

Grade 9: Menu Planning - Cultural Foods Showcase



Developed by AHS, Nutrition Services in consultation with the Body Image Research Lab
at the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education – April 2025



Speaker Notes

- We will be looking what is involved in menu planning

Ask: What is menu planning? Or rephrase with what does menu planning mean to you?

Answers: Answers will vary.

- Menu planning can mean different things to people. There is no right or wrong way to menu plan.
- It is thinking ahead about what you'll make for meals and snacks. It could be for a single meal or for a week or a month of meals and snacks. In junior high, you may think about what you want for lunch tomorrow or for the school week.
- Benefits: getting prepared ahead of time can help you make healthier food choices and reduce food waste by using the food that is available. This saves money too.

Approximate time for completion: Lecture portion and discussion will take approximately 20 minutes, in addition to a multi-class project and teach back by students. The assignment can be completed individually, in pairs or a small group.

Teacher Background

- This presentation uses the example of planning a meal for a special event day at a school as a way to discuss menu planning and highlight key components and considerations the students will need to complete their assignment.
- For a PowerPoint version of this presentation, please contact:
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You and your friends have been asked to plan the menu for an upcoming special event day lunch.

Where do you start when planning a menu?

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Speaker Notes

- You and your friends have been asked to plan the menu for an upcoming special event day lunch. Where do you start when planning a menu?

Reference:

Health Canada. Canada's food guide - Plan what you eat. 2022 Jul 8. Available from: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/cook-more-often/plan-what-you-eat/>

Image sources:

Microsoft 365 Stock Images



Speaker Notes

Menu planning can be done in several ways, but there are some key things to consider.

Plan:

For planning the sports day lunch, you will need to:

- gather information about the people attending and details about the event. For example, will the lunch be served in the gym or outside.
- create a menu - decide what you would like to eat. Ensure your meal is balanced (has a variety of foods from Canada's food guide groups of foods)
- find recipes and determine other required ingredients.

Note: if you were menu planning for yourself or family, you would want to check your fridge, cupboards and freezer and plan to use the foods you have before they go to waste. This reduces food waste and saves money.

Prepare:

Prepare for grocery shopping by creating a list.

- Determine the required ingredients, food staples and kitchen supplies.
- Determine the amounts you need for each ingredient and supplies

Teacher Background

- For this lesson plan, the planning and preparing will focus on what to do up to the point of grocery shopping.

Reference:

Health Canada. Canada's food guide - Plan what you eat. 2022 Jul 8. Available from: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/cook-more-often/plan-what-you-eat/>

Image source:

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Plan: Event details



How many people are attending?



Are there food allergies or restrictions?



What cooking equipment is available?



How will the meal be served?



Where will people eat?



How much time is available to prepare the food?



What is our grocery shopping budget?

Speaker Notes

Details about the event and people attending will be essential for building your menu. Here are some ideas of what to consider:

- How many people are attending?
- Are there any food allergies or food restrictions to consider?
- Kitchen space and equipment. Does this impact the types of food you can prepare?
- Will people help themselves to food or will it be served? Will there be several courses or will food be served/available all at once?
- How will people be eating (at table, picnic, buffet etc.). What supplies will you need for this (e.g. tablecloths, serving spoons, paper plates and cutlery?). Does the school have some of these supplies?
- What food ingredients are available at your local grocery store (seasonal foods).
- How much time do you have to prepare the food, serve and clean up?
- What is the budget for the lunch? The budget can strongly influence the types of foods and recipes you choose.

Plan: Make a balanced meal

Use the **proportions** and **types** of food on the food guide plate to guide your recipe choices and menu plan.



[Using Canada's Food Guide Plate](#)

½ Vegetables and fruits

¼ Protein foods



¼ Whole grain foods

Speaker Notes

- When planning meals and snacks, use the types and proportions of food found on Canada's food guide.
- Each group of food provides different nutrients. The plate highlights which types of foods our body needs. Eating this way will help you get all the nutrients you need in the right amounts.

Key messages for each group of food:

- Try including vegetables and fruits at every meal and snack. They are filled with nutrients that your body needs. Fresh frozen and canned varieties are all nutritious options. Look for canned and frozen options without added sugar (i.e. syrup) and low or no salt added when possible.
- Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
- Canada's food guide suggests including whole grains as part of our pattern of eating. Some of your family's cultural foods may include other types of grains and it is fine to include these and share these as part of this assignment.
- Eating a variety of different foods are all important parts of healthy eating.

Optional: show Canada's food guide videos in class to review key concepts related to planning a meal. All are under 1 minute in length.

