salad. Grab-and-go salads are an excellent and convenient way for students to select a healthy choice for lunch.
- To create a visually appealing salad, keep all these factors in mind:
  - Contrasting and variety of colors (“Colors of the rainbow”)
  - Contrasting shapes and textures
  - Visual counterpoints stimulate the brain (“we eat with our eyes first”)
  - Height of the food
  - Contrasting cuts (i.e., carrots – shredded, coins, baby)
- Remind participants that it is important to follow the recipe and not to add extra amounts of ingredients which could change the nutritional content and cost.

**NOTE:** When available, substitute food products and menu items with lower-sodium versions. Work with your menu planner to determine the products that best fit your recipe. It is important to follow the recipe and not add additional or extra amounts of ingredients which could change the nutritional content and cost.

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

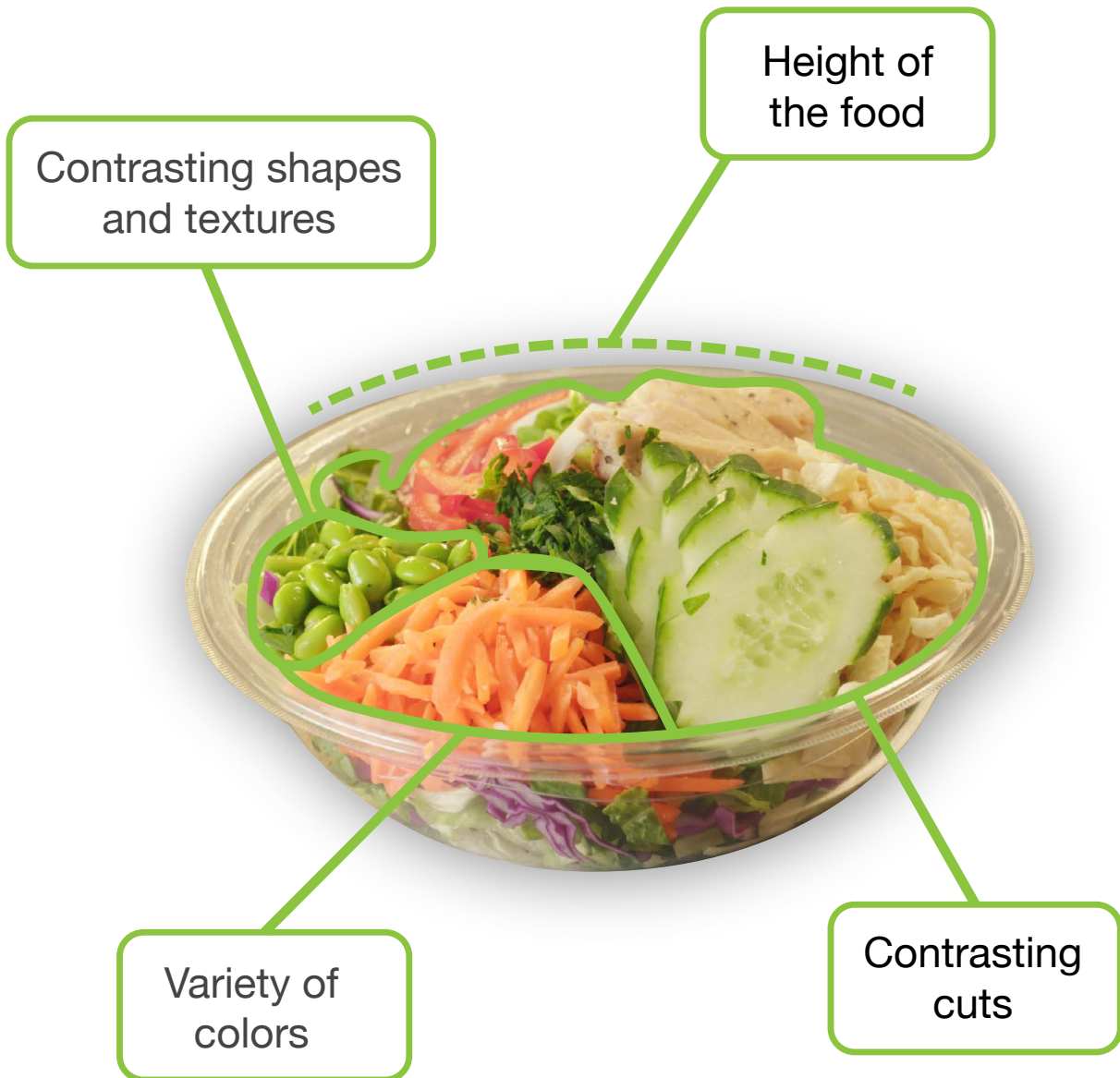


## Culinary Quick Bites

BASIC FOOD PREPARATION SKILLS

## HOW TO BUILD A GRAB-AND-GO SALAD

To create an appealing salad, keep all of these factors in mind, because visual counterpoints stimulate the brain.





# CULINARY QUICK BITES

## How To Build A Boxed Grab And Go Salad

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

<https://vimeo.com/854355645/96191b5878>

### QR CODE

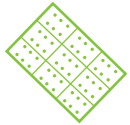
Utilize the QR code embedded to the right to share the video with staff utilizing handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets. Use the photo app on the smart device to scan the code to be directed to the video.



# ACTIVITY

## SETUP

### MATERIALS:



Anti-slip mat  
– 1 per person



Containers for salads  
– as needed



Infographic: How to  
Build a Grab-and-Go  
Salad  
– 1 per person



Cutting board  
– 1 per person



Salad recipe of your  
choice (Site recipe  
or CNRB recipe)  
– 1 per person



Chef knife  
– 1 per person



Food items for salad based  
on the site's selected recipe  
(possible items may include):  
Lettuce, Cabbage, Spinach,  
Scallion, Cucumber,  
Tomatoes, Green Pea,  
Garbanzo Beans, Chicken  
Breast, Shredded Cheddar  
Cheese



Waste pan  
– as needed



Food pan  
– as needed



