



Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers



INSTITUTE OF
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Cycle Menus for Child Care: Preschoolers

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Lutina Cochran

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Aleshia Hall-Campbell, PhD, MPH

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Institute of Child Nutrition

The University of Mississippi

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Cycle Menus

Using cycle menus in child care is a great way to save time during the menu planning process. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a period, such as 4 or 6 weeks. The menu is different each day during the cycle. After the whole menu is served, the cycle is complete. The menus are then repeated in the same order.

This resource features cycle menus for preschoolers ages 3–5 years, but it can easily be adapted. Still, it can be easily adapted for older and younger age groups.

There are four cycle menus. Each cycle features a four-week menu with a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and meats and meat alternates. Each menu is designed for easy customization to meet overall needs regardless of location or the availability of certain food items.

Each menu also features a variety of USDA standardized recipes for child care centers that can be found in the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#). These recipes are also linked on the Recipe pages following each Cycle Menu. The recipes include ingredients, directions, and crediting information for meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements. Although these recipes are great for meeting the CACFP requirements, operators are encouraged to incorporate any standardized recipes currently used to prepare foods on the menu.

In addition to the menus, there are several supplemental resources. Here are a few of the resources featured to help you customize your cycle menu:

- CACFP Meal Pattern Charts
- Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables
- Fruits and Vegetables: Ways to Prepare and Season
- Introducing Children to New Tastes and Textures
- Flavor Shakers
- Cooking with Herbs and Spices
- Standard Blends of Herbs and Spices
- Best Practices Food Safety Tips

Spring Cycle Menus

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Spiced Oatmeal ² Baked Apples Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Wheat Toast with Nut Butter Tropical Fruit Salad Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Scrambled Eggs ² Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat English Muffin with Turkey Sausage Blueberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	French Toast Squares ² Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ⁴				
Quick Quesadilla ² with Mozzarella Cheese and Black Beans in a Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla Celery Sticks Nectarine Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Salisbury Steak ² Whole Grain-Rich Dinner Roll ² Mashed Potatoes* Cantaloupe Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Pizza Cup with Cheese* with Whole Grain-Rich Dough Garden Salad Strawberry Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Roasted Chicken Breast Cornbread ² Spinach Salad Honeydew Melon Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Broiled Beef Patty Whole Wheat Bun Potato Wedges Diced Mango Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Mashed Avocados with a Splash of Lime Juice Thin Wheat Crackers	Whole Wheat Bagel with Nut Butter Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Bread Sticks with Marinara Sauce Tangerine Segments	Cauliflower Florets with Ranch Dip Apricot Halves	Pita Bread Pimento Cheese

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.

² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Spring Cycle Menus

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Breakfast Pizza with Hash Brown Crust ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Grain-Rich Flakes Cereal Blueberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spinach Egg Bake ² Pineapple Tidbits Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Pancakes ² Strawberry Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Muffin ² Diced Tropical Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Roasted Turkey Slices Quinoa Green Beans Corn on the Cob Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Sloppy Joe ² with Ground Beef on a Whole Wheat Bun Okra Honeydew Melon Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Tuna with Lettuce on Whole Wheat Flatbread Broccoli Mandarin Oranges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey Roll-Up Wrap in a Soft Corn Tortilla Garden Salad Carrot Wedges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Oven-Fried Chicken ² Brown Rice Green Peas Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
String Mozzarella Cheese Mini Pretzels	Cinnamon Raisin Mini Bagel Unsweetened Applesauce	Cheddar Cheese Strips Grape Tomatoes	Vanilla Yogurt Apricot Halves	Round Crackers with Nut Butter Kiwi Slices

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² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.
³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.
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⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Spring Cycle Menus

Week 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Whole Wheat Pancakes ² Mixed Berries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Wheat English Muffin Unsweetened Applesauce Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Grain-Rich Flakes Cereal Strawberry Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Burrito with Salsa ² Bell Pepper Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash ² Mandarin Oranges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Stir-Fry ² Pork Brown Rice Spinach Diced Peaches Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Chicken Fajitas ² with Green Peppers and Onions in a Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla Refried Beans Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Black Bean Patty on a Whole Wheat Bun Celery Sticks Sweet Plantains ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spaghetti and Meat Sauce ² (with Carrots and Bell Peppers) and Whole Grain-Rich Spaghetti Noodles Pineapple Tidbits Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey Tacos ² with Shredded Lettuce and Tomatoes in Whole Grain-Rich Yellow Corn Taco Shells Apricot Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Granola ² Vanilla Yogurt	Thin Wheat Crackers Kiwi Slices	Snap Peas Black Bean Hummus ²	Whole Wheat Toast with Nut Butter Banana Slices	String Mozzarella Cheese Broccoli Florets

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.

² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Spring Cycle Menus

Week 4

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Spiced Oatmeal ² Baked Cranberries with Cinnamon Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Scrambled Eggs ² Diced Bell Peppers Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	French Toast Sticks Strawberry Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Muffin ² Apricot Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Pancakes ² Baked Apple Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3,4}				
Rainbow Rice ² with Diced Chicken Cabbage Pineapple Tidbits Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Macaroni and Cheese ² with Whole Grain-Rich Elbow Pasta Peas Tropical Fruit Salad Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Crumbled Ground Turkey Wild Rice Broccoli Florets Plum Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Baked Chicken Quinoa Carrots Grape Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Broiled Beef Patty on a Whole Wheat Bun Garden Salad Blueberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Vanilla Yogurt Kiwi Bites	Whole Wheat Mini Bagel Nut Butter Banana Slices	Cottage Cheese Peach Halves	Tuna Salad Saltine Crackers	Nachos with Diced Chicken ² Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla Chips

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² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.
³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.
⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.
⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Spring Cycle Recipes

Black Bean Hummus

[View Recipe](#)

Breakfast Burrito with Salsa

[View Recipe](#)

Breakfast Muffin

[View Recipe](#)

Breakfast Pizza

[View Recipe](#)

Broccoli Bites

[View Recipe](#)

Chicken Fajitas

[View Recipe](#)

Cornbread

[View Recipe](#)

Granola

[View Recipe](#)

Macaroni and Cheese

[View Recipe](#)

Maple Baked French Toast Squares

[View Recipe](#)

Nachos with Diced Chicken

[View Recipe](#)

Oven-Fried Chicken

[View Recipe](#)

Pancakes

[View Recipe](#)

Pizza Cup with Cheese

[View Recipe](#)

Pork Stir-Fry

[View Recipe](#)

Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes

[View Recipe](#)

Quick Quesadilla

[View Recipe](#)

Rainbow Rice

[View Recipe](#)

Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash

[View Recipe](#)

Salisbury Steak

[View Recipe](#)

Scrambled Eggs

[View Recipe](#)