- **Family Meals** <https://youtu.be/9FG4d-2tECo>
- **Mixed Dishes** <https://youtu.be/hknXiyFwUEA>

Teacher Background

For more information refer to [Make healthy meals with Canada's Food Guide Plate](#)

- Reminder: consider what foods students have available to them at home when teaching students about vegetables, fruits, protein foods and whole grain foods. This may include different forms of vegetables and fruits (fresh, frozen, canned), different types of protein foods (animal based and plant based) and a variety of different grains (including non-whole grain options).

Reference:

Health Canada. Canada's dietary guidelines. 2023 June 23. Available from: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/guidelines/section-1-foundation-healthy-eating/>

Plan: Make a balanced meal

Some ingredients (e.g. spices, oils, sauces) may not fit on the food guide plate, but are still important for flavour and enjoyment.



$\frac{1}{2}$ Vegetables and fruits

$\frac{1}{4}$ Protein foods



$\frac{1}{4}$ Whole grain foods

Speaker Notes:

- Some foods or ingredients may not fit within Canada's food guide. These foods may include herb, spices, cooking oils or other ingredients that contribute to the flavour and overall enjoyment of foods.

Teacher Background

- During classroom education, your students may provide examples of other foods they enjoy, including foods associate with celebrations (e.g. cake) or highly processed foods. You can help refocus the conversation in a neutral way by using some of the example phrasing here Create a supportive environment - Canada's Food Guide

You and your friends
decide on a meal:



Is this meal balanced?

$\frac{1}{2}$ Vegetables
and fruits

$\frac{1}{4}$ Protein
foods



$\frac{1}{4}$ Whole
grain foods

Speaker notes:

You and your friends decide on a meal. Based on the information you gathered, you determined:

- none of the students are vegetarians and there are no milk allergies.
- it needs to be a cold lunch because you will not have access to the cooking equipment at that time and it needs to be easy to serve and eat.

You decide on:

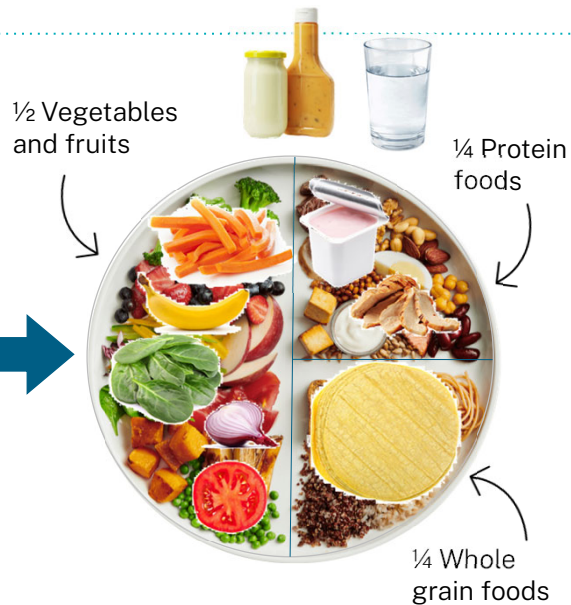
- Chicken vegetable wraps
- Sliced carrots
- Bananas
- Individual servings of yogurt
- Water

Does this meal include all three groups of food in balanced proportions?

Yes! It looks like this is a balanced meal.



What is your next step?



Speaker notes:

Yes, this chicken wrap with sliced carrots, banana, yogurt and water looks to be a balanced meal according to Canada's food guide .

- Approximately half the meal is vegetables and fruits
- Although there are 2 types of protein foods, the amount of chicken in the wrap would be fairly small and the yogurt cups are also small, so approximately a quarter of the meal
- The large whole wheat wrap would make up approximately a quarter of the meal.

What is your next step in menu planning?

Plan: Choosing recipes

You determine that you only need to find 1 recipe for the special event lunch.

Speaker Notes

There are several things to consider when choosing recipes.

- Consider the complexity of the recipe, as well as time and skills required to create the dish.
- Do I have the kitchen equipment to make the recipe and a place to store the prepared food before it is served to ensure food safety?
- The availability and cost of ingredients is another important consideration.
- In general, if using multiple recipes, look for ones that have overlapping ingredients to save money and preparation time.

Adjusting the yield

- In this example, searching for a recipe that has a large yield (50 servings) is a good idea. It will make it easier to build a grocery list if the ingredients are already scaled up.
- Another reason to try to find a recipe with a larger yield is because it cannot be assumed that scaling up a recipe will always work well. Typically recipes can be doubled. However, some ingredients, especially in baking, need to have a specific ratio and changing the recipe yield by a significant amount may change how the ingredients interact.