**NOTE:** If your site does not have enough materials for all participants to complete the activity simultaneously, divide participants into groups based on the materials available. Participants will be working together to build the grab-and-go salads. Determine the number of salads to be made based on the number of servings needed for your service.

## SETUP INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATOR

- 1** Prior to the training, gather all the materials needed for the activity. Pre-wash the produce that will be used for the training. Set up a workstation for each participant with the required utensils and food items.
- 2** Use mise en place (preparing food items for assembly) to set up the stations:
  - All vegetables and topping ingredients should be prepared.
  - Meat, poultry, or fish should be cooked, chilled, and sliced or chopped.
  - Vegetables should be washed, dried, and sliced.
- 3** During the activity, remember to monitor and observe staff as they practice their culinary skills.

# ACTIVITY

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Each participant will build an appealing boxed salad per recipe determined by the facilitator.

- 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** Instruct participants to take their time and practice how to put together visually appealing grab-and-go salads.
- 4** Pack the salad in the designated grab-and-go container. Pay close attention to following the recipe so that the ingredients are layered or placed in an attractive way.
  - Use the Right Container: Start with a clear, sturdy, and appropriately sized container that showcases the salad's freshness and vibrant colors.
  - Layer Ingredients: Following the recipe, layer the ingredients systematically. Start with the heaviest or wettest items at the bottom and work your way up. For instance:
    - Start with a base layer of lettuce or greens.
    - Add proteins, such as grilled chicken, tofu, or beans.
    - Layer vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers, and bell peppers.
    - Sprinkle smaller toppings, like croutons, nuts, or seeds.
    - Finish with a few pieces of garnish, such as fresh herbs.

## 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 salad recipes that could benefit from the information covered in the lesson.
  - Ask participants what types of salads they think their students would enjoy.
  - Ask participants their thoughts of adding pictures/images to salad recipes.
- Ask if the participants feel more comfortable with grab-and-go salads 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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