Sloppy Joe

[View Recipe](#)

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

[View Recipe](#)

Spiced Oatmeal

[View Recipe](#)

Spinach Egg Bake

[View Recipe](#)

Sweet Plantains

[View Recipe](#)

Turkey Taco

[View Recipe](#)

Whole-Grain Dinner Roll

[View Recipe](#)

Summer Cycle Menus

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Whole Wheat Toast with Turkey Sausage Apricot Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Wheat Toast with Cinnamon Unsweetened Applesauce Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Scrambled Eggs ² Hash Browns Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Waffles Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spiced Oatmeal ² Blueberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3,4}				
Spaghetti and Meat Sauce ² (with Carrots and Bell Peppers) and Whole Grain-Rich Spaghetti Noodles Watermelon Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Sweet and Sour Pork ² Brown Rice Cabbage Honeydew Melon Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey Meatloaf ² on a Whole Grain-Rich Dinner Roll ² Corn on the Cob Green Beans Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Salisbury Steak ² Whole Wheat Bread Sticks Mashed Potatoes ² Carrots Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Chicken Tacos ² with Shredded Lettuce and Tomatoes in Whole Grain Yellow Corn Taco Shells Plum Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Zucchini Sticks with Red Sauce ² Whole Wheat Bread Sticks	String Mozzarella Cheese Mini Pretzels	Cottage Cheese Peach Slices	Whole Wheat Mini Bagel Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Strawberry Slices Whole Grain-Rich Cereal Rounds

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² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Summer Cycle Menus

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Spiced Oatmeal ²	French Toast Sticks	Breakfast Burrito with Salsa ²	Scrambled Eggs ²	Baking Powder Biscuits ²
Strawberry Slices	Unsweetened Applesauce	Potatoes Wedges	Sweet Bell Pepper Wedges	Honeydew Melon Slices
Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Diced Ham	Pizza Cup with Cheese ² with Whole Grain-Rich	Chicken Alfredo with a Twist ²	Beef Stir-Fry ² with Broccoli and Carrots	Turkey and Cheese on Whole Grain-Rich Hoagie
Whole Grain-Rich Wild Rice	Pizza Dough	Whole Grain-Rich Rotini Pasta	Brown Rice	Green Beans
Asparagus	Garden Salad	Oven Roasted Okra	Plum Halves	Cantaloupe Slices
Peach Slices	Corn on the Cob	Apricot Halves	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk		
Snack ⁵				
Sliced Cucumbers and Tomatoes	Popped Popcorn	Granola ²	Cottage Cheese	Vanilla Yogurt
Low-Fat Cheese Sticks	Celery Sticks with Dip	Banana Slices	Peach Halves	Blueberries

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² An asterisk (*) symbol indicates a standardized recipe is available for the food item.
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⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Summer Cycle Menus

Week 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Baking Powder Biscuits ² Unsweetened Applesauce Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Yogurt with Granola ² Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Pancakes ² Strawberry Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spinach Egg Bake ² Raspberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Toast and Nut Butter Honeydew Melon Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Barbecued Turkey ² on a Whole Wheat Roll Garden Salad Blueberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Red Beans Brown Rice Summer Squash Plum Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Hot Ham and Cheese on Whole Grain-Rich Dinner Roll ² Carrots Wedges Cantaloupe Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Pizza Burger with Ground Turkey ² Whole Wheat Bun Lima Beans Peach Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Baked Chicken Quinoa Green Beans Sweet Plantains ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Watermelon on a Stick Diced Mozzarella Cheese	Vanilla Yogurt Granola ²	Cheddar Cheese Slices Tomato Wedges	Nachos with Diced Chicken ² Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla Chips	Round Crackers with Fruit Salsa ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk

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⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Summer Cycle Menus

Week 4

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Whole Wheat Waffle Strawberry Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Breakfast Muffin ² Cantaloupe Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Grain-Rich Puffed Cereal Blueberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Grilled Cheese on a Whole Wheat Bagel Celery Sticks Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spiced Oatmeal ² Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Black Bean Patty Whole Wheat Bun Garden Salad Corn on the Cob Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Fish Tacos with Shredded Lettuce and Tomatoes Whole Grain-Rich Yellow Corn Taco Shells Apple Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Sweet and Sour Pork ² Brown Rice Diced Summer Squash Peach Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey and Beef Macaroni ² Whole Grain-Rich Elbow Pasta Green Beans Honeydew Melon Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Baked Chicken Quinoa Cucumber Slices Apricot Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Zucchini Sticks with Red Sauce ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	String Mozzarella Cheese Mini Pretzels	Mango Smoothie Bowl ² Woven Whole Wheat Crackers	Vanilla Yogurt Granola ²	Cinnamon Raisin Mini Bagel Cottage Cheese

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⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

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Institute of Child Nutrition

Summer Cycle Recipes

Baking Powder Biscuits

[View Recipe](#)

Barbecued Turkey on a Roll

[View Recipe](#)

Beef Stir-Fry

[View Recipe](#)

Breakfast Burrito with Salsa

[View Recipe](#)

Breakfast Muffin

[View Recipe](#)

Chicken Alfredo with a Twist

[View Recipe](#)

Chicken Taco

[View Recipe](#)

Fruit Salsa

[View Recipe](#)

Granola

[View Recipe](#)

Mango Smoothie Bowl

[View Recipe](#)

Mashed Potatoes

[View Recipe](#)

Nachos with Diced Chicken

[View Recipe](#)

Pancakes

[View Recipe](#)



Pizza Burger

[View Recipe](#)

Pizza Cup with Cheese

[View Recipe](#)

Salisbury Steak

[View Recipe](#)

Scrambled Eggs

[View Recipe](#)

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

[View Recipe](#)

Spiced Oatmeal

[View Recipe](#)

Spinach Egg Bake

[View Recipe](#)

Sweet and Sour Pork

[View Recipe](#)

Sweet Plantains

[View Recipe](#)

Turkey and Beef Macaroni

[View Recipe](#)

Turkey Meatloaf

[View Recipe](#)

Whole Grain Dinner Roll

[View Recipe](#)

Zucchini Sticks with Red Sauce

[View Recipe](#)

