

Tips for Successful Food Demonstrations

Planning/Preparing

- When choosing a recipe, ask yourself the following questions: What messages are you trying to share? Is it easy quick and easy to prep? Cost appropriate? Have you tested it? How about nutrition – does it meet your criteria for “nutritious?” If small children will attend, is the food safe/appropriate for them to eat?
- Your audience: what do you know about them? Will you be providing the demo during mealtime? Will they be in a rush? What barriers might they have to acceptance of the food you prepare?
- If possible, visit the demonstration site ahead of time. Check for availability of tables, electrical outlets, water, restrooms, and garbage cans, and the best area to park and unload.
- Be sure you have stocked your demo “kit” with everything you will need, including food and utensils. Be sure all cooking utensils are clean, and that perishable foods are kept cold until use.
- Dress conservatively. Keep jewelry simple to avoid distraction. Wear comfortable shoes. If you have long hair, tie it back so it is out of the way.

Your Site

- Arrive early so you have plenty of time to find what you need and set up.
- Wipe off the demonstration table with bleach solution or cover with a clean tablecloth.
- If using an electric cord, be sure it is safely positioned and not a potential tripping hazard.
- Tape a large plastic bag to one end of the demo table for clean-up. Keep a second garbage bag on hand for dirty dishes (if there is a sink at the site, you can rinse dishes before packing them – be sure to wash/sanitize them later).

Setting Up

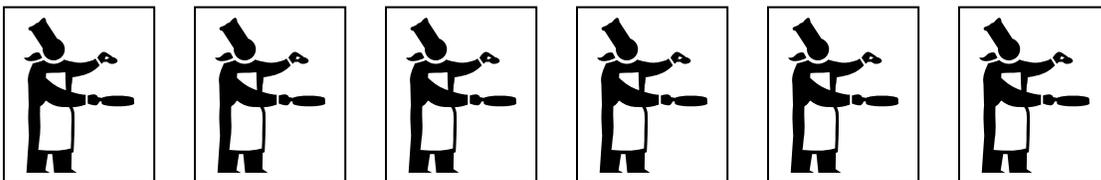
- Once you’ve unloaded your kit, move it out of the way so no one trips on it.
- Display ingredients so participants can see what you are using for the demonstration.
- Keep your demo area orderly – use a tray for utensils and ingredients, and one for dirty utensils and opened cans/packages.
- Check your demo table from the “viewers’ side” to be sure participants can see the demonstration clearly.
- Put your recipe inside a plastic cover to protect it from spills. Tape your recipe copy to the table (so it doesn’t disappear!)

Action!

- Measure salt, spices, etc. over a cup – not over the mixture in the skillet, blender or bowl. Or, you may pre-measure these ingredients when you are setting up – this will save time later.
- Clean up spills immediately. Have at least one damp cloth/sponge available for spills (a roll of paper towels is also a good idea).
- When handing out samples, use a new plate/bowl for “seconds.” It is best if you are the one to dish up samples.
- Be sure that you (and anyone helping you with the demo) demonstrate good food safety practices: wash hands often – before unloading your kit, before handling food, etc. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Make sure raw foods don’t contaminate cooked foods.
- Avoid touching your hair or face, and avoid scratching, etc. while demonstrating. Your viewers will be watching! No tasting food or drinking beverages while demonstrating.
- Smile! Invite visitors to come and see what you are doing. Ask them a question: “Would you like to try a fruit smoothie today?” Be sure to give them a copy of the recipe.

Before You Leave

- If possible, wash (or at least scrape/rinse) utensils before packing up. A large plastic garbage bag works well for quickly packing dirty dishes/utensils and transporting back to the kitchen for sanitation. Check the floor for spills and crumbs.
- What to do with leftovers? Most of the time, there will not be any food left if you plan for participants to have small samples. If the food has been handled by many people or left at room temperature for too long, throw it out after your demonstration. Sending perishable foods home after a demonstration is risky business. Unless you know with certainty that the food will be refrigerated promptly (within 2 hours from the time you prepared it), do not send it home with clientele or other staff members. Some agencies/groups have food safety rules that do not allow food to be sent home. Be sure to check this out ahead of time.



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