
Resources for Schools to Support Healthy Menu Development

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 improved school meals by requiring more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain-rich foods, while reducing sodium, limiting saturated fats, and removing trans fats.

Schools are working hard to develop healthy, tasty meals that kids love, despite the mounting challenges that COVID-19 has placed on school nutrition programs. Now more than ever, school nutrition programs are playing a critical role in providing nutritious meals to students.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) strongly encourages school nutrition programs to **limit sodium and added sugars and offer only whole grain-rich grains.**

Below are examples of resources that showcase a variety of recipes for school nutrition programs, many of which can help programs offer healthier, delicious recipes that students will love. This is not an exhaustive list of resources available, and not all recipes in these resources are endorsed by CSPI.

Before adopting a new recipe, school nutrition professionals should always check the nutrition analysis first. As added sugar content is not always available in the nutrition analysis for K-12 recipes (because there is no added sugar requirement in the School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program), a good practice is to use recipes that call for little to no brown sugar, granulated sugar, honey, agave, and maple syrup. When recipes call for products that contain added sugar, such as dried cranberries or sweetened applesauce, opt for no- or reduced-sugar varieties of these products.

[Chef-Designed School Lunch \(Idaho Child Nutrition Programs\)](#)

This resource includes healthy recipes developed for Idaho schools by a culinary chef and Registered Dietician, complete with student feedