



# 4-H Foods Demonstration Guide



When you are taking a 4-H Food and Nutrition project, you may share what you learn with others by giving a foods demonstration. Talking in front of a group of friends and other club members can be a little scary at first, but with planning and practice you will be able to give a foods demonstration with ease.

Just what is a foods demonstration? Basically, a foods demonstration is showing a group of others how to prepare a food item; use a cooking technique; or cook an unusual food product. Actually, a demonstration may be easier than a talk, because you have something to do with your hands — you actually show, or demonstrate, what you are talking about.

Have you ever seen anyone do a foods demonstration? Some places you may have seen one are at school, at a 4-H club meeting, at a fair, or on television. By using a foods demonstration to teach others, you can make food preparation look easy and fun, and encourage others to give it a try.

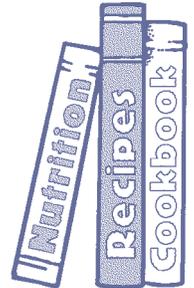
Foods demonstrations in 4-H may be presented at the club, county and state level.

## Planning the Demonstration

First, decide what you are going to demonstrate. It may be a food from your 4-H Food and Nutrition project book, a favorite family recipe, or a new food product that you want to try (as long as it is related to your 4-H Food and Nutrition project). The most important thing is to learn the recipe and what the food should look like when it is finished, which means — practice, practice, practice.

Think about how long it takes you to make the food and what it will look like when it is finished. You will have 8 to 10 minutes to do your demonstration. Choose something that you can do in 8 to 10 minutes or something you can demonstrate with some of the steps done ahead of time (such as measuring, chopping, etc.).

Remember, the topic must be related to a 4-H Food and Nutrition project you are taking. Your project book(s) can provide many topic ideas.



Once you have chosen the topic for your demonstration, start by learning all you can about the subject. Your goal is to know more about the topic than you can possibly say in the 8 to 10 minutes.

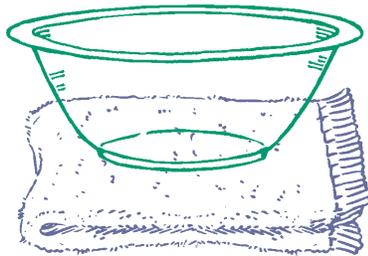
When preparing for the demonstration, use the following checklist to make sure you have everything that you need:

- ✓ List the demonstration steps in order
- ✓ Outline the information you have found that helps explain your demonstration
- ✓ List all equipment you need
- ✓ Practice, Practice, Practice

## Getting Ready for the Demonstration

- Measure all ingredients and do any advance food preparation, as necessary (chop, dice, pre-cook).
- Place everything in clear containers – remove lids or covers just before the demonstration.
- Make sure that commercial labels are not left on any of the food containers you will use.
- The demonstration area is the “stage.” Set up the work area so that items you will be using are easy to reach and easy to use within this area. Keep the “stage” area free of distracting items.
- Have a damp cloth ready to wipe up spills and clean the work area and your hands.

*Tip: A damp cloth under a mixing bowl also helps keep the bowl from slipping and from making too much noise.*



- Set up the ingredients that are pre-measured; remove any lids or plastic wrap. Do you have a damp towel for clean up? The center of the table will be the actual work area — for mixing, slicing, kneading, rolling, etc.

- Trays can be helpful to carry and organize your food items. An empty tray can be used for the emptied containers. Set the trays up so you can work from left to right (or right to left if that is more comfortable for you); taking the ingredients from the left tray, using them in your workspace in the center, and placing the empty container on the right tray.
- If you need to use electrical equipment of any kind, bring along an extension cord and make sure you know how to operate the equipment.
- Clean, plain and simple clothing is best for doing a foods demonstration. An apron may be a good choice for some while others may choose a costume related to the project. Both are okay as long as they do not distract from the foods demonstration. Avoid jewelry, rings, bangle bracelets, long necklaces, long fingernails, and fingernail polish. These can be distracting and may pose a safety problem if they get lost in the food.
- Hair should be neat and pulled away from your face. Make sure that no hair can fall into the food.

## Giving the Demonstration

Begin your demonstration by drawing your audience in. Make a statement that they can identify with or that will make them want to prepare this dish. You may want to start out by showing what the finished product will look like. Audience appeal is what you are after.

Introduce yourself. State your name, age, club or county, number of years you have been in foods projects and the number of years you have been doing foods demonstrations. Talk about the recipe. Why did you choose it? Does your family like it? What are its selling points?

