# Virginia Department of Education logo

# Office of School Nutrition Programs

# Standardized Recipe Style Guide

A standardized recipe is a recipe that has been tested repeatedly and adapted to produce the same results and yield each time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

Refer to the [Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) Basics at a Glance](https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/) for specific measurements, symbols, abbreviations, and equivalents.

## Definitions and References

* **As Purchased (AP)** – The total amount of food purchased prior to preparation. A significant disparity can exist between the amount of food purchased (i.e. as purchased) and the final prepared product (i.e. edible portion (EP)). Greater quantities of ingredients, especially meats, fruits, and vegetables, must sometimes be purchased to make up for losses incurred during preparation.
* **Virginia Harvest of the Month** **(VA HOM)** – A program promoting seasonal eating, increased fruit and vegetable consumption, and support of local economies. Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education’s Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP), VA HOM provides ready-to-use materials for classrooms, cafeterias, nonprofit organizations, farmers’ markets, and early care centers for educating children about the joys of eating seasonal, local foods.
* **Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)** – A systemized approach to preventing foodborne illness during the production and preparation of food. The seven principals of HACCP include: 1) assess the hazards, 2) identify the CCPs, 3) establish limits at each CCP, 4) monitor CCPs, 5) take corrective action, 6) verification, and 7) documentation. For more information on HACCP principles in schools, review the [USDA Food and Nutrition Service Guidance for School Food Authorities: Developing a School food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP Principles.](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf)
* **Critical Control Points (CCPs)** – A point in the HACCP process that must be controlled to ensure food safety.
* **Process Approach to HACCP** – The [Process Approach to HACCP](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf) is a method of classifying food preparation into three broad categories. The categories are based on the number of times a menu item makes a complete trip through the temperature danger zone (i.e. 41ºF-135ºF) and depend on the food preparation method used at each site.
  + **Process #1** **(No Cook)** – The menu item does not go completely through the danger zone in either direction.
  + **Process #2** **(Same Day Service)** – The menu item takes one complete trip through the danger zone (going up during cooking) and is served the same day.
  + **Process #3** **(Complex Food Preparation)** – The menu item goes through both heating and cooling, taking two or more complete trips through the danger zone.
* [**USDA Meal Pattern for School Lunch**](https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-meal-pattern-chart)**.**
* [**USDA Meal Pattern for School Breakfast**](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-meal-pattern-chart)
* **Vegetable Components and Subgroups –** According to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations at [7CFR210.10](https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=51a776c9c58b26b599370ef36057b736&mc=true&node=se7.4.210_110&rgn=div8), schools must offer vegetables daily as part of the lunch menu. All vegetables are credited based on their volume as served, except that one cup of leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetables and tomato paste and puree are credited based on calculated volume of the whole food equivalency.Pasteurized, full-strength vegetable juice may be used to meet no more than one-half of the vegetables component. Cooked dry beans or peas (legumes) may be counted as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate component but not as both in the same meal. Vegetable offerings at lunch over the course of the week must include the following vegetable subgroups: dark green vegetables, red-orange vegetables, beans and peas, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables.
  + **Dark Green Vegetables** – Bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mesclun, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, and watercress.
* **Red-Orange Vegetables** – acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, tomatoes, tomato juice, and sweet potatoes.
* **Beans and Peas (Legumes)** – black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas, and white beans.
* **Starchy Vegetables** – black-eyed peas (not dry), corn, cassava, green bananas, green peas, green lima beans, plantains, taro, water chestnuts, and white potatoes.
* **Other Vegetables** – all other fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables, cooked or raw, such as artichokes, asparagus, avocado, bean sprouts, beets, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, parsnips, turnips, wax beans, and zucchini.

## Recipe Information

1. **Recipe Number:** Recipe numbers are important for organization and recordkeeping. Recipe numbers should be in sequential order based on the date they are implemented or created**.**

**Example:** *Recipe 1, Recipe 2, Recipe 3, etc.*

1. **Category:** The recipe category describes the food group(s) within a recipe. If using the recipe for one or two grade levels exclusively, include that information in parentheses after the category.

**Examples:**

* *Breakfast Entrée*
* *Lunch Entrée (HS)*
* *Supper Entrée (MS/HS)*
* *Snack (ES)*
* *Vegetable Side*
* *Fruit Side*

1. **Recipe Title:** Recipes should be named according to the main ingredients they contain, the cooking process used, and/or by their commonly known name. When possible, name recipes according to the ingredient present in the largest quantity.

