

Food Challenge

Practice Tips



This information created and shared by Shawnte Clawson, District 1 4-H Specialist.

Please feel free to alter as needed based on your team's strengths or areas for improvement.

For practice recipes, refer to the Texas 4-H cookbook on DishDish.com.



- Always let kids cook! They are excited about cooking and desire to do “hands on” activities.
- Choose “jobs” for everyone until you have officially assigned jobs. You can draw names out of a hat - just choose randomly so you can see everyone’s talents early. Example of jobs below:
 - Read recipe / figure cost
 - Cut up (prep) ingredients / mix & combine
 - Cook with heated appliances (electric skillet)
 - Safety / clean up
 - Equipment (find items in box – hand to team)
- After every cooking experience – make sure you do a presentation. Every team member must speak at least once. Each team member’s presentation piece will depend on their assigned job. For example:
 - Read recipe / figure cost
 - Will introduce team, give recipe name, give cost of dish and servings.
 - Prep
 - Will discuss steps of making dish – may also give my plate info
- Each practice demonstrate something new before your actual cooking session (like cutting up an onion, tomato, how to cut up chicken, etc..) It’s also good to introduce new foods every practice – they will always see foods they are unfamiliar with at the contest.
- Have parents sign up to bring foods for each practice. Send them the recipe the week before and make sure they keep it a surprise. This way one person isn’t out all the cost for food. You can do the same with kitchen equipment. Make up a list and ask each parent to be responsible for those items. Ask parents to buy personal items separate from the food challenge groceries as we need a receipt with JUST the FOODS you will be cooking with.
- When looking for recipes, make sure there are lots of jobs to do but be sure they can do it within the 40 minutes and with the equipment they have. Its good if they can do several things like grating cheese, open cans with can opener, use a garlic press, and all those things we adults take for granted!
- If the 4-H members have not been in a 4-H project you may have to start with basic lessons of measuring and how to measure with liquid vs dry measuring tools.
- Use incentives. What designates a good practice for your team? If they know what you expect they will work for that. They also like to eat what they make – but I only allow this AFTER the presentation and AFTER cleaning up.