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Team Nutrition Cooks!

ACTIVITY GUIDE

United States Department of Agriculture

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Welcome to Team Nutrition Cooks!

Team Nutrition Cooks! (TNC) is a series of cooking-based nutrition activities for out-of-school and afterschool programs, for children around ages 8 to 12 years old. These activities can spark children's interest in trying new foods and help empower them with skills for independence. Cooking can also help kids become more interested in making healthy food choices that can help build and support good eating habits throughout their lifetime.

Team Nutrition Cooks! contains five modules, and each module is centered around a kid-friendly recipe that can be prepared at your afterschool or out-of-school program site. Step-by-step instructions for each module are included in this **Activity Guide**. Modules can be done in any order you choose, and you can spread them out over the course of a week, month, or year.

Each module has an accompanying **Family Handout** that can be sent home so that children can continue to practice their cooking skills at home. **Family Handouts** include the recipe, instructions for how kids and families can cook together, and worksheets and activities to reinforce healthy habits. All materials can be viewed and downloaded at **https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cooks**.

Team Nutrition Cooks! Menu of Modules

Applesauce

p. 15

This is a great place to start! Using only two ingredients—apples and water—children learn to peel, core, dice, measure, simmer, and mash while making a familiar favorite. A perfect way to give kids a taste for healthy cooking!

Scrambled Eggs With Spinach

p. 43

Stir up some fun with this breakfast—or anytime—dish! Kids will have an "eggscellent" time learning how to chop, measure, crack an egg, whisk, scramble, and more.

Corn and Zucchini Pancakes

p. 71

Pancakes aren't just for breakfast! Skills such as grating, cracking an egg, whisking, chopping, and measuring are used in making this savory vegetable dish.

Grain Bowls

p. 99

These grain bowls let the goodness of whole grains shine while mixing them with vegetables, protein, fruit, and a light dressing. Measuring, chopping, simmering, and assembling the bowls are covered in this recipe.

Salad With Vinaigrette Dressing

p. 127

Leafy greens, fresh fruits and vegetables, and a hint of cheese are tossed with a homemade dressing that children can make on their own. Children can practice measuring, whisking, mixing, and peeling in this "no-cook" recipe.

Recipe for Success!

Below are some tips to help make *Team Nutrition Cooks!* a success in your program. You may want to circle the options that you would like to try or check off the box after you have tried it.

- ❑ **Start Early—**Before starting *Team Nutrition Cooks!*, you may find it helpful to look over the calendar for the year, semester, or other period of time to see what dates or days of the week would be best for these activities. You can think about other activities or occasions that are held at your site, holidays or vacation days when your program might be closed, and other events that you may want to schedule around. Many programs are very busy in the late fall or early winter with holiday celebrations and in the late spring with end-of-school-year activities.

- ❑ **Safety First—**Before starting, be sure to review all of the policies related to your program or facility regarding food preparation. Check with your local health department about food safety requirements specific to your area. For general information on food safety and food allergies, see **Food Safety/Food Allergies** on page 5 of this guide.

- ❑ **Read Ahead—**You may find it helpful to read through the entire module at least a day or 2 before doing the activities. This will help you determine what ingredients you need, how much of each ingredient to buy, the materials and supplies you might need, and how to arrange the space at your site. You may also want to pay special attention to notes marked "**Do Ahead**," "**Safety Tip**," "**Bright Idea**," or "**Instructor Tip**."

- ❑ **Attention to Allergies—**Before starting *Team Nutrition Cooks!*, be sure to find out if any participants have food allergies. Let parents and families know their child will be making and tasting food in your program.

- ❑ **Practice (If Possible)—**If you have time, you may want to try the recipe before making it with the group or find a way to use the cooking tools in the room and area where you are holding the program.

- ❑ **Shop (or Ask!) Around—**If you know of other programs in your community that have cooking activities for children, you may be able to borrow equipment or materials from them to use for *Team Nutrition Cooks!* Or, if appropriate, you can ask families to bring in cooking tools that can be used for each module.