**Examples:**

* *Fiesta Chicken Burrito*
* *Beef Broccoli Stir Fry*

1. **Yield:** The recipe yield is the number of servings a recipe produces. The yield should be listed directly under the recipe title and should include container/size information as applicable.

**Examples:**

* *50 salads*
* *2 gallons + 2 quarts for 2 – 12”x20”x24” steam table pans*

1. **Serving Size:** The serving size is the weight, volume, cut, or finished product for each recipe portion served.

**Examples:**

* *5-ounce salad*
* *½ cup (No. 8 scoop)*
* *2 tacos*

## Ingredients

1. List ingredients in the same order that they appear in the recipe directions. For example, the first ingredient in the Ingredients List should be the first ingredient mentioned in the first step of the recipe directions.

**Example:**

*Ingredients:*

*Carrots, fresh diced*

*Tomatoes, fresh diced*

*Directions: Wash carrots in running cold water.*

1. Name the ingredients by common name followed by a comma and specifications including brand and state of preparation.

**Example:** *1 medium (approx. 2 ¾”) apple, Granny Smith, diced into ½” cubes*

1. Capitalize the ingredient name in the Ingredients List.

**Examples:**

* *Ground Beef*
* *Bok Choy*

1. Include the word “fresh” after the names of fresh produce ingredients.

**Example:** *Orange, Mandarin, fresh*

1. Include the word “dried” after the names of dried produce, meats, legumes, or other ingredients.

**Example:** *Cranberries, dried*

1. Include the word “raw” or “pre-cooked” to describe meat, poultry, fish, and eggs.

**Example:** *Chicken breasts, raw, skinless, boned, frozen*

1. Include the word “dry” for uncooked pasta, grains, and legumes.

**Examples:**

* *Spaghetti, whole grain, dry*
* *Rice, brown, long-grain, dry*

1. Include the measurement of the as purchased (AP) ingredient.

**Example:** *Tortilla, whole grain, 10”*

1. Include the AP weight of each individual item.

**Example:** *Tortilla, whole grain, 10”, 2 oz. each*

1. Include a description of how the ingredient is packaged and/or stored.

**Examples:**

* *Chicken, frozen, pre-cooked, diced ½”*
* *Cheese, cheddar, reduced-fat, shredded*
* *Spinach, fresh, leaves only, pre-packaged, triple-washed*

1. Do not enter brand names in the ingredients list. Use two asterisks (\*\*) to identify that a specific brand was used. In the recipe *Notes* section, include the brand used and that the meal pattern contribution and nutrient analysis were based on the brand identified.

**Example:**

* + *Ingredient: \*\*Bun, hamburger, whole grain, 8 count, 1.5 oz. each*
  + *Measure: 8 each*
  + *Notes: \*\*Van de Kamps Hamburger Bun*

1. Include product descriptions as they appear in the USDA Food Buying Guide (FBG) or the NSLP USDA Foods Product Information Sheets, if applicable.

**Examples:**

* *Ingredients: Chicken Parts, fresh or frozen, raw, back pieces, with skin, (about 6 oz. each)*

***Note:*** *raw was added to this description.*

* *Ingredients:* *Eggs, pasteurized, whole, frozen, 5 lbs.*

1. Include an asterisk (\*) with USDA Foods followed by the description included in the USDA Foods List with the AP weight.

**Example:**

*Ingredients: \*Rice, brown, long-grain, parboiled, dry*

*Weight: 25 lbs. AP*

1. Include the word “additional” in parentheses after an ingredient that is optional.

**Example:** *Lemons (additional garnish)*

## Weight

1. Include weight in pounds and ounces using the abbreviations “lb(s).” for pound(s) and “oz.” for ounce(s) for solid ingredients in quantities greater than two ounces.
2. Do not include liquid ingredients in the Weight column.
3. Use whole numbers or fractions and insert a plus (+) symbol between units if using more than one unit.

**Example:** *5 lbs. + 2 oz.*

1. Decimals should only be used for weights of AP ingredients.
2. Include the largest unit of weight followed by the smaller unit.

**Example:** *1 lb. + 6 oz.* instead of *22 oz.*

1. Include AP weights for fresh produce, fresh herbs, meats, poultry, fish, and other items that may decrease in size during preparation. Include “AP” after the weight.

