

PROCEDURES FOR CREATIVE COOKS

1. **PLAN A MENU FOR A MEAL** - Any type of meal and theme can be planned. It may be a breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner, barbecue, picnic, high tea, campout, or sports game, holiday, birthday party or other ideas the member may want to try. It may be a family meal or a formal dinner for two, etc. It may be as simple or as extravagant as the member wants to make it. Members should keep the occasion in mind as they plan their meal.
2. **SET ONE PLACE SETTING APPROPRIATE TO THE MEAL** - Regardless of the number of people the member intends to serve, the table should be set for just one person for judging purposes. A traditional style meal should be set up on a card table provided by the member. A contemporary meal such as a picnic might be served nicely on a blanket on the floor. Encourage creativity in the members while emphasizing that the comfort and convenience of those eating the meal are of primary importance. Because of space limitations, all entries should be confined to a space 48" square. Exceeding these space limitations will disqualify contestants from consideration for reserve champion and champion status.

One place setting includes a covering for the table (tablecloth, placemats, etc.), napkins, dishes, glasses, cups, flatware, etc., as would be needed if the meal were actually being served. The setting should be appropriate to the meal. Paper plates would be considered appropriate for a picnic but the judge will want to see that the plate is sturdy enough to support the meal being served without inconvenience to the person who will be using it. The place setting should also include a centerpiece which complements the table and the meal, and any serving dishes and utensils necessary to the meal. **No food item is to be included as a part of the centerpiece.** Adults cannot help contestants set up their display. To do so may forfeit all awards won. This **includes** helping prepare foods in the kitchen, verbal coaching, facial expressions, hand gestures, etc. Adults may assist in carrying items into and out of the building and during clean up in order to expedite set-up of the next age division.

Exhibitors are asked to display one serving of their prepared food in the proper dish. Exhibitors are encouraged to garnish the one serving as it might be served. The judge should not be served from this displayed serving. Disposable dishes and utensils should be used (not a part of your table-service), to serve a sample of your food item to the judges.

3. **PREPARE ONE FOOD ITEM FROM THE MENU** - Commercially prepared food items are not acceptable unless as an ingredient in a larger recipe. (Example: Using a can of condensed cream of mushroom soup in a casserole recipe is okay. Using a can of condensed cream of mushroom soup to make a cream of mushroom soup is not okay.) The item which the member or team chooses to prepare may be any one in the menu. It may be a salad, main course, side dish, dessert, etc. Members should be encouraged to prepare an item that makes a nutritional contribution to the meal. Contestants will not prepare their dish before the judge, but will exhibit their completed project. The member will be expected to serve a sample of their food item to at least one judge. The member should not use items from their place setting to serve the judges, but should provide small plates, forks, etc., to serve the sample. **Due to health regulations, you are not to give samples to the general public.** It is **also advisable** to use **disposable plastic gloves** when serving the food, especially if there is any chance your hands may touch the food.

FOOD

All food used for Creative Cooks should be brought from home unless you choose to purchase perishable items in Pueblo. In selecting the item to be prepared, consider how the item will be transported to the State Fair safely and attractively. Judges may refuse to sample any food items they feel are unsafe to eat.

USE OF KITCHEN

Contestants are encouraged to do as much food preparation as possible at home, before coming to State Fair as kitchen space is extremely limited. However, contestants will be able to use one of the State Fair kitchens, as needed, by notifying the superintendent at check in. A microwave is available to be used for warming only. The kitchen will be clean when contestants arrive, and they will be expected to leave it clean when they are finished. Contestants should bring cleaning rags, towels, paper towels, etc. to wash the dishes and wipe off counters.

NOTE: Junior and intermediate members are not to prepare deep fat fried foods due to safety concerns.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Participants will be judged on the following criteria: Exhibitor - well groomed, dressed appropriately, understanding of meal planning

1. Menu - balanced for flavor, color, texture, shapes, nutrition
2. Prepared Dish - appearance, flavor, quality
3. Display and Place Setting - refer to score sheet for specific details
4. Nutrition - knowledge and application to menu
5. Food Safety
6. Creativity

QUESTIONS THE JUDGE MIGHT ASK

Judges will evaluate each presentation on the above criteria. **Participants are not to give a demonstration or speech to the judge.** They need to be prepared to answer questions related to the meal they have planned, nutrition and basic food preparation techniques. Interviews are timed and questions are tailored to the age division.

The judges will approach the exhibit and look at the poster, table, recipe, etc. They may at any time ask contestants to explain a certain part of their exhibit. Such as:

- "Have you served this meal to your family?"
- "Why did you choose this centerpiece?"
- "Would you tell me why you think this meal is a nutritious meal?"
- "How would you get this dish to a picnic and be sure it would be safe to eat?"
- "Why did you choose to prepare this dish instead of one of the other items on your menu?"
- For a team, "How would you divide the responsibility for preparing this meal?"

These are only examples of the types of questions a judge might ask. Contestants should answer the questions conversationally, as they would explain their meal to a curious guest. Contestants will then serve the judge a sample of their food, using dishes and flatware that are not a part of the place-setting.

POSTERS AND RECIPES

Contestants must include a menu poster as part of their display, not exceeding 8½" X 11" in size. The poster needs to be legible and can be decorated by the participant. [NOTE: Contestants **must** provide a written copy of their recipe with entry form, using the form provided in this packet.] Contestants should also have a copy of the recipe with their display or be ready to show it to the judge if requested.

PREPARING YOUR MENU

When preparing your poster arrange the food items in the order in which they are eaten. Place foods that "go together" on the same line.

THIS

Fried Chicken
Mashed Potatoes Gravy
Tossed Salad French Dressing
Hot Rolls Butter
Fruit Ambrosia
Milk

NOT THIS

Gravy
Milk
Mashed Potatoes
French Dressing
Fried Chicken
Tossed Salad
Hot Rolls
Butter
Fruit Ambrosia

Garnishes do not need to be included in the written menu, but they do brighten a meal. A slice of radish, cucumber, stuffed olives, tomato wedge, sliced egg yolk, fruit, parsley, etc., can all add interest to a plate if properly used. Size, shape, color, texture, flavor, etc., must be considered in the selection of the proper garnish. Experiment with different garnishes to select the most appropriate garnish for the meal you have planned.

CONTESTANTS MUST BRING

No part of the exhibit will be furnished by the State Fair or Creative Cooks Superintendent. Contestants are to provide all equipment, supplies, etc. to set up their exhibit.

REMEMBER!

- ___ card table (if needed)
- ___ appropriate linens
- ___ centerpiece
- ___ tableware
- ___ glassware
- ___ all ingredients for prepared recipe
- ___ serving pieces
- ___ prepared dish
- ___ apron
- ___ potholders
- ___ dishtowel and dishcloths
- ___ poster including menu
- ___ disposable dish and flatware to serve judge