- ❑ **Break It Up—**Children may be coming to your program after a full day of sitting and learning in school. Including physical activity or breaks before *Team Nutrition Cooks!* can help with classroom management during the cooking activities. Or—you may choose to break up the activities in a module over 2 or more days. Each module provides tips on how activities can be reordered, rearranged, or modified to fit the needs of your group.

- ❑ **Give It Time—**The first time you cook with your group, activities may take longer than what is recommended in this guide. That is OK! Allow more time than you think you will need for the first module, and over time, you and the children will likely fall into a routine for cooking that will take less time and run more smoothly.

Recipe for Success! continued

- **Size Up or Down—**Each recipe is written to yield six servings. We recommend having a group of five children and one adult. This way, each child will prepare or have a part in preparing the recipe and will be given a full serving. The ratio of one adult for each group of five children will help you manage preparation, instruction, and behavior and avoid long waiting times and overcrowding of cooking stations. If you have larger groups, you may want to try:
  - **Repeating the Activity:** Divide the children into small groups and then repeat the activity throughout the day or week.
  - **Showing the Skills:** Demonstrate cooking skills in front of the group, and then have each small group practice one skill, such as grating or mixing.

- **Take Advantage of Downtime—**If your group has extra time during the session, such as when you are waiting for something to cook, you can have them do the worksheets in the Family Handout as part of the session. Each module also includes discussion questions that could be used during this time.

- **Short on Time?—**Focus on Handwashing, Ground Rules, Cooking and Eating, and Cleanup. Each module has a Quick Start Guide to give you all the important information you need to quickly prepare and get cooking!

Team Nutrition Cooks! FUNdamentals

Here are some important instructions and tips that will help you teach each lesson safely and smoothly. Review this section before implementing *Team Nutrition Cooks!* in your program.

Food Safety

Specific food safety tips are included as part of each activity, including handwashing guides, proper temperatures for cooking and storing foods, and information about food allergies.

What do you need to know about handling fruits and vegetables safely?

- Fruits and vegetables should be kept separate from raw eggs, meat, poultry, and seafood while shopping, preparing, and storing.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables well under running tap water before eating, cutting, or cooking with them. Rinse fruits and vegetables even if you plan to peel them before using them in the recipe. Do not use soap or detergent to clean fresh produce.
- Scrub firm produce, such as apples and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Dry produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that might be present.
- If using pre-cut fruit or vegetables labeled "ready to eat" or "washed," you do not need to rinse them again.
- Refrigerate produce that has been cut. Never let cut fruits or vegetables sit at room temperature more than 2 hours before refrigerating. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature in your refrigerator is consistently at 40°F or below.

What do you need to know about handling raw eggs safely?

Raw eggs must be handled carefully to avoid the possibility of foodborne illness, often called "food poisoning." Even eggs with clean, uncracked shells may sometimes have bacteria called salmonella that can cause diarrhea, fever, stomach cramps, and vomiting. Cooking eggs kills salmonella. Correctly buying, storing, handling, and cooking eggs greatly reduces this risk.

- **Buying:** When buying eggs, only buy refrigerated eggs with clean, unbroken shells. Open the carton and check to see that the eggs are clean and that the shells are not cracked. Bacteria can enter through cracks in the shell. Check the expiration date stamped on the carton as well.
- **Storing:** Store raw eggs inside of their original carton and on an inside shelf of a refrigerator. Eggs left at room temperature should be thrown away after 2 hours or 1 hour in warm weather. Use a thermometer to ensure refrigerator temperature is consistently 40°F or below.

Personal Health and Food Safety

No one who is feeling sick should handle food. If an adult or child has been sick with symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea, he or she should not participate until he or she is symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

If an adult instructor's hands have a cut or wound, the cut should be bandaged and clean disposable gloves should be worn. If a child's hand has a cut or wound, the child should be given tasks that do not involve direct contact with food.

Safe Food Handling

Handling and Cooking Eggs

- Do not taste raw eggs. Foods made with eggs should be fully cooked before eating.
- There is no need to rinse USDA-graded eggs, which are ready to use and prewashed at the processing site. Rinsing eggs may increase the risk of contamination, as water can enter the egg through the pores in the shell.
- Anything that touches raw eggs needs to be washed before being used again, including hands. Do not mix a raw egg with the same fork you use for eating. Clean all kitchen counters, utensils, kitchen tools, and surfaces that raw egg has touched with hot, soapy water.
- Do not leave eggs or egg-rich foods at room temperature for more than 2 hours total.
- Eggs should be eaten within 3 to 5 weeks of purchase.
- Serve egg dishes immediately after cooking.