**Example:**

*Ingredient: Onion, fresh, yellow*

*Weight: 1 lb. + 4 oz. AP*

*Directions: Peel and chop inion into 1” cubes to measure 3 cups chopped.*

1. Include the common purchasing unit of the ingredient in parentheses with the weight, if applicable.

**Example:**

*Ingredient:* *Cilantro, fresh, bunches*

*Weight: 4 oz. (1 bunch)*

## Measure

1. Include measurements in gallons (gal.), quarts (qt.), cups (c.), tablespoon (Tbsp.), teaspoon (tsp.) or inches (”). Do not use one pint in place of two cups.
2. Include the largest unit of measurement and use a plus (+) symbol between units if referencing more than one unit.

**Examples:**

* *3 gal. + 2 c.* instead of *50 c.*
* *¼ c.* instead of *4 Tbsp.*
* *1 gal. +1 qt. + 2 c.* instead of *22 c.*

1. Include the common purchasing unit or portion in parentheses following the measurement for clarification.

**Example:** *1 qt. + ½ c. (½ No. 10 can)*

1. Include measurements for ingredients in the recipe directions.

***Note:*** *If shrinkage might occur, do not enter the measurement in the Measure column, but describe the measurement of the prepared item in the recipe directions. If there is shrinkage due to preparation of the AP ingredient, list the weight or measure in the directions after the procedure for preparing the ingredient. The AP amount should be listed in the Weight column.*

**Example:**

*Ingredients: Onion, fresh, yellow*

*Weight: 1 lb. + 4 oz. AP*

*Directions: 1. Peel and chop onion into 1” pieces to measure approximately 3 cups chopped onion.*

## Directions

1. Enter the directions in the same order of the use of the ingredients. The first ingredient listed should be the first ingredient in the first step of the directions.
2. Number your steps in the directions beginning with the number one (1).
3. Begin each step with a verb or action.

**Example:** *Peel and chop carrots into 1” cubes.*

1. Words such as “the” and “a” are not necessary in recipe directions.
2. Include terms that accurately describe each technique.

**Examples:** *Julienne, blanch, braise, mince, dice, etc.*

1. If not commonly known, include a description of the technique in the recipe *Notes* section.

**Example:** *Julienne means to cut food lengthwise into very thin, stick-like strips.*

1. All ingredients should be named in the steps of the directions. Do not combine similar ingredients.

**Correct Example:**

*Ingredients:*

* *Cumin*
* *Chili Powder*
* *Paprika*

*Directions: Combine cumin, chili powder, and paprika.*

**Incorrect Example:**

*Directions: Combine spices.*

1. Review each step for clarity and simplicity. Be sure to include actions like wash, drain, peel, thaw, and chop. Do not assume the user will complete these tasks without direction.
2. Include the description “2 days in advance” in the recipe *Notes* section if 48 hours are required to thaw an ingredient or product.
3. Identify the Critical Control Points (CCPs) in the recipe directions. Use the words “greater than” or “less than” rather than the greater than (>) or less than (<) symbols. Be sure to note the CCPs for storing, preparing, holding, serving, heating, reheating, and cooling.

**Examples:**

* *Directions: CCP: Thaw in refrigerator at 41˚F or below for 48 hours.*
* *Directions: CCP: Heat to 165˚F or higher for at least 15 seconds.*
* *Directions: CCP: Hold for hot service at 135˚F or higher.*

1. Include thawing as the first step if the recipe calls for thawing a frozen product. Be sure to describe the refrigeration thawing process.

**Example:**

*Directions: CCP: Thaw in the refrigerator at 41˚F or below for 48 hours.*

1. Include the corresponding scoop, ladle, spoodle, or other portioning utensil with the measurement in parentheses in the directions. Also include the size or capacity of serving containers, preparation containers, pan, pots, and skillets in their dimensions, volume, or weights.

**Example:** *Scoop ½ cup (No. 8 scoop) cornmeal mixture onto two 18”x26”x1” baking sheet pans.*

1. Include baking times for both conventional and convection ovens if the recipe indicates that either type of oven may be used. List conventional oven information first.

**Example:**

*Conventional Oven: 400˚F for 10 minutes*

*Convection Oven: 375˚F for 7 minutes*

1. For separate directions related to a specific process in the recipe, state “To prepare” followed by the name of the process and underline the statement.

**Example:** *To prepare marinade:*

1. The second to last step of the directions should start with “Portion” and include the portion size of the final product. This size should match the portion size at the top of the recipe. If there are several portions included in each recipe serving be sure to indicate the number of portions per serving.