(Optional) Adjusting recipes to meet personal needs

- Discuss information and tips on the Health Canada webpage [Adjusting recipes to meet your needs - Canada's Food Guide](https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/cooking-skills/adjusting-recipes-meet-your-needs). For example, adjusting recipes for health, dietary restrictions, or to reflect culture and lower cost.

Background for teachers:

- [How to Use a Recipe](#) (Alberta Health Services) -this handout has information and tips on how to use a recipe and create a grocery list.
- Healthy recipe ideas –if students ask about where to find healthy recipes.
 - [Health Canada – Canada's Food Guide Recipes](#)
 - [AHS – Inspiring Healthy Eating Recipes](#)
 - [Dietitians of Canada -Cookspiration](#)

Reference

Health Canada. Adjusting recipes to meet your needs. 2025 Mar 13. Available from: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/cooking-skills/adjusting-recipes-meet-your-needs>

Image sources:

Students -Microsoft 365 Stock Images

Prepare: Create a grocery list

Review your recipes and menu to:

- Create an ingredients list
- Other items identified in recipe (e.g., tinfoil)
- Calculate amounts to purchase

Event Details:

- What supplies are needed based on event details? (e.g. paper plates, cutlery, cups, tablecloths, etc.)
 - Calculate amounts to purchase
-



Speaker Notes

- Use the menu plan to prepare a grocery list with the ingredients from each recipe. Also, include other items from the recipes that you may need to prepare the foods. For example, tinfoil, toothpicks, etc.
- Determine the quantity of ingredients by comparing the number of servings or yield on each recipe to the number of people attending. As noted on the previous slide, it helps to choose a recipe with a large yield if you are making a meal for a large group.
- Review your menu for other food or drink items.
- Review the supplies that are needed for the meal. Do you have all the tools needed?

Prepare:
You and your friends
create a grocery list.

Your menu plan
is ready
for the event!



The collage consists of three circular images. The top right image shows three students (two men and one woman) sitting at a table in a library, looking at a laptop. The bottom left image shows a spiral-bound notepad with a handwritten grocery list. The bottom right image shows a person's hand reaching into a bin of red tomatoes in a grocery store.

- 80 bananas
- 8 - 3lb bags of carrots
- 8 packages of spinach
- 10 tomatoes
- 2 red onion
- 80 tortillas
- 24 chicken breasts
- 3 bottle of dressing
- 10 - 8 packs of yogurt

Speaker notes:

You and your friends create a grocery list. You also speak to the staff at the school cafeteria to ensure all the equipment needed is available (cutting boards, plates, napkins, etc.). Your menu plan is ready for the event!

Review: Menu planning process

Plan:

- ✓ Event details and budget
- ✓ Balanced meal
- ✓ Recipes

Prepare:

- ✓ Grocery list of ingredients and supplies
- ✓ Calculate amounts to purchase



Speaker Notes:

The menu planning process for an event or a special occasion includes:

- **Event Details:** Consider number of attendees, any food allergies or restrictions, kitchen equipment and space, including storage such as a refrigerator and freezer space. What is the budget for the meal?
- **Balanced Plate:** Remember to include $\frac{1}{2}$ you plate as vegetables and fruit, $\frac{1}{4}$ plate grains and $\frac{1}{4}$ protein foods
- **Recipe:** Consider the complexity of the recipe, as well as time and skill required to create dish. If using multiple recipes, look for ones that have overlapping ingredients to save money and preparation time.
- **Grocery list:** create the list from the ingredients in your recipe(s). Consider cost and if a food (vegetables and fruit) is in season.
- **Calculate:** Calculate how much of each food ingredient on your list is needed to make the recipe

Menu planning at home for yourself or family is a similar process. Instead of “event details”, it would be you or your family’s “daily schedule”, including the amount of time and location of eating meals and any dietary considerations for yourself or family members . Also, the “balanced meal” step would be based on building meals and snacks with foods that you currently have at home, especially foods that do not last long, rather than buying all new ingredients.

Image sources:

Microsoft 365 Stock Images

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Your lunch menu was a success!

Everyone enjoyed it so much that you have been asked to plan an upcoming **cultural celebration dinner**.

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Speaker notes:

Your lunch menu plan was a success! Everyone enjoyed it so much that you have been asked to plan an upcoming **cultural celebration dinner**.

Image sources:

Microsoft 365 Stock Images



What is a family food tradition or a cultural food you enjoy?



Speaker Notes:

Ask: Does anyone want to share a family food tradition or a cultural food they enjoy?