Food Allergies

Each year, millions of Americans have allergic reactions to food. Although most food allergies cause relatively mild symptoms, some can cause severe reactions and can be life-threatening.

Before beginning *Team Nutrition Cooks!*, review your program's food allergy and food safety policies and let parents and families know that their child will be tasting and making foods in your program. Be sure to find out if any of the children have food allergies.

The eight foods that most commonly trigger an allergic reaction are:

1. Fish
2. Shellfish
3. Eggs
4. Milk
5. Wheat
6. Peanuts
7. Tree nuts (e.g., walnut, almond, hazelnut, cashew, pistachio, Brazil nuts)
8. Soybeans

Allergic reactions can include:

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash
- Tingling or itchy sensations
- Swelling of the face, tongue, or lips
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Coughing or wheezing
- Dizziness and/or light-headedness
- Swelling of the throat and vocal cords
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness

Symptoms of food allergies typically appear within a few minutes to a few hours after a person has eaten the food to which he or she is allergic.

Call for emergency medical help quickly if someone is having a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

For additional food allergy management and prevention information, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Food Allergies in Schools at:*

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/.

Ground Rules

Review and have the children agree to the Ground Rules before starting.

When reading the Ground Rules, remind the children why each rule exists or ask them to explain the reasoning behind each rule. Make sure everyone understands and agrees to the Ground Rules before moving on. You can either get a "thumbs up" or have the children sign the rules as an agreement.

- ❑ **Clear the decks—**Keep books, backpacks, electronics, and coats off the tables or counters where food is prepared or served. Be sure bags are not in the aisle or in a place where people will trip over them. *Remind the children that this is for their safety and to keep germs out of the food.*
- ❑ **Wear sneakers—**Wear closed-toed shoes, such as sneakers. *Remind the children that this is for their safety.*
- ❑ **Tie back long hair—**Pull long hair into a ponytail or bun to prevent accidents and to minimize hair getting into food. *Remind the children that this is for their safety and to keep germs out of the food.*
- ❑ **Scrub in and out—**Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom. *Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.*
- ❑ **Be careful—**Use the kitchen tools carefully and stay aware of where everyone is around you. *Remind the children that this is for their safety.*
- ❑ **No "ewwwws"—**You are going to try some new things and you may love them, but if you do not, no "ewwwws." *Remind the children that this helps everyone to keep an open mind. It is also a part of practicing good manners.*
- ❑ **No "double-dipping"—**Tasting utensils should never be used in shared food. Watch to make sure that the children do not put tasting utensils back into shared food. *Remind the children that this is for their health and safety.*
- ❑ **Clean up your mess—**Everyone will clean up his or her own mess. *Remind the children that this is practicing responsibility.*

How to Read a Recipe

➲ **DO AHEAD:** Give each child a copy of the Family Handout for the module and have the children turn to the recipe. Copies of the Family Handout can be found at **https://teamnutrition.usda.gov**.

