

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.
- Review the National School Lunch Program requirements.
- Ensure the 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 is more than one team at 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 must be submitted to the Tennessee Department of Education by **March 15, 2021**. 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 by March 15, 2021.



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 associated with participating in the Junior Chef competition?

There are no costs associated with participating in the recipe contest. Any "practice" materials or ingredients 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 recipe presentations?

The top eight teams from the recipe competition will be invited to present their recipes to a panel of chef judges. Recipes will be judged on overall appeal and presentation. See the Recipe Presentation 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 Junior 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;
- To give students the opportunity to demonstrate their culinary skills in a competitive environment; and
- For students to 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.¹ 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.¹

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?

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](#).

If you have additional questions, contact Rachel Draper at Rachel.E.Draper@tn.gov.

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

¹ 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.