



## 2024 Maine Farm to School Cook Off Rules and Guidelines



### Overview

The Maine Farm to School Cook-off is a statewide culinary competition for teams of school nutrition professionals and students to promote local foods in school meals. Each team, consisting of one student and one school nutrition employee, is tasked to prepare two lunch meals (one vegetarian and one non-vegetarian) using specific recipe guidelines and time restrictions, and will present to a panel of judges.

### Timeline at a Glance

- February 16, 2024 – Team Registration Due
- March 5, 2024- Mandatory Team Meeting- Virtual Zoom (1:30pm)
- March 22, 2024 – Recipes Due to Child Nutrition
- May 7, 2024 – Cook- Off Competition at Central Maine Community College! 11am-2pm

### Recipe Guidelines & Submission

- The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) meal pattern will be used for both lunch meals.
  - The lunch meals must meet the **required offering for grades 9-12**. This includes 2 oz grain, 2 oz meat/meat alternate, 1 cup fruit and 1 cup vegetable. **Milk can be excluded from the meal.**
- Both meals must contain:
  - At least one USDA food
  - At least three local ingredients (defined as grown, raised, caught or manufactured in Maine) with one being a challenge ingredient. **Chicken breast (provided in raw form)** will be the challenge ingredient for the non-vegetarian meal and **tofu** will be the challenge ingredient for the vegetarian meal. The challenge ingredients will be sourced by Child Nutrition and supplied to each team on the day of the competition.
- All recipes must be tested in a school kitchen. Five bonus points will be given if a video is provided showing taste testing of the recipe being submitted with students or classrooms!
- Recipes must contain the following information:
  - Name of recipe
  - Type of dish (ex: breakfast entrée, lunch entrée, side)
  - Scaled to 50 servings
  - Portion size

- Ingredients in measurable amounts (ex: 2 ½ cups tomatoes, not 5 tomatoes)
- Complete Instructions
- Meal pattern contribution information
- **Completed recipes must be typed using the provided template and submitted by March 22, 2024. Crediting will be checked by Child Nutrition staff.**
- **Any recipe submitted in the incorrect format or incomplete will be returned for corrections.**
- All recipes submitted will be used in a Farm to School Cook- book.
- When considering which recipes to use keep in mind the division of work between team members. The goal of this competition is to involve students as much as possible in the preparation and cooking.

### **Judging & Scoring Criteria**

The following scoring criteria will be used to evaluate the lunch meals. Please review the [scoring sheets](#) with your team.

- Creative use of challenge ingredients
- Presentation, Taste, and Feasibility to be used in school nutrition programs
- Teamwork and division of work
- Food safety and time management in the kitchen

The judging panel will consist of:

- K-12 student (past cook-off winner if possible)
- Professional Chef
- School Nutrition Director

This competition is all about promoting and educating about the wonderful things happening in school nutrition programs. We have selected people as judges who have a diverse range of culinary and food expertise and to get the student perspective.

### **Important Competition Details!**

**Three servings** of the vegetarian and non-vegetarian meal must be prepared. One plate for the judges, one plate for teams to sample, and one plate for display and pictures.

The schedule will be as follows:

- **Cooking round 1: One hour** of kitchen time to prepare the vegetarian meal and work on prep of the non-vegetarian meal.
- **Judging round 1:** Vegetarian meal; each team will be given 1 minute to describe their meal and for judges to ask questions.
- **Cooking round 2: One hour** of kitchen time to complete the non-vegetarian meal.

- **Judging round 2:** Non-vegetarian meal; each team will be given 1 minute to describe their meal and for judges to ask questions.

*Child Nutrition will provide:*

- Black aprons and hats with Farm to School Cook-off logo for all participants
- Challenge ingredients (tofu and chicken breast)
- A compost bucket to dispose of any food scraps/waste
- An equipment list for the cook-off kitchen location will be provided to the teams.

*Team Expectations:*

- All preparation must be done on site. No exceptions! 5 points will automatically be deducted for any pre-made items.
- Test and practice with your recipes beforehand
- Teams are expected to look professional and meet the dress code of the Culinary Classroom while participating in the cook off. We often have media present and it's important to portray the professional side of school nutrition. This includes the following:
  - ✓ Beard restraint, if applicable.
  - ✓ Closed toe/back shoes.
  - ✓ Long pants, no leggings.
  - ✓ A plain wedding band is the only jewelry allowed.
  - ✓ Nails must be clean and trimmed. Nail polish and artificial nails will not be allowed.

### **Reimbursement for Team Expenses**

There is funding available for cook-off teams to be reimbursed for food (\$100) and supplies (\$50). All reimbursement checks will go to the district's school nutrition department. In order to be reimbursed a State of Maine expense form and all accompanying food and supply receipts must be emailed to Michele Bisbee at [michele.bisbee@maine.gov](mailto:michele.bisbee@maine.gov). Examples of supplies that would count include:

- Trays/plates for presenting the meals to judges.
- Equipment needed to safely transport ingredients to the competition. Any questions can be directed to Michele Bisbee or Stephanie Stambach.

### **Day of Competition Reminders**

- Arrive early to review rules and guidelines and to tour the kitchen facility.
- Bring recipes and all recipe ingredients and come with a backup plan!
- Bring small wares, if needed
- Clean the kitchen, equipment, and small wares used prior to leaving the location. Participants will be made accountable for any damages to equipment.
- Practice good sanitation throughout the entire competition
- No coaching is allowed in the kitchen during the competition.