Fall Cycle Menus

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash ²	Whole Grain-Rich Flakes Cereal	Spiced Oatmeal ²	Turkey Sausage with Whole Wheat English Muffin	Whole Wheat Toast with Melted Cheddar Cheese
Corn Grits	Banana Slices	Raisins and Dried Cranberries	Pear Slices	Grape Halves
Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Quick Quesadilla ² with Mozzarella Cheese and Black Beans on Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla	Beef Stir-Fry ² with Broccoli and Carrots	Pizza Cup with Mozzarella Cheese ² with a Whole Grain-Rich Pizza Dough	Meatloaf ² with Ground Beef Whole Grain-Rich Dinner Roll ²	Oven-Fried Chicken ² Quinoa
Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes ²	Brown Rice	Coleslaw	Kale with Cumin	Collard Greens
Celery Sticks	Pineapple Tidbits	Baked Potato Wedges	Diced Mango	Mixed Fruit
Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Soft Pretzels	Fresh Apple Slices with Nut Butter	Popped Popcorn	Snap Peas	Vanilla Yogurt
Hummus	Pita Bread Triangles	Carrot Wedges	Mozzarella Sticks	Raspberries

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Fall Cycle Menus

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Waffles Hash Browns Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ²	Whole Grain-Rich Puffed Cereal Raspberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Maple Baked French Toast Squares ² Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Muffin ² Pineapple Tidbits Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Mini Bagel and Nut Butter Diced Mango Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Oven-Baked Chicken Tenders (Un-Breaded) Brown Rice Winter Squash Kale and Cumin Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Sloppy Joe ² with Ground Beef on a Whole Wheat Bun Baby Carrots Diced Pears Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Quick Quesadilla ² with Mozzarella Cheese and Black Beans in a Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla Green Peas Mixed Berries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Baked Fish Brown Rice Zucchini Sweet Plantains ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Macaroni and Cheese ² with Whole Grain-Rich Elbow Pasta Broccoli Florets Yams Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Celery Sticks with Dip Grape Halves	Croissants Unsweetened Applesauce	Round Crackers Black Bean Hummus ²	Whole Wheat Bread Sticks with Marinara Sauce Cauliflower Florets	Pita Bread Mixed Fruit

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Fall Cycle Menus

Week 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Whole Wheat Mini Bagel Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Wheat Toast with Cinnamon Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Pancakes ² Unsweetened Applesauce Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spinach Egg Bake ² Diced Potatoes Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Broccoli Bites ² Mandarin Oranges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3,4}				
Chic' Penne ² with Whole Grain-Rich Penne Pasta Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes ² Diced Pears Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Mini Turkey Burgers on a Whole Wheat Bun Green Beans Grape Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey and Cheddar Cheese in a Whole Corn Tortilla Brussels Sprouts Raspberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Barbecued Chicke ² Brown Rice Mixed Vegetables Diced Peaches Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Pizza with Ground Turkey Topping ² on a Homemade Whole Grain-Rich Pizza Crust Garden Salad Apple Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Salad Shakers ² Soft Pretzels	Cottage Cheese Pineapple Tidbits	Popped Popcorn Celery Sticks with Dip	Vanilla Yogurt Kiwi Pieces	Whole Wheat English Muffin with Nut Butter Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk

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⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Fall Cycle Menus

Week 4

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Scrambled Eggs ² Hash Browns Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Grain-Rich Flakes Cereal Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Grain-Rich Bagel with Nut Butter Pear Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Spiced Oatmeal ² Strawberries Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Muffins ² Orange Wedges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Barbeque Turkey Salad ² on Whole Wheat Bread Celery Sticks Grape Halves Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Chicken Alfredo with a Twist ² with Whole Grain-Rich Rotini Pasta Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes ² Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Volcanic Meatloaf ² with Ground Beef Cornbread ² Mashed Potatoes ² Green Peas Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Beef Stir-Fry ² with Broccoli and Carrots Brown Rice Diced Mango Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Quick Quesadilla ² with Mozzarella Cheese and Black Beans in a Whole Grain-Rich Tortilla Cauliflower Florets Sweet Plantains ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Round Crackers Pimento Cheese	Pita Bread Salad Shakers ²	Mini Pretzels Kiwi Slices	Whole Wheat Bread Sticks Melted Cheddar Cheese	Vanilla Yogurt Pineapple Tidbits

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.
² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.
³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.
⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.
⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Fall Cycle Recipes

[Barbecue Turkey Salad](#)[View Recipe](#)[Barbecued Chicken](#)[View Recipe](#)[Beef Stir-Fry](#)[View Recipe](#)[Black Bean Hummus](#)[View Recipe](#)[Breakfast Muffin](#)[View Recipe](#)[Broccoli Bites](#)[View Recipe](#)[Chic' Penne](#)[View Recipe](#)[Chicken Alfredo with a Twist](#)[View Recipe](#)[Cornbread](#)[View Recipe](#)[Fiesta Wrap](#)[View Recipe](#)[Maple Baked French Toast Squares](#)[View Recipe](#)[Macaroni and Cheese](#)[View Recipe](#)[Oven-Fried Chicken](#)[View Recipe](#)

Pancakes

[View Recipe](#)

Pizza Cup with Cheese

[View Recipe](#)

Pizza with Ground Turkey Topping

[View Recipe](#)

Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes

[View Recipe](#)

Quick Quesadilla

[View Recipe](#)

Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash

[View Recipe](#)

Salad Shakers

[View Recipe](#)

Scrambled Eggs

[View Recipe](#)

Sloppy Joe

[View Recipe](#)

Spiced Oatmeal

[View Recipe](#)

Spinach Egg Bake

[View Recipe](#)

Sweet Plantains

[View Recipe](#)

Volcanic Meatloaf

[View Recipe](#)

Whole Grain Dinner Roll

[View Recipe](#)

Winter Cycle Menus

Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Breakfast Burrito with Salsa ² Potato Wedges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Grain-Rich Cereal Rounds Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Toast with Nut Butter Diced Kiwi Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Corn Grits with Turkey Sausage Oranges Wedges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Cinnamon Raisin Bread Apple Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Hot Ham and Cheese on Pita Bread Brussels Sprouts Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Meatball Madness ² with Ground Beef and Turkey Whole Wheat Bread Sticks Turnips Tangerine Segments Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Oven-Baked Chicken Brown Rice Yams Collard Greens Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey Meatloaf ² Cornbread* Winter Squash Pear Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Sweet and Sour Pork ² Brown Rice Corn Green Beans Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Whole Wheat English Muffin with Nut Butter Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Mozzarella Cheese Sticks Pineapple Tidbits	Saltine Crackers Tuna Salad	Whole Wheat Mini Bagel Yams	Carrot Wedges Soft Pretzels

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.

² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Winter Cycle Menus

Week 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Spiced Oatmeal ² Banana Slices Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Whole Wheat English Muffin Diced Kiwi Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Pizza with Hash Brown Crust ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Waffles Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Canadian Bacon Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Salisbury Stea ² Cornbread ² Mashed Potatoes ² Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Roasted Chicken Breast Cornbread ² Mixed Vegetables Oranges Wedges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Turkey Meatloaf ² Whole Grain-Rich Dinner Roll ² Collard Greens Yams Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Baked Fish Brown Rice Turnips Winter Squash Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Macaroni and Cheese ² Whole Grain-Rich Elbow Pasta Brussels Sprouts Baked Apples Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Thin Wheat Crackers Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Cheddar Cheese Strips Pear Slices	Vanilla Yogurt Kiwi Pieces	Whole Wheat Bread Sticks with Marinara Sauce Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Round Crackers Black Bean Hummus ²

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.

² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Winter Cycle Menus

Week 3

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Whole Wheat Toast with Melted Cheddar Cheese Sweet Plantain ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Scrambled Eggs ² Grapefruit Wedges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Breakfast Muffin ² Mixed Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash ² Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Whole Wheat Pancakes ² Unsweetened Applesauce Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3, 4}				
Barbecued Chicken ² Brown Rice Green Peas Pineapple Tidbits Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Baked Fish Quinoa Swiss Chard Yams Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Sloppy Joes ² with Ground Beef on a Whole Wheat Bun Spinach Tropical Fruit Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Oven-Baked Turkey Breast Brown Rice Collard Greens Diced Peaches Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Hot Ham and Cheese on Pita Bread Turnips Mandarin Oranges Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Carrot Wedges Cottage Cheese	Whole Wheat Mini Bagel with Nut Butter Banana Slices	Mini Pretzels String Mozzarella Cheese	Thin Wheat Crackers Deviled Eggs	Vanilla Yogurt Granola ²

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.

² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Winter Cycle Menus

Week 4

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast ¹				
Scrambled Eggs ²	Spiced Oatmeal ²	Whole Wheat Mini Bagel	Whole Grain-Rich Cereal Rounds	Baking Powder Biscuits ²
Hash Browns	Grapefruit Wedges	Sweet Plantains ²	Banana Slices	Pear Halves
Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk ³	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Lunch or Supper ^{3 4}				
Stir-Fry ² Pork	Pizza Burger ² with Ground Beef on a Whole Wheat Bun	Turkey Meatloaf ² Cornbread*	Oven-Fried Chicken ² Quinoa	Sautéed Tofu and Broccoli ^{1 2} with Whole Grain-Rich Spaghetti Noodles
Brown Rice	Yams	Mashed Potatoes ²	Spinach	Baby Carrots
Cabbage	Pineapple Tidbits	Green Beans	Apricot Halves	Apple Slices
Orange Wedges	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk	Low-Fat or Fat-Free Milk
Snack ⁵				
Popped Popcorn	Woven Whole Wheat Crackers	Whole Wheat Toast	Cauliflower Florets	Cottage Cheese
Celery Sticks with Dip	Diced Pears	Pimento Cheese	Black Bean Hummus ²	Snap Peas and Carrot Sticks

¹ A meat/meat alternate may be served as a grain component a maximum of three times per week.

² A standardized recipe is available for the food item.

³ Serve 2–5-year-olds low-fat or fat-free milk; if serving 1-year-olds, serve whole milk.

⁴ A vegetable can be served in place of the fruit component.

⁵ Serve water as a beverage when no other beverage is served. Offer water throughout the day, and make it available upon request.

Winter Cycle Recipes

[Baking Powder Biscuits](#)[View Recipe](#)[Barbecued Chicken](#)[View Recipe](#)[Black Bean Hummus](#)[View Recipe](#)[Breakfast Burrito with Salsa](#)[View Recipe](#)[Breakfast Muffin](#)[View Recipe](#)[Breakfast Pizza](#)[View Recipe](#)[Cornbread](#)[View Recipe](#)[Granola](#)[View Recipe](#)[Macaroni and Cheese](#)[View Recipe](#)[Mashed Potatoes](#)[View Recipe](#)[Meatball Madness](#)[View Recipe](#)[Oven-Fried Chicken](#)[View Recipe](#)[Pancakes](#)[View Recipe](#)



Pizza Burger

[View Recipe](#)

Pork Stir-Fry

[View Recipe](#)

Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes

[View Recipe](#)

Roasted Potatoes and Turkey Hash

[View Recipe](#)

Salisbury Steak

[View Recipe](#)

Sautéed Tofu and Broccoli

[View Recipe](#)

Scrambled Eggs

[View Recipe](#)

Sloppy Joe

[View Recipe](#)

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

[View Recipe](#)

Spiced Oatmeal

[View Recipe](#)

Sweet and Sour Pork

[View Recipe](#)

Sweet Plantains

[View Recipe](#)

Turkey Meatloaf

[View Recipe](#)

Whole Grain Dinner Roll

[View Recipe](#)

Supplemental Content

CACFP Meal Pattern Charts

breakfast

(Select three components for a reimbursable meal)

Meal Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 ²
Fluid Milk	4 fluid ounces ³	6 fluid ounces ⁴	8 fluid ounces ⁵	8 fluid ounces ⁵
Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both⁶	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains⁷ (ounce equivalent = oz eq)				
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, and/or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified ready-to-eat cereal (dry, cold)				
Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Puffed cereal	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 ¼ cup	1 ¼ cup
Granola	⅞ cup	⅞ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

¹ Must serve all three components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk afterschool care centers.

² At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must be unflavored whole milk for children age 1.

⁴ Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁵ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁶ Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day.

⁷ Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement.

Meats/meat alternates may be offered in place of the entire grains requirement, up to 3 times per week at breakfast. One ounce equivalent of meats/meat alternates credits equal to one ounce equivalent of grains. Through September 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By October 1, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

lunch and supper

(Select all five components for a reimbursable meal)

Meal Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 ²
Fluid Milk	4 fluid ounces ³	6 fluid ounces ⁴	8 fluid ounces ⁵	8 fluid ounces ⁵
Meats/Meat alternates (ounce equivalent = oz eq)				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products ⁶	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Cheese	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Large egg	½	¾	1	1
Beans, peas, and lentils	¼ cup	⅜ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Yogurt ⁷	4 oz eq (½ cup)	6 oz eq (¾ cup)	8 oz eq (1 cup)	8 oz eq (1 cup)
Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tbsp	3 tbsp	4 tbsp	4 tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq	2 oz eq
Vegetables⁸	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits⁸	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Grains⁹				
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, and/or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup

¹ Must serve all five components for a reimbursable meal. Offer versus serve is an option for at-risk afterschool care centers.

² At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must serve unflavored whole milk to children age 1.

⁴ Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁵ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁶ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226.

⁷ Yogurt may be regular or soy, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened. Through September 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By October 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

⁸ Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day. A vegetable may be offered to meet the entire fruit requirement. When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.