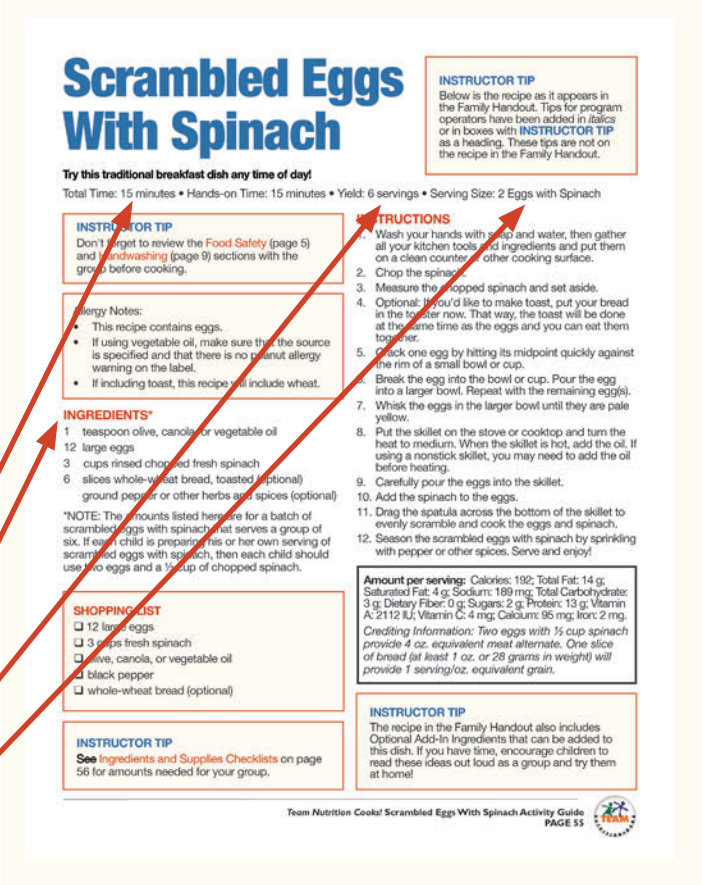
Explain how to read a recipe:

- A recipe lays out directions for cooking. It is important to read through the entire recipe.

Read the whole recipe first:

Read through the entire recipe from start to finish so that you can make sure you have everything you will need. The recipe will tell you:

- How much time it will take you to make the dish
- What ingredients (food) you need and how much
- How many servings it will make
- The size of each serving



Scrambled Eggs With Spinach

Try this traditional breakfast dish any time of day!

Total Time: 15 minutes • Hands-on Time: 15 minutes • Yield: 6 servings • Serving Size: 2 Eggs with Spinach

INSTRUCTOR TIP
Below is the recipe as it appears in the Family Handout. Tips for program operators have been added in *italics* or in boxes with INSTRUCTOR TIP as a heading. These tips are not on the recipe in the Family Handout.

INSTRUCTOR TIP
Don't forget to review the Food Safety (page 5) and Handwashing (page 9) sections with the group before cooking.

Allergy Notes:
- This recipe contains eggs.
- If using vegetable oil, make sure that the source is specified and that there is no peanut allergy warning on the label.
- If including toast, this recipe will include wheat.

INGREDIENTS*
1 teaspoon olive, canola, or vegetable oil
12 large eggs
3 cups rinsed chopped fresh spinach
6 slices whole-wheat bread, toasted (optional)
ground pepper or other herbs and spices (optional)

*NOTE: The amounts listed here are for a batch of scrambled eggs with spinach that serves a group of six. If each child is preparing his or her own serving of scrambled eggs with spinach, then each child should use two eggs and a ½ cup of chopped spinach.

SHOPPING LIST
- ❑ 12 large eggs
- ❑ 3 cups fresh spinach
- ❑ Olive, canola, or vegetable oil
- ❑ black pepper
- ❑ whole-wheat bread (optional)

INSTRUCTOR TIP
See Ingredients and Supplies Checklists on page 56 for amounts needed for your group.

INSTRUCTIONS
1. Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your kitchen tools and ingredients and put them on a clean counter or other cooking surface.
2. Chop the spinach.
3. Measure the chopped spinach and set aside.
4. Optional: If you'd like to make toast, put your bread in the toaster now. That way, the toast will be done at the same time as the eggs and you can eat them together.
5. Crack one egg by hitting its midpoint quickly against the rim of a small bowl or cup.
6. Break the egg into the bowl or cup. Pour the egg into a larger bowl. Repeat with the remaining egg(s).
7. Whisk the eggs in the larger bowl until they are pale yellow.
8. Put the skillet on the stove or cooktop and turn the heat to medium. When the skillet is hot, add the oil. If using a nonstick skillet, you may need to add the oil before heating.
9. Carefully pour the eggs into the skillet.
10. Add the spinach to the eggs.
11. Drag the spatula across the bottom of the skillet to evenly scramble and cook the eggs and spinach.
12. Season the scrambled eggs with spinach by sprinkling with pepper or other spices. Serve and enjoy!

