

# Tennessee Junior Chef Competition

## Tips, Questions, and Answers

### Tips

- Consult the experts:
  - Connect with your school district's School Nutrition Program Director and/or Menu Planner. They are familiar with the school meal pattern and nutrition standards, recipe development and menus, and ingredients commonly available to and used in school nutrition programs.
  - Ask local chefs and farmers for recipe ideas and tips on local products and how to highlight seasonal produce.
- Hints on writing recipes:
  - Use as few ingredients and as few steps in preparation as possible to make the recipe labor efficient. List ingredients, quantities and directions in the order in which they are used in preparation.
  - Write directions in a step fashion (i.e. step one, step two, etc.). Make the directions as clear, concise and complete as possible.
  - Include type of cooking equipment needed.
- Research popular menu items at restaurants, and new trends in flavors. Consider different but complimentary flavors, textures, etc.
- Complete a student taste test. This step is optional, but will give your team three bonus points during the recipe competition (see Recipe Contest Judging Rubric). A taste test can also give great feedback on the quality of your recipe.
- Review the National School Lunch Program requirements.
- Ensure recipe contains sufficient information and meets minimum requirements.

### Questions and Answers

#### 1. Who can participate?

All Tennessee students in grades 9-12 that attend a school participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are eligible to participate in the Junior Chef competition. Each team must have two to five students. Only one team per school may enter the recipe contest. If there are more than one team a one school that would like to enter the recipe contest, it is recommended that schools conduct a school-level competition among teams to determine the one recipe to submit to the state-wide recipe contest. Only one team per school will be selected to compete in the Cooking Competition.

#### 2. How do I enter?

The application is available on the Tennessee Department of Education's School Nutrition webpage. A completed application and photograph of the dish must be submitted to the Tennessee Department of Education by **November 1, 2019**. Because recipes must have approval from the school district's school



nutrition program, recipes should be submitted to the school district's school nutrition program as soon as possible to allow time for review (possibly nutrient analysis) and approval of the recipe. Entries should be submitted via email to [Rachel.E.Draper@tn.gov](mailto:Rachel.E.Draper@tn.gov) by November 1, 2019.

**3. Does my team have to get approval of our recipe from our school district's School Nutrition Program?**

Yes. Teams are encouraged to work with their school district's School Nutrition Program to develop the recipe. Teams must obtain approval of their recipe by the school district's School Nutrition Program prior to entering the contest. This collaboration and partnership between the students, adult supervisors and the district school nutrition program is integral in your team's success.

**4. Is there a registration fee?**

No.

**5. Are there costs associating with participating in the Junior Chef competition?**

There are no costs associated with participating in the recipe contest. If your team is selected to compete in the cooking competition in Nashville, travel and lodging for students and one adult team supervisor (who must be a school district employee) will be reimbursed. Additionally, all ingredients necessary for the competition will be purchased and ready for the participants at no cost. Any other costs (additional adults to accompany the team, chef hats or coats, equipment not provided at venue) will **not** be covered by the Tennessee Department of Education. Any "practice" material will be at the expense of the team leading up to the competition.

**6. What are the judging criteria for the recipe contest?**

Recipe entries will be judged and scored on:

- Meeting the NSLP meal pattern and nutritional guidelines;
- Recipe presentation;
- Creativity;
- School Nutrition Program reproducibility;
- Use of Tennessee grown products.

For the full judging criteria for the recipe contest, please consult the Recipe Contest Judging Rubric.

**7. What are the judging criteria for the Cooking Competition?**

Recipes will be judged on overall appeal, appearance and execution, taste, presentation and sanitation and food safety. See the Cooking Competition Judging Rubric for more information.

**8. What is the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)?**

The [National School Lunch Program](#) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day.

### 9. What are the required components for the school lunch meal?

Meals offered in the NSLP must meet a [meal pattern and nutrition standards](#) set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The meal pattern consists of five components, fruit, vegetable, grain, meat/meat alternate, and milk.

### 10. What is Farm to School?

The term Farm to School encompasses efforts that bring locally or regionally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and the integration of food based education into the regular standards-based classroom curriculum. To learn more, visit the [National Farm to School Network](#).

### 11. What are the goals and benefits of the Student Chef Competition?

The goals and benefits of the Student Chef Competition are:

- To encourage students to engage with school nutrition and learn about our programs;
- To develop healthy, student-friendly recipes that include local products that can be incorporated into the school nutrition program;
- Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their culinary skills in a competitive environment; and
- Students will gain valuable knowledge and skills in recipe development, food preparation, teamwork and local food systems.

### 12. What is a whole grain?

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts – the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.<sup>1</sup> Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, cracked wheat, wheat berries, rolled oats, brown rice, wild rice, etc.

### 13. How is whole grain-rich defined?

Whole grain-rich is a term which refers to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) criteria for school meal requirements for grain. Foods that meet the whole grain-rich criteria for the school meal program contain at least 50 percent of the grains in the product are from a whole grain. The remaining 50 percent or less of grains, if any, must be enriched.<sup>1</sup>

### 14. How do I know if a grain ingredient in my recipe meets the whole grain-rich criteria?

If the ingredient statement lists a whole grain ingredient as the first ingredient (or the second ingredient behind water), then it is whole grain-rich.

### 15. How can I find out what products are grown in Tennessee?

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. Food and Nutrition Service. *Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. A Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-Rich Criteria*. January 2014. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/WholeGrainResource.pdf> . Accessed July 6, 2017.



Consult the list of Tennessee-grown products in the Junior Chef Guidelines document. You can also search for products grown in Tennessee on the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's [Pick Tennessee Products webpage](#).

**16. Should teams bring their own equipment to the cooking competition?**

Some items will be provided, but not all. Please review the Junior Chef Guidelines document for a list of items that will be provided to teams for the cooking competition.

**17. How much time do teams have to prepare, cook, and plate their recipe?**

Teams competing in the cooking competition must prepare, cook, and plate their recipe (yield of six servings) in 1.5 hours. An additional 30 minutes will be given for presentation to judges and clean-up.

**18. Can the adult/team supervisor help cook?**

No. Only students may cook during the competition. The adult team supervisor must be present at the Cooking Competition, but the adult supervisor cannot coach/guide students once the competition has started. The team supervisor will not be allowed in the kitchen area during the competition.

**19. What is the attire for students on the day of the cooking competition?**

Students should dress appropriately for food preparation. Appropriate attire includes chef attire/coat if available, long pants, and closed-toed, low heel shoes with non-slip soles. Jewelry is not allowed. Hair is properly restrained, and no nail polish. Students must bring their own gloves, hair nets/head coverings, and more. Consult the Junior Chef Guidelines for more information.

If you have additional questions, contact Rachel Draper at [Rachel.E.Draper@tn.gov](mailto:Rachel.E.Draper@tn.gov).

This program was adapted from the Georgia Department of Education Student Chef Competition.