⁹ Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement. Through September 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By October 1, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

snack

(Select two of the five components for a reimbursable snack)

Meal Components and Food Items ¹	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 ²
Fluid Milk³	4 fluid ounces ³	4 fluid ounces ⁴	8 fluid ounces ⁵	8 fluid ounces ⁵
Meats/Meat alternates (ounce equivalent = oz eq)				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Tofu, soy product, or alternate protein products ⁶	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Cheese	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Large egg	½	½	½	½
Beans, peas, and lentils	⅓ cup	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Yogurt ⁷	2 oz eq (¼ cup)	2 oz eq (¼ cup)	4 oz eq (½ cup)	4 oz eq (½ cup)
Peanut butter or soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	1 tbsp	1 tbsp	2 tbsp	2 tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, or seeds	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Vegetables⁸	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Fruits⁸	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Grains⁹				
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Whole grain-rich or enriched bread product, such as biscuit, roll, or muffin	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq
Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, and/or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (dry, cold)				
Flakes or rounds	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup
Puffed cereal	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 ¼ cup	1 ¼ cup
Granola	⅓ cup	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup

¹ Must serve two of the five components for a reimbursable snack. Milk and juice may not be served as the only two items in a reimbursable snack.

² At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters may need to serve larger portions to children ages 13 through 18 to meet their nutritional needs.

³ Must serve unflavored whole milk to children age 1.

⁴ Must serve unflavored milk to children 2 through 5 years old. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁵ May serve unflavored or flavored milk to children ages 6 and older. The milk must be fat-free, skim, low-fat, or 1 percent or less.

⁶ Alternate protein products must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226.

⁷ Yogurt may be regular or soy, plain or flavored unsweetened or sweetened. Through September 30, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces. By October 1, 2025, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

⁸ Juice must be pasteurized. Full-strength juice may only be offered to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal or snack, per day.

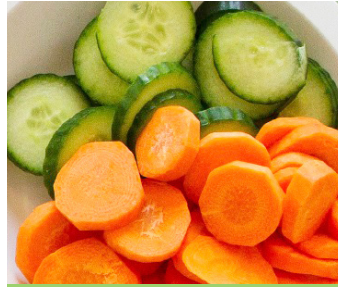
⁹ Must serve at least one whole grain-rich serving, across all eating occasions, per day. Grain-based desserts may not be used to meet the grains requirement. Through September 30, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of total sugars per dry ounce. By October 1, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables



Spring

- Apples
- Apricots
- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Corn
- Collard Greens
- Garlic
- Kale
- Kiwifruit
- Lemons
- Lettuce
- Limes
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Peas
- Pineapples
- Radishes
- Rhubarb
- Spinach
- Strawberries
- Swiss Chard
- Turnips



Summer

- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Beets
- Bell Peppers
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Carrots
- Celery
- Cherries
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Garlic
- Green Beans
- Honeydew Melon
- Lemons
- Lima Beans
- Limes
- Mangos
- Okra
- Peaches
- Plums
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Summer Squash
- Tomatillos
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Zucchini



Fall

- Apples
- Bananas
- Beets
- Bell Peppers
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Collard Greens
- Cranberries
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Grapes
- Green Beans
- Kale
- Kiwifruit
- Lemons
- Lettuce
- Limes
- Mangos
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Parsnips
- Pears
- Peas
- Pineapples
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Radishes
- Raspberries
- Rutabagas
- Spinach
- Sweet Potatoes & Yams
- Swiss Chard
- Turnips
- Winter Squash



Winter

- Apples
- Avocados
- Bananas
- Beets
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Collard Greens
- Grapefruit
- Kale
- Kiwifruit
- Leeks
- Lemons
- Onions
- Oranges
- Parsnips
- Pears
- Pineapples
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Rutabagas
- Sweet Potatoes & Yams
- Swiss Chard
- Turnips
- Winter Squash

Adapted Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2020). *Seasonal produce guide: SNAP-Ed connection*. <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide>

Fruits and Vegetables: Ways to Prepare and Season



Apples

Applesauce

Place peeled, cored, and sliced apples in $\frac{1}{4}$ inch water. Steam apples in a microwave or pan until soft and add water if needed. Remove from heat, mash apples to desired consistency, and add seasonings. Eat warm or allow to cool.

Bake

Select larger apples and remove the core with a knife, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the apple core intact at the bottom. Put a small amount of seasoning in the hole. Place apples in a baking pan and add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water to the pan. Bake at 375 °F for 30–40 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Grill

Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice in a large bowl and put sliced apples in the mixture for 30–60 minutes. Place soaked apple slices on skewers and grill about seven minutes on each side. Once grilled, remove from heat and add seasonings. For added variety and texture, add apples to grilled meat or vegetable kabob.

Raw

Rinse and dry an apple to enjoy as is, or slice and dip in peanut butter, yogurt, or hummus. Dip apple slices in lemon juice to prevent browning.

Season

Enhance the flavor of apples with cinnamon, clove, ginger, or nutmeg.



Apricots

Broil

Set broiler to high, with rack about four inches from heat. Cut apricots in half and remove the pit. Place on a baking sheet with the skin side down and cut side up—cook 2–5 minutes or until tender.

Grill

Pierce the apricots (whole or halved) with skewers. Brush with honey and grill until desired tenderness, about 2–3 minutes.

Poach

Place apricots into simmering water or fruit juice. Remove from the liquid when tender, about 6–8 minutes. Add spices such as cinnamon or cloves to enhance flavor.

Raw

Rinse and dry apricots to enjoy as is, or with blue cheese for added flavor. Add fresh, chopped apricots to oatmeal or cold cereal. Use apricots to create a breakfast parfait or smoothie with yogurt and granola.

Season

To enhance the flavor, season with cinnamon, clove, and/or honey. Add apricots to cooked vegetables for a natural sweetener.



Asparagus

Grill or Broil

Place asparagus in a plastic bag, drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasoning. Shake until asparagus is coated, then put spears on a preheated (medium-high heat) grill or under a hot broiler. Cook about 5–8 minutes until tender, turning occasionally.

Sauté or Stir-fry

Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan. Add low-sodium seasoning with bite-size or one-inch pieces—Cook asparagus by stirring over high heat until desired tenderness, about 5–8 minutes.

Roast

Place asparagus in a plastic bag, drizzle with olive oil, and seasoning. Shake until asparagus is coated, transfer spears onto a baking sheet or pan, then roast in the oven at 400 °F, about 5–8 minutes.

Steam

Place asparagus in a pan with a small amount of water, low-sodium seasoning, and garlic. Cook on medium heat for 8–10 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Season

To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, dill weed, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, thyme, or lemon juice.



Broccoli

Boil or Steam

Place chopped broccoli florets and/or stems (even-sized pieces) into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 10–15 minutes until individual sections are tender enough to pierce through with a fork or until desired tenderness.