Amount per serving: Calories: 192; Total Fat: 14 g; Saturated Fat: 4 g; Sodium: 189 mg; Total Carbohydrate: 3 g; Dietary Fiber: 0 g; Sugars: 2 g; Protein: 13 g; Vitamin A: 2112 IU; Vitamin C: 4 mg; Calcium: 95 mg; Iron: 2 mg.

Crediting Information: Two eggs with ½ cup spinach provide 4 oz. equivalent meat alternate. One slice of bread (at least 1 oz. or 28 grams in weight) will provide 1 serving/oz. equivalent grain.

INSTRUCTOR TIP
The recipe in the Family Handout also includes Optional Add-In Ingredients that can be added to this dish. If you have time, encourage children to read these ideas out loud as a group and try them at home!

Team Nutrition Cooks! Scrambled Eggs With Spinach Activity Guide PAGE 55

Plan ahead:

Explain that "**Total Time**" is the total amount of time the recipe takes to make from start to finish. "**Hands-on Time**" is the amount of time spent on preparing the food, such as rinsing, dicing, peeling, etc. For example, if something is baking in the oven for 30 minutes, that is part of the total time, but not the hands-on time, since you are just waiting for the oven to do the work. This time is perfect for doing something else in the kitchen, like cleaning up!

After looking at the "**Total Time**," decide when you want to eat or serve the dish. For example, if a recipe takes 30 minutes to prepare and you want to eat at 5:00 p.m., you need to start cooking at 4:30 p.m. If it is your first time cooking something, you may want to add a bit more time to the total time listed.

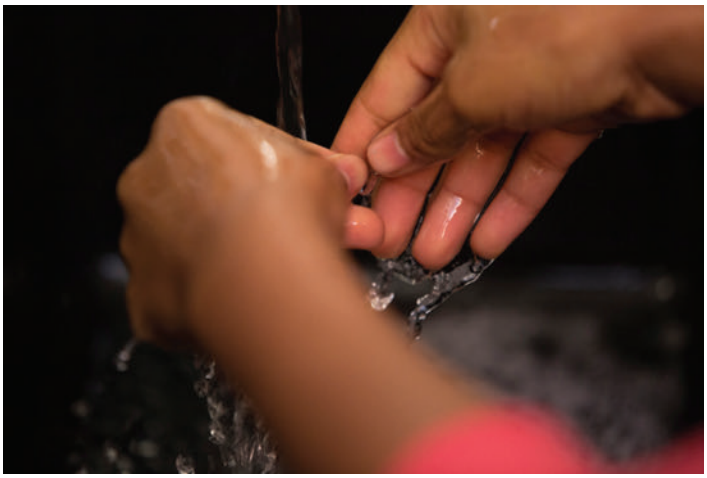
Read through the recipe together and answer any questions the children may have about the directions, ingredients, or kitchen tools.

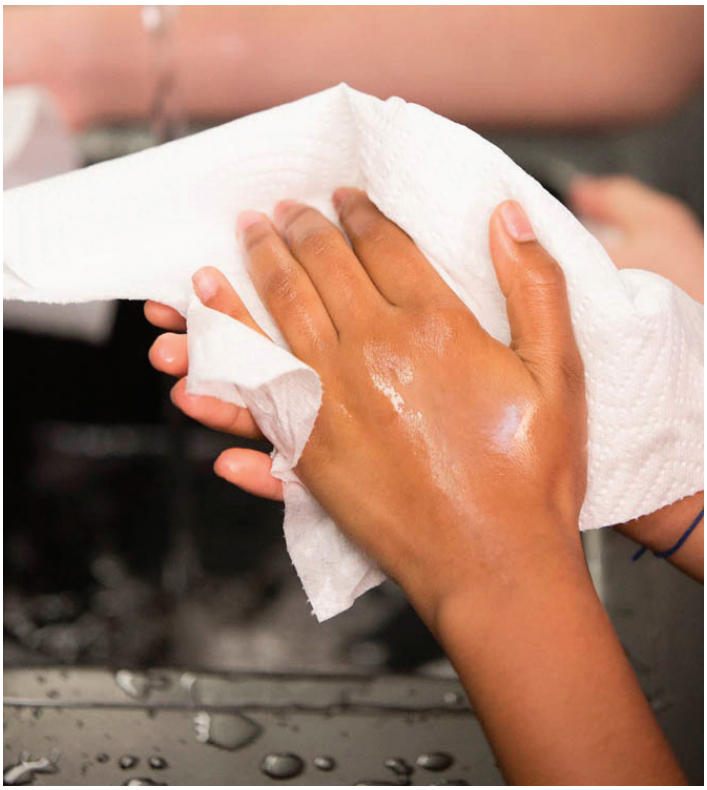
Look and Cook Recipe:

