

Fruits go back to School



SCHOOL CONNECTION

Children should have access to healthy food and be able to make healthy food choices wherever they are – at home, in school, and out in the community. Improving the health of the nation’s children and reversing the childhood obesity epidemic is a shared responsibility and will take the commitment of parents, the foodservice industry, the media, and schools working together. The vision of USDA’s School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) is to improve the health of school children through better nutrition. Implementing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in school meals will have important health benefits for children.

Menu-Planning Practices for Healthy School Meals

- Increase the amounts and variety of fruits offered because fruits offer an abundance of important nutrients such as fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Fruits are low in calories, fats, and sodium. Children who eat generous amounts of fruits as part of a healthy diet are likely to have reduced risk of chronic diseases, including stroke, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer.
- Frequently offer fresh fruits using a variety of presentations, such as apple wedges, fresh fruit cups, and banana halves.
- Plan a vitamin C rich fruit or vegetable daily.
- Offer fruit with more potassium often, such as bananas, honeydew melon, oranges, and orange juice.

Culinary Techniques for Fresh Fruits

- Wash fresh fruits close to the time they will be prepared for service. Use clean, cool water and drain the fruit well.
- Berries should be kept in the original container and washed just before serving to prevent softening and to discourage mold growth.
- To prevent browning with fruits such as apples, pears, peaches, bananas, and avocados cut them with a stainless steel blade and then dip in an acidic fruit juice or a commercial product that contains ascorbic acid.
- Prepare in serving size pieces and keep chilled until service. Fruit should be cut in age-appropriate size pieces.
- Offer cut-up fruit as a topping for yogurt.

Culinary Technique for Cooking or Baking Fruit

- Use the right form of the fruit for the recipe. The recipe will suggest the form of the fruit to use: fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Use the form suggested since the textures are different and affect the quality of the baked products.
- Most baked fruit recipes can be prepared ahead of service time and held in the warmer. Fruit dishes that have a crust, such as pie or cobbler should be placed in a warmer uncovered or held at room temperature until time for service.
- Savory fruit sauces should have a balance of sweet and savory and can be used for dipping chicken strips or cheese sticks.

Fruits Are Versatile

Serve delicious fruits at:

Breakfast
Lunch
Snacks

Feature fruits in:

Cold soups
Salads
Side Dishes
Main Courses
Sandwiches
Pizzas
Sauces
Desserts

Resources

- National Food Service Management Institute, *Cooking for the New Generation*, 2007.
National Food Service Management Institute, *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals*, 1996.
National Food Service Management Institute, *Healthy Cuisine for Kids*, 2005.
U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More*, 2004.

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Fruit Pico de Gallo

Size of Portions: 1/4 cup (No. 16 scoop) provides 1/4 cup of fruit

Pico de Gallo is usually known as a type of salsa with tomatoes, onions, cilantro, and tomatoes. However, “pico de gallo” is in fact a fruit salad spiced with a chile powder. The term “pico de gallo” translates into “beak of the rooster” because of the red chiles used in the seasoning. Dice the fresh fruits into chunk size pieces and mix them together in any combination you like. Add children’s favorite fruits such as blueberries, plums, or nectarines. Thanks to Brooks School of the Gervais School District in Gervais, Oregon for sharing this recipe.

Ingredients	50 servings		100 servings		Instructions
	Weight	Measure	Weight	Measure	
	Cantaloupe, fresh, 15 count (40 ounces)	1 1/4 pound	1/2 each	2 1/2 pounds	
Strawberries, frozen, unsweetened	1 pound	2 7/8 cups	2 pounds	5 cups	2. Combine cantaloupe, strawberries, and canned pineapple.
Mango, frozen, unsweetened	12 ounces	1 cup	24 ounces	3 cups	
Pineapple, canned, tidbits packed in juice or light syrup	53 ounces	6 cups	106 ounces (No. 10 can)	12 cups	
Limes		1 each		2 each	3. Wash limes, lemons, and oranges. Cut each citrus fruit into quarters lengthwise. Cut each quarter into 1/8 inch slice.
Lemons		1 each		2 each	
Oranges		1 each		2 each	
Pico de gallo		2 Tablespoons		4 Tablespoons	4. Toss mixed fruit with citrus and pico de gallo seasoning. Put into shallow pan (12”x20”x 2 1/2”). Squeeze fresh lime juice over fruit. Cover. Refrigerate until service.
Limes		2 each		4 each	

Nutrients per serving

Calories	30	Saturated Fat	0 g	Iron	1 mg
Protein	.4 g	Cholesterol	0 mg	Calcium	9 mg
Carbohydrate	7.8 g	Vitamin A	295 IU	Sodium	2 mg
Total Fat	.1g	Vitamin C	11 mg	Dietary Fiber	.8 g

For additional fruit based recipes:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Recipes for Schools*, 2006. Includes recipes such as **Waldorf Fruit Salad** and **Cherry Crisp**.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Recipes for Child Care*, revised 2005. Includes recipes such as **Fruity Dipping Sauce** and **Peach Cobbler**.

Source: Gervais School District, Gervais, Oregon

This recipe is not USDA tested.