Sample Answers:

- Answers will vary.
- Select a family food tradition to share yourself to get class started or use an example here:
 - Alberta Indigenous culture: Pemmican is a traditional food often eaten on long hunting trips. Recipes vary, but typically it is made from ground dried meat mixed with wild berries and homemade lard.
 - Acadian culture: meat pie “Tourtière” eaten during winter holiday season. Typically made from ground pork, beef or veal and potatoes.

Image sources:
Health Canada

Celebrations and Traditions

Celebrating cultural food traditions gives us a chance to:

- ✓ learn about different foods around the world
- ✓ promote a wider variety of food choices
- ✓ learn new food preparation skills
- ✓ pass along food traditions and cultural awareness



Speaker Notes

Cultural traditions

Sharing cultural food traditions is a way of connecting, teaching and passing on special meal preparations to the next generation. Culture and food traditions also provides an opportunity to try new foods and is important in the development of positive eating attitudes.

Key learning points:

Part of the enjoyment of eating is choosing foods that reflect your preferences. Your preferences and eating habits can be shaped by many things, including cultures and food traditions.

Cultures and food traditions can influence:

- how you eat
- what you eat
- when you eat
- where you get food
- how you prepare food

In many cultures, food and food traditions:

- are central in celebrations
- play a big part in connecting us to others

Healthy food choices and eating habits can vary widely:

- around the world
- between and within cultures

Healthy eating can be adaptable and reflect various cultures and food traditions

Including cultures and food traditions as part of healthy eating can help you:

- choose foods that you enjoy
- grow your skills and knowledge
- learn about cultures and food traditions
- create a sense of community and foster connections
- keep your cultural roots and food traditions alive by sharing them with others

Reference:

Government of Canada. Canada's Food Guide. Cultures, food traditions and healthy eating. 2020, Oct 14. Available from: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/enjoy-your-food/cultures-food-traditions-and-healthy-eating/>

Image sources:

Microsoft 365 Stock Images



What information will you need for planning the cultural celebration meal?



Speaker Notes

Ask: What information will you need for planning the cultural celebration meal?

Possible Answers:

- Answers may vary
- Explain that the steps discussed for planning the sports day lunch are the same you would use for planning any menu. In particular, the “event details” considerations would be the same.
- Go to next slide

Image sources:

Microsoft 365 Stock Images



What information will you need for planning the cultural celebration meal?



- How many people are attending?
- Are there food allergies or restrictions?
- What cooking equipment is available?
- Where will people ? How will the meal be served?
- What foods are culturally important?
- How much time is available to prepare the food?
- What is our grocery shopping budget?

Speaker Notes

Review event details with some added considerations for culture

- How many people are attending?
- Any food allergies or intolerances?
- Kitchen space and equipment (do you need to borrow anything to prepare the meal?)
- How will people be eating (at table, picnic, buffet etc.)
- Number of courses or food all at once
- What foods are culturally important.
 - Talk to family members or friends that are part of your culture.
 - Research culture and traditional food dishes (especially if you cannot get this information from family).
- Can you purchase all the specific cultural ingredients in Alberta?
- What ingredients or food do you currently have in cupboards, fridge, freezer that could be used?
- Budget: seasonality, flyer deals for purchasing
- Time: How much time do you have to prepare the food, serve and clean up

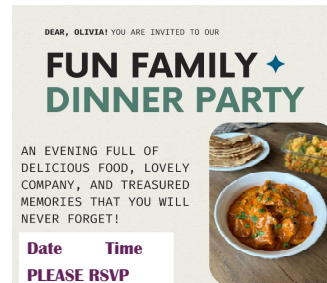
Image sources:

Microsoft 365 Stock Images

Assignment

Scenario: You have been asked to host a cultural celebration meal for 8-12 guests. You are in charge of creating the menu and determining any required supplies for preparing, serving, and eating the meal.

- Select a culture and research traditional foods and celebrations.
- Develop a menu for a meal specific to the culture you chose. Include different courses or components such as appetizers or desserts if that is part of the cultural food tradition.
- Use electronic slides or a poster/display board to capture your research and menu. Be creative and use pictures or drawings that depict the foods selected.



Speaker Notes

- This assignment will focus on one meal. You will plan a menu that is specific to the culture of your choosing and will include several components: appetizer, main entrée, dessert.
- Lastly, we will be presenting our assignments back to each other in class to showcase the various cultures selected.

Teacher Background:

- There is a Menu Planning Assignment – Student Instructions that can be provided to students before or after presenting this slide.
- Teacher decides if students will complete an assignment individually, in pairs, or in a group.