Pasta, Salad, or Stir-Fry

Chop broccoli into 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch florets and add to any lasagna, pasta, pasta sauce, green salad, or stir-fry dish.

Raw

Rinse and trim broccoli to enjoy plain or with a low-fat dip such as yogurt.

Roast

Place broccoli spears in a plastic bag and drizzle with olive oil and low-sodium seasonings. Shake until broccoli is coated. Spread on a baking sheet and roast at 400 °F for 15–20 minutes or until tender.

Season

To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, curry powder, dill weed, garlic, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, tarragon, thyme, or lemon juice.



Carrots

Boil or Steam

Slice carrots into ¼-inch to ½-inch coins and place into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 5–8 minutes or until tender.

Chop

Add chopped carrots to stews, soups, or pot roasts.

Raw

Rinse, peel, and eat carrots whole or cut into carrot sticks to enjoy plain or with a low-fat dip.

Roast

Chop carrots into ¼-inch to ½-inch sections, place in a plastic bag, and shake with olive oil and desired seasonings. Spread on a baking sheet and roast at 400 °F for 20–30 minutes or until crisp. Roast with other vegetables, such as potatoes, broccoli, asparagus, or cauliflower.

Season

To enhance flavor, season with allspice, basil, caraway seed, cloves, cinnamon, curry powder, dill weed, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, tarragon, or thyme.



Kale

Blanch or Boil

Remove dried or thick stems and place the kale into the boiling water to blanch 5–8 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Braise

Cut kale to the desired size. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook over low heat for about 20 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Salad

Add raw to salads for added flavor, texture, and visual appeal. Tenderness can be achieved by massaging finely cut greens with acidic dressing. Add in nuts, seeds, or dried fruit for additional flavor and texture.

Sauté

Cut kale to the desired size. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired, and stir over high heat until desired tenderness, about 5–8 minutes.

Steam

Remove dried or thick stems. Place kale in a pan with a small amount of water and seasonings. Cook on medium heat for 2–4 minutes, depending on the size and age of greens until desired tenderness.

Season

To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as basil, bay leaf, celery seed, garlic, oregano, tarragon, or thyme.



Leafy Greens

Blanch or Boil

Remove dried or thick stems. Cover the raw greens with water and bring to a boil. Add greens and blanch: collard, 8–15 minutes; beet, turnip, and mustard greens, 5–8 minutes; chard, 2–4 minutes; baby greens, less than a minute. Cook until desired tenderness.

Braise

Cut large greens and keep small greens whole. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook greens over low heat for about 20 minutes or until desired tenderness. This method is ideal for collards, chard, and kale.

Sauté

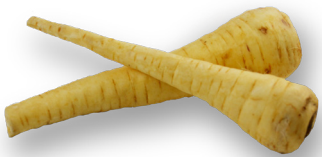
Cut large greens and keep small greens whole. Remove dried or thick stems. Drizzle cooking oil in a heated pan, add seasonings if desired. Cook greens by stirring over high heat until desired tenderness, about 5–8 minutes. This method is ideal for spinach, collards, chard, bok choy, and mustard greens.

Steam

Remove dried or thick stems. Place greens in a pan with a small amount of boiling water and seasonings, if desired. Cook on medium heat for 2–4 minutes (depending on size and age of greens) or until desired tenderness.

Season

To enhance flavor, experiment with low sodium seasonings such as basil, bay leaf, celery, seed, garlic, oregano, tarragon, or thyme.



Parsnips

Bake

Place whole or cut parsnips in a baking dish with a cover. Cook 20–30 minutes in a 350 °F oven.

Boil or Steamed

Place trimmed, well-scrubbed parsnips in a steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 12–15 minutes or until tender. Combine with mashed potatoes to enhance flavor and add fiber or eat mashed on their own.

Sauté

Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of the pan, then add chopped ½-inch to 1-inch pieces of parsnips—stir parsnips for even browning. Sauté about 12–15 minutes or until tender.

Season

To enhance the flavor of parsnips, use ginger, mace, nutmeg, and/or cinnamon.



Pears

Bake

Add diced pears to muffins, oatmeal, and breads for additional flavor and moisture.

Raw

Wash and eat whole or sliced. Enjoy low-fat cottage cheese for added protein. Add dried pears to oatmeal or cold cereal.

Salsa or Salad

Peel and dice pears for a refreshing summer salsa or add to any green salad.

Season

To enhance the flavor of pears, use cloves, cinnamon, ginger, or vanilla beans.



Potatoes

Bake

Rinse and scrub potatoes. Allow to dry slightly. To prevent a crispy skin, rub with olive oil or butter. Pierce potato with a fork before baking to allow steam to escape. Place in 400 °F oven and bake for 45 minutes or until tender.

Boil or Steam

Rinse, peel (if desired), and cut potatoes in 1-inch to 2-inch cubes, then place into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 20–30 minutes for cubed potatoes and 30–40 minutes for whole potatoes. To mash, use a handheld mixer or masher until desired consistency. Add seasonings to enhance flavor.

Roast

Chop potatoes into ½ inch sections or long strips, place in a plastic bag and shake with olive oil to coat. Spread on a baking sheet and roast at 450 °F for 30–40 minutes, turning frequently.

Season

To enhance the flavor of potatoes, use basil, bay leaf, celery seed, chives, curry powder, dill weed, garlic, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, and/or thyme.



Summer Squash

Broil

Set broiler to high, with rack about six inches from heat. Cut squash in slices and drizzle with olive oil and low sodium seasoning before placing on a baking sheet. Cook 3–5 minutes or until tender.

Sauté

Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of the pan, and add sliced squash. Sauté until lightly brown, about 3–5 minutes, or until tender. Remove from heat and use as a side dish or add to vegetable dishes, lasagna, pasta, and other dishes.

Steam

Place sliced or whole squash into a pan of boiling water. Steam 6–10 minutes for sliced squash or 12–15 minutes for the whole squash.

Season

To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as allspice, basil, cumin, curry powder, dill, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon, or thyme.



Turnips

Boil or Steam

Slice turnips into ½-inch to 1-inch pieces and place into steamer or pan of boiling water. Steam or boil about 15–20 minutes or until tender. Boil uncovered to allow the bitter gases to escape. After boiling or steaming, add turnips to casseroles or blend with potatoes.

Roast

Chop peeled turnips into quarters, place in a plastic bag, and shake with olive oil to coat. Spread coated turnips on a pan to roast at 425 °F for 20–30 minutes or until tender.

Sauté

Warm pan to medium to medium-high heat, add butter or oil to coat bottom of the pan, then add diced ½-inch to 1-inch pieces of turnip—stir turnips to produce even browning. Sauté about five minutes or until tender.