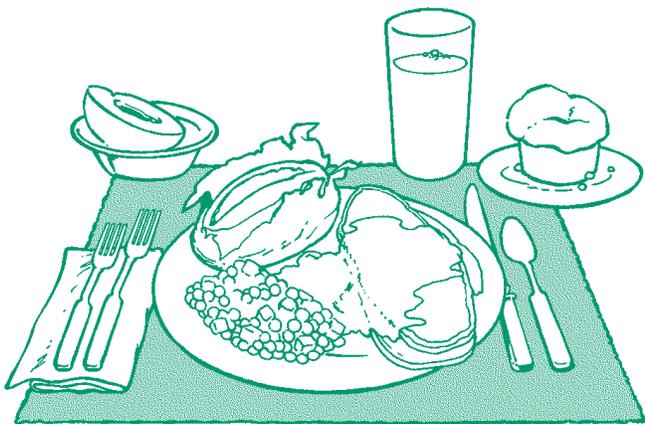
While you are mixing the ingredients, rolling out the dough, shaping the bread — whatever you are doing, talk to the audience and maintain eye contact. Explain a bit of the history of the

food. Tell them the nutritional value of the food you are preparing. Why is this food good to include in their meals? If you are using unusual equipment, special foods, or unfamiliar terms, give them information to help them understand what you are talking about. This is called “filler” and will help keep your audience interested in what you are doing. **Do not** try to talk above a mixer, food processor or other noisy piece of equipment. *Tip: While you are using the “filler” make sure that you do not refer to ingredients as “my” or “your” — call them “the.” For example, “my flour” should be “the flour.”*

As you finish the steps in the demonstration, clean up the work space and move the trays and soiled articles to another table. Wipe off the area and remove any crumbs into your hand and place the crumbs on the trays with the soiled dishes. Display the finished product as attractively as possible. Make sure that it is appealing and that the audience could sit down and have a bite. You may want to remove one portion of the food and display it on a serving plate with a napkin, utensils and beverage. If you are using a demonstration mirror, be sure to reverse the setting so that it will look right in the mirror. Keep the bottom edge of the utensils in a straight line.

## Using Note Cards

If possible, do not use note cards during your demonstration. If you must use notes, make sure they are on small cards placed off to the side of your work area, and only refer to them while



working. Your eyes should be focused toward the audience, which is difficult if you are reading note cards. Look at the audience, relax and smile! Remember to look to the right and left so that you make eye contact with everyone.

## Using Posters

Some demonstrators like to use a poster or other visual aid showing the recipe they are using. Others prefer printed recipe cards that are handed out to the audience. Either method is okay. If you use posters, make sure that the writing is easy to read and pleasing to look at. Use a standard-sized piece of poster board (20" x 30") and make the writing large enough to be seen 20 feet away. Use good contrast between poster text and background. Remember, bright colors are often hard to read. If you use a poster of the recipe, you do not need to repeat amounts of ingredients during the demonstration — just name them as you add them.



## Summarizing the Demonstration

You have shown the audience what you have made, how easy it is to do and how attractive it can be. Bring your demonstration to a close with a statement by answering the question you asked in the introduction.



## Food Demonstration Tips

### Food Sanitation Tips

- ✓ Wash your hands before working with food.
- ✓ Do not lick your fingers or utensils, scratch your face, touch your hair, cough into the food, or contaminate the food in any way.
- ✓ If you must touch the food, explain why you are using your hands and why the product is still safe to eat. You may wish to wear plastic food preparation gloves when handling the food.

- ✓ If you have hot or cold ingredients, keep them safe and remind the audience of the importance of food safety.
- ✓ Know the proper temperatures for food safety.

### Nutrition Tips

- ✓ The Food Guide Pyramid may be used as a reference.
- ✓ Dietary Guidelines for Americans may be used as a reference.
- ✓ You may explain vitamins and minerals contained in the food, what they are and how the body uses them.
- ✓ Make sure your references are accurate.

### Other Presentation Tips

- ✓ If you have forgotten an ingredient — don't make a big deal out of it — just go on and do the demonstration as though you had it.
- ✓ If you have an accident, explain what happened and continue on — anyone can have a problem with food preparation!
- ✓ Be entertaining and informative.
- ✓ Smile and look at the audience.
- ✓ Use a pleasant voice and proper grammar.
- ✓ Make sure everything is clean before you start.
- ✓ Be organized.
- ✓ Speak in a voice that the audience can hear.



## Resource Materials

### Food Preparation Web Sites

<http://www.nutrition.gov>  
<http://www.foodsafety.gov>  
<http://www.fightbac.org>

### Illinois 4-H Publications

Public Presentations, MB0115 (2000)  
 Food Guide Pyramid, ME0301a  
 Communications Guide: Demonstrations,  
 MB0120a (web)

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