**Examples:**

* *Portion ¼ cup (No. 16 scoop) cooked brown rice for each serving.*
* *Portion ½ cup (No. 8 scoop) prepared vegetable stir-fry for each serving.*
* *Portion ½ cup (No. 8 scoop) prepared casserole for each serving*

1. The last step of the directions should start with “Serve” and should indicate each serving size. This size should match the serving size at the top of the recipe.

**Example:** *Serve 2 tacos per serving.*

## Recipe Information

* **Preparation Time** – Enter the amount of time in hours and/or minutes that it takes to prepare and assemble the recipe for both 50 servings and 100 servings.
* **Cook Time** – Enter the amount of time in hours and/or minutes that it takes to cook, bake, grill, etc. the recipe for both 50 servings and 100 servings.
* **HACCP Process Approach** – A method of classifying food preparation into three broad categories. The categories are based on the number of times a menu item makes a complete trip through the temperature danger zone.
* **Contribution to Meal Pattern** – Schools must offer the food components and quantities required meeting their respective meal program requirements. The contribution to meal patterns should be written in the measurements used to credit food components in the meal patterns. For example, the USDA lunch and breakfast meal pattern established in [7CFR210.10](https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=143a70190445a3054aeee876981115a9&mc=true&node=se7.4.210_110&rgn=div8) and [7CFR220.8](https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=d34a18885d029c19f4ee42ef0ff7f715&mc=true&node=se7.4.220_18&rgn=div8), respectively, require ounce equivalents for grains, meats, and meat alternates. Cup measurements should be used for fruits, vegetables, and milk.

**Examples:**

* + *Contribution to meal pattern – 2 oz. eq. Grains and 1.5 oz. eq. Meat/Meat Alternate*
  + *Contribution to meal pattern – 1.5 oz. eq. Grains and 1 cup Fruit*
* **Contribution to Vegetable Subgroups** – In addition to food components, USDA requires minimum amounts of vegetable subgroups. The subgroups include: dark green, red/orange, beans and peas, starchy, and other. The subgroups should be described in ¼ cup, ½ cup, or one cup increments.

**Example:** *Contributions to vegetable subgroups – 1 ½ cups dark green and ¼ cup starchy*

* **VA HOM Vegetables and Fruits** – Include the vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s) used in the recipe and the month with which they correspond, if applicable.

**Example**: *Virginia Harvest of the Month Vegetable – January Sweet Potatoes*

* **Considerations for Seasonality** – Produce seasonality is key to achieving flavorful results. Include considerations for seasonality with as many seasonal options as possible.

**Example:** *Considerations for Seasonality – May include chopped strawberries in place of chopped apples in this recipe, when in season.*

* **Recipe Source** – If the recipe or a version of the recipe was developed by another individual or entity, a crediting statement should be included at the end of the recipe. Include a period (.) at the end of the crediting statement.

**Examples:**

* + *Source – Recipe adapted from John Smith’s “Book of Recipes,” Recipe Publisher, 2007.*
  + *Source: USDA Standardized Recipes Project.*
* **Additional Serving Suggestions** – Enter additional suggestions that pertain to the final product. These items are not included in the nutrient or meal pattern analysis of the recipe. If the recipe is enhanced by the additional serving suggestions, include as part of the recipe and in nutrient and meal component analysis.

**Example:**

*Additional Serving Suggestions – Serve with brown rice or whole grain spaghetti.*

* **Notes** – When working with USDA Foods, include the note, “One asterisk (\*) indicates USDA Foods.” This section may also be used for notes related to preparation needs.

**Example:** *Marinade may be prepared up to two days in advance.*

* **Allergens** – List the allergens that students and staff should be aware of when consuming the recipe/product. Consider the top eight allergens first. The [top eight food allergens](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-allergensgluten-free-guidance-documents-regulatory-information/food-allergen-labeling-and-consumer-protection-act-2004-questions-and-answers) are designated by the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004. Other common allergens may also be listed here.

**Example:** *Allergens – Eggs, Milk.*

* **Nutrition Information** –Similar to a Nutrition Facts Label, the nutrition information section includes the macronutrient and micronutrient content of the recipe. Nutrition information is not necessary for preparing a recipe, but is useful for meal planning. If available, recipes should include the number of calories (kcal), grams (g) of saturated fat, and milligrams (mg) of sodium per serving.

**Example:**

*Nutrition Information – Calories (kcal) 250, Total Fat (g) 7, Saturated Fat (g) 2.43, Dietary Fiber (g) 7, Protein (g) 7, Sodium (mg) 430, Calcium (mg) 113, Iron (mg) 6.4*

Last revised 2/20/2020.