Season

To enhance the flavor of turnips, use garlic, coriander, cumin, chili powder, or cardamom.



Winter Squash

Bake or Roast

Peel and cube or cut the squash in half and scoop out seeds. On a foil-lined baking dish, place halved squash cut-side down or evenly arrange cubed squash. Cover and bake the whole squash at 350 °F for 45 minutes or until tender. Bake cubed squash at 350 °F for 20–25 minutes.

Boil or Steam

Keep whole or cut the squash into quarters or cubes and remove the skin and seeds. To boil squash whole, pierce the skin with fork, cover, and boil for one hour. To steam or boil cubed squash, place pieces into a pan of boiling water or steam basket for 10–15 minutes or until tender. To mash, use a handheld mixer or masher until desired consistency.

Sauté

Grate or cube squash. Heat pan to high, add butter or oil to coat bottom of the pan and add squash. Sauté 15–25 minutes or until tender.

Season

To enhance flavor, experiment with low-sodium seasonings such as allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, marjoram, or nutmeg.

Adapted Source: Montana State University Extension. (n.d.). *Food fact sheets*. <http://nutrition.msuextension.org/nutrition-cooking-culture/index.html>



Introducing Children to New Tastes and Textures

Childhood is an exciting time. Children love to discover and explore. They also like to exert control, often over the foods they will eat. Here are some tips to help young children willingly explore new tastes and textures.

No Pressure

- Children (and adults!) are less likely to eat and enjoy food when pressured to eat it. A new food to a child may be a familiar food to you. Allow the children to explore the food at their own pace.
- Encourage children to eat or try a new food in a non-pressuring manner. For instance, read a book about a new food that will be served that day. Serve the new food at snack time when children are hungrier and have fewer food choices. Notice the cycle menus include menu items at the snack that might be served as part of a larger meal.
- Offer new foods to children many times instead of only once or twice. The more exposure that children have to a food, the more familiar and comfortable it becomes. Thus, the more likely it is that they will try the food. One way to introduce new fruits and vegetables is through a Mystery Box/Bag Activity; find one in Grow It, Try It, Like It! Available from Team Nutrition (www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it).

Explore and Learn

- Engage children in food experiences. Visit farmer's markets or make one of your own from grocery store purchases. Try cooking with children; snack time is a great time to have children involved with food. Do a demonstration of the snack recipe or allow children to make a sample tray; your staff can prepare the snack served to all if food safety is a concern.
- Take children on a walking tour that includes the kitchen. Help them learn about the way foods are prepared. Introduce the staff to the children to create a personal connection.

Families Can Help

- Enlist help from home. When children have similar foods at home, they are more likely to eat them at child care. The recipes in the cycle menus are available in smaller, home size recipes. Share these resources with families.
- Consider having samples of new recipes available to parents to taste during conferences or special events. Chances are your families are looking for new recipes, too.

Role Models Matter

- Have staff eat with children and eat the same foods as children. Make mealtime a pleasant time for conversation, including talking about the foods on the menu. Go beyond expressing likes and dislikes.
- Have a positive attitude toward foods and the mealtime experience. Remember, the excitement and willingness to taste foods shown by adults and other children may influence reluctant eaters to try.
- Offer the new food first to a child who eats most foods. Children will often follow the leader and try the food.

Respect Children's Appetites and Preferences

- Do not force a child to eat. It is normal for a child to ask for second helpings of food one day and yet eat very lightly the next day. The same is true for meals and snacks within a day.
- When introducing a new menu item or food to children, consider starting with a sample size or "just a bite" portion. Allow children to politely remove food from their mouths with a napkin if they do not want to swallow the food.

Adapted Source: New York State Department of Health. (2020). *Ways to encourage children to have positive attitudes toward food*. <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/resources/attitudes.htm>

Flavor Shakers

Great on Potatoes

2 tablespoons dill weed
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder

1 tablespoon paprika
1 tablespoon dried parsley
1 tablespoon dried sage



Great on Squash and Carrots

2 tablespoons cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground cloves
1 tablespoon ground ginger

1 tablespoon nutmeg



Great on Vegetables and French Fries

2 tablespoons chili powder
2 tablespoons cumin
1 tablespoon crushed red pepper

1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon granulated garlic



Great on Vegetables

2 tablespoons black pepper
1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon paprika

1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon garlic powder



Additional Shaker Ideas

1. Low-sodium lemon pepper
2. Crushed red pepper flakes
3. Grated Parmesan cheese and dried parsley
4. Course ground black pepper and granulated garlic



Adapted Source: Team Nutrition Iowa. (2018). *Flavor shakers*. <https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/FLAVOR%20SHAKERS%20CACFP.pdf>

Cooking with Herbs and Spices

Using a variety of herbs and spices in cooking is a healthy way to add flavor to foods without adding a lot of sodium and sugar. The charts below are a starting point for thinking about how you can use herbs and spices to replace sodium and sugar in recipes.

Name	Form	Taste	Uses
Anise seed	Whole, ground	Sweet licorice flavor	Cookies, cakes, fruit mixtures, chicken
Basil	Fresh, dried chopped leaves	Mint licorice flavor	Pizza, spaghetti sauce, tomato dishes, vegetable soups, meat pies, peas, zucchini, green beans
Bay leaves	Whole, ground	Pungent and sharp with a slight bitter taste	Fish, soups, tomato juice, potato salad dressing
Caraway seed	Whole	Sharp and pungent	Baked goods such as rye bread, cheeses, sauerkraut dishes, soups, meats, stews
Celery Seed	Whole, ground	Flavor distinctly different from celery	Fish, soups, tomato juice, potato salad
Chives	Fried, freeze-dried	In the onion family; delicate flavor	Baked potato topping, all cooked green vegetables, green salads, cream sauces, cheese dishes
Cilantro	Fresh, dried	Sweet aroma, mildly peppery	Ingredient in Mexican foods
Coriander seed	Whole, ground	Pleasant, lemon-orange flavor	Ingredient in curry; ground form used in pastries, buns, cookies, and cakes; in processed foods such as frankfurters
Cumin	Whole seeds, ground	Warm, distinctive, salty-sweet, resembles caraway	Ingredient in chili powder and curry powder; German cooks add to pork and sauerkraut, and Dutch add to cheese
Dill	Fresh, dried, seeds	Aromatic, like caraway but milder and sweeter	Dill pickles; seeds in meats, sauces, salads, coleslaw, potato salad, and cooked macaroni; dill weed in salads, sandwiches, and uncooked mixtures
Fennel seed	Whole	Flavor similar to anise, pleasant sweet licorice	Bread, rolls, apple pies, seafood, pork and poultry dishes; provides the distinctive flavor to Italian sausage