Each Activity Guide and Family Handout also has a Look and Cook Recipe next to the written recipe that uses pictures to show the steps of the recipe. The children can also use these cards to help them learn how to make the recipe.

Handwashing

Explain that everyone must wash his or her hands before any cooking or tasting begins. Washing hands helps keep food safe and stops germs from spreading. Remind the children to keep their clean hands away from their mouth, nose, face, or other places on their bodies.





1. Discuss necessary times to wash hands, including:
   - Before, during, and after preparing food
   - Before eating food
   - After using the bathroom
   - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
   - After touching garbage or other unclean surfaces such as the floor.
2. Show the handwashing video at **https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cooks**. Follow the steps listed below:
   1. Take off all jewelry on your arms and hands.
   2. Wet your hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
   3. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, your palms, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
   4. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
   5. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
   6. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air-dry them.
   7. Turn off the faucet with a paper towel, not your bare hands.

   If needed, remind the children to use a paper towel instead of their clean, bare hands, to get back into the cooking area.
3. Before the tasting or cooking activity, wash your hands. Have the children and other helpers wash their hands too.

How to Set a Table

When teaching students how to set a table, ask each child to prepare his or her own place setting. Have a sample place setting that the children can refer to as an example.

In a standard American place setting, the napkin and fork are on the left side of the plate, with the fork lying on top of the napkin. The knife goes next to the plate on the right side, with the blade facing the plate. The spoon is also on the right side of the plate, to the right of the knife. The cup goes above the knife and the spoon.

How to Serve Family Style

Food is not usually cooked in individual servings. Most dishes are made in a large batch and then divided into portions. When a large serving dish is passed around the table from which individuals can help themselves, this is called "family style."

- Make sure to use clean serving utensils.
- Remind the children that they should eat only from his or her own plates, never directly from the serving dish, to avoid spreading germs. No one should touch the food with his or her fingers when serving or holding the serving dish.
- Everyone will have his or her own plate and eating utensil.
- Uneaten food should never be returned to the serving dish.
- Make sure that each child is offered one full serving of food, as written in the recipe. However, the children do not have to take their full portion all at once and can take more later if they'd like.

Cleanup

It is important to let the children know that cleaning up is an important part of cooking. Some children may not know the correct way to clean dishes, counters, and floors, so showing them what you expect is recommended. Have the children use hot water to wash dishes. Show them the correct amount of soap to put on the dish cloth: a drop or two should be enough for a few pots and pans.

Have dish soap, dish cloths, and dish towels on hand. The children can also use rubber dish gloves when washing dishes.

- **Soak dishes:** If food is baked on or stuck to the dishes, soak them in warm water to loosen it.
- **Wash dishes:** Show the children how to scrub dishes, pots, and pans. Make sure that they wash both the inside and outside and the top and bottom of each. Since utensils go directly into our mouths, be sure they are washed well. It is important to wash all parts of every item, including the handles.
- **Dry dishes:** Show the children where they can leave dishes to dry, or how to dry them with a dish towel. Have them check to make sure there are no remaining grease streaks or traces of food stuck on the pots and pans.
- **Put away kitchen tools:** Show the children where the kitchen tools belong so that they can help put them away.
- **Wash surfaces:** Wash all surfaces that were used for cooking with hot, soapy water.
- **Clean and dry sink:** Wash out the sink with hot, soapy water and dry it with a clean dish towel.
- **Sweep the floor:** Show the children how to sweep into a dustpan and throw away the waste.

✓ **SAFETY TIP:** When washing dishes, never swirl your hands around the bottom of the sink, especially if you cannot see the bottom. There may be sharp tools or utensils under the water.

Get Families Involved!