Name	Form	Taste	Uses
Marjoram	Fresh, dried whole or ground	Faintly sage-like, slight mint aftertaste, delicate	Vegetables; one of the ingredients in poultry and Italian seasoning; processed foods such as bologna
Mint	Fresh leaves or dried flakes	Strong and sweet with a refreshing aftertaste	Peppermint is the most common variety; popular flavor for candies and frozen desserts; many fruits, peas, and carrots
Oregano	Fresh, dried leaves, ground	More pungent than marjoram, reminiscent of thyme	Pizza, other meat dishes, cheese and egg dishes; vegetables such as tomatoes, zucchini, or green beans; an ingredient in chili powder
Parsley	Fresh, dried flakes	Sweet, mildly spicy, refreshing	A wide variety of cooked foods, salad dressings, and sandwich spreads
Poppy seed	Whole, crushed	Nut flavor	Whole as a topping for breads; over noodles and pasta or rice; in vegetables such as green beans
Rosemary	Fresh, whole leaves	Refreshing, pine, resinous, pungent	Chicken dishes and vegetables such as eggplant, turnips, cauliflower, green beans, beets, and summer squash; enhances the flavor of citrus fruits
Sage	Whole, rubbed, ground	Pungent, warm, astringent	Meats, poultry stuffing, salad dressings; cheese; a main ingredient in poultry seasoning blend; an ingredient in a wide variety of commercial meat products
Savory	Fresh, dried whole or ground	Warm, aromatic, resinous, delicate sage flavor	Beans, meats, soups, salads, sauces; an ingredient in the poultry seasoning blend
Sesame seed	Whole	Toasted nut flavor	Rolls, bread, and buns
Tarragon	Fresh, dried leaves	An aroma with a hint of anise; licorice flavor, pleasant, slightly bitter	Vinegar, salad dressings, chicken, tartar sauce, and egg salad
Thyme	Fresh, dried whole or ground	Strong, pleasant, pungent clove flavor	New England clam chowder, Creole seafood dishes, Midwest poultry stuffing; blended with butter is good over green beans, eggplant, and tomatoes
Turmeric	Dried, powder	Aromatic, warm, mild	Prepared mustard; a main ingredient in curry powder; chicken and seafood dishes, rice, creamed or mashed potatoes, macaroni; salad dressing for a seafood salad; in melted butter for corn on the cob

Spice Chart

Name	Form	Taste	Uses Allspice
	Whole berries, ground	The aroma suggests a blend of cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg; sweet flavor	Fruit cakes, pies, relishes, preserves, sweet yellow vegetables, such as sweet potatoes and tomatoes
Cardamom seed	Whole, ground	Mild, pleasant, sweet ginger-like flavor	Baked goods, apple and pumpkin pies; an essential ingredient in curry
Cinnamon	Whole sticks, ground	Warm, spicy and sweet flavor	Cakes, buns, and breads
Cloves	Whole, ground	Hot, spicy, sweet, penetrating flavor	Whole cloves for baking hams and other pork, pickling fruits, and in stews and meat gravies; ground cloves in baked goods and desserts and to enhance the flavor of sweet vegetables, such as beets, sweet potatoes, and winter squash
Ginger	Fresh, whole, cracked, ground	Aromatic, sweet, spicy, penetrating flavor	Baked goods; rubbed on meat, poultry, and fish; in stir-fry dishes
Mace	Ground	Strong nutmeg flavor	The thin red network surrounding the nutmeg fruit; used in baked goods where a color lighter than nutmeg is desirable
Mustard	Whole seeds, powder, prepared	Sharp, hot, very pungent	Meats, poultry, fish, sauces, salad dressings, cheese and egg dishes; whole seeds in pickling and boiled beets, cabbage, or sauerkraut

Nutmeg	Whole, ground	Spicy, pleasant flavor	The seed of the nutmeg fruit for baked goods, puddings, sauces, vegetables; in spice blends for processed meat; next with butter for corn on the cob, spinach, and candied sweet potatoes
Paprika	Ground	Sweet, mild, or pungent flavor	A garnish spice gives an appealing appearance to a wide variety of dishes; used in the production of processed meats such as sausage, salad dressings, and other prepared foods
Peppercorns: black, white, red, and pink	Whole, ground, coarse ground	Hot, biting, very pungent	Many uses in a wide variety of foods; white pepper ideal in light-colored foods where dark specks might not be attractive
Red pepper (cayenne)	Ground, crushed	Hot, pungent flavor	Meats and sauces

Standard Blends of Herbs and Spices

Name	Ingredients	How it is used
Barbeque spice	Cumin, garlic, cloves, paprika, and other ingredients: chili pepper, salt, sugar	Barbeque sauce, salad dressing, meat casseroles, potatoes
Chili powder	Cumin, garlic, oregano, cloves, allspice, powdered onion, and other ingredients: chili pepper, salt	Chili con carne, gravy, meat stews
Curry powder	Ginger, turmeric, cloves, cinnamon, cumin, black and red pepper, fenugreek seed (a spice specific to this blend)	Indian curry dishes, curry sauces, French dressing, scalloped tomatoes, fish chowders, split pea soup
Poultry seasoning	Sage, thyme, marjoram, savory, sometimes rosemary	Poultry and other stuffing, meatloaf; biscuits served with poultry

Adapted Source: Institute of Child Nutrition. (n.d.). *Culinary techniques for healthy school meals* (2nd ed.). University, MS: Author.

Best Practices Food Safety Tips

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, before and after preparing, serving, handling, and eating food.
- Prepare foods using cleaned and sanitized cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables under clean, running water just before peeling, eating, cutting, or cooking.
- Wash tops of canned goods under clean running water before opening.
- During each step of food handling, separate ready-to-eat-foods from raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Use separate cutting boards for fresh produce and raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Use separate plates and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Cook foods to a safe and recommended internal temperature as measured by a food thermometer.
- Reheat all leftovers to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F as measured by a food thermometer and held for 15 seconds.
- Keep hot foods at a temperature of 140 °F or above and cold foods at a temperature of 40 °F or below.
- Keep the refrigerator at 40 °F or below as measured by a refrigerator thermometer.
- Keep the freezer at 0 °F or below as measured by a freezer thermometer.
- Never leave perishable foods out of the refrigerator for more than a total of 2 hours (includes purchasing, preparing, and serving).

Adapted Source: Institute of Child Nutrition. (2017). *Healthy me! The preschoolers' guide to nutrition and wellness, resource cards, set 2*. <https://theicn.org/resources/135/healthy-me-the-preschoolers-guide/103196/resource-card-set-2.pdf>