Getting parents or other family members involved will make it more fun for kids and will help bring the cooking lesson home. Encourage the kids to use the Look and Cook Recipe found in the Family Handout. Copies of the Family Handouts can be downloaded or ordered from **https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cooks**. Encourage the kids to go online to access the videos and try cooking at home.

Consider hosting a "Family Day" when students prepare and then eat a meal with their families using recipes learned in this program. This is another good way to engage parents and other caregivers. Planning an event where families can experience their children's enthusiasm and creativity is another way to get keep families interested and involved in their children's cooking and eating habits.

Serving For the Seasons

In many parts of the United States, some foods may be fresher and cost less depending on time of the year. Below are suggestions for times of the year when you may want to try out a particular module. Remember that *Team Nutrition Cooks!* activities can be done in any order you choose, and you can begin the program in any month of the year.

Winter

- **Scrambled Eggs With Spinach** – Spinach and eggs are available in many places year-round. Warm up with this nourishing dish on cold winter days.

Spring

- **Salad With Vinaigrette Dressing** – Take advantage of the freshness of greens in the spring and give this recipe a spin.

Summer

- **Corn and Zucchini Pancakes** – Fresh corn and zucchini are easy to find in the summer, making this recipe a great one to try in June, July, or August.

Autumn

- **Applesauce** – Apples are everywhere in autumn; use your favorite types in this easy, two-ingredient recipe.
- **Grain Bowls** – This versatile recipe is great year-round! Try it with turkey and cranberries for a festive fall meal.

Recipes for Special Days

- National Apple Day – **October 21**
- National Apple Week – **the second week in August**
- National Apple Month – **October**
- National Egg Day – **June 3**
- National Salad Month – **May**
- National Spinach Day – **March 26**
- National Corn Fritter Day – **July 16**

Teen Talk: Opportunities for Service Learning...and Beyond!

Does your program work with teens in an afterschool or out-of-school time setting? Working with *Team Nutrition Cooks!* can be a wonderful opportunity for teen volunteers to gain service learning experience, to serve as role models to younger children, and to sharpen leadership, communication, and organizational skills while helping activities run smoothly in your program. Depending on the age and time commitment of the teens, they might be able to help you with tasks such as:

- Preparing shopping lists and shopping for food
- Gathering materials and supplies
- Setting up before activities begin
- Cleaning up after activities end
- Demonstrating cooking skills
- Supervising small groups of children
- Testing and preparing recipes ahead of time and adapting, as needed, to the needs of the group
- Selecting books or creating and leading healthy eating activities that also relate to the theme of the recipes
- Decorating the room to support healthy eating behaviors

Finally, involving teens with *Team Nutrition Cooks!* activities may encourage them to think more about their eating and health behaviors or how they may improve their own habits. This experience may also whet their appetite for working in culinary arts, nutrition, or with children as a future career. You can make a difference!

Team Nutrition Cooks! Recipes: Crediting Information

Recipe Name	Food Component(s)	Crediting Information
Applesauce	Fruit	¾ cup of applesauce provides ¾ cup fruit.
Scrambled Eggs With Spinach	Meat/Meat Alternate, Grain (optional)	Two scrambled eggs with spinach provide 4 ounce equivalents (oz. eq.) meat/meat alternate.
Corn and Zucchini Pancakes	Vegetable, Meat/Meat Alternate, Grain	Two corn and zucchini pancakes provide ¾ cup vegetable, 1 oz. eq. meat/meat alternate, and 1¼ serving/oz. eq. grain*.
Grain Bowls	Vegetable, Fruit, Meat/Meat Alternate, Grain	1½ cups of grain bowls provide ½ cup vegetable, ½ cup fruit, 1 oz. eq. meat/meat alternate, and 1 serving/oz. eq. grain*.
Salad With Vinaigrette Dressing	Vegetable, Fruit	Two cups of salad with vinaigrette dressing provide 1 cup vegetable and ¼ cup fruit.

* Grains in this recipe are credited based on oz. eq. of grains. Oz. eq. may be substituted for servings of grains/breads because an oz. eq. of grain contains slightly more creditable grains (16 grams) than is required for a grain/bread serving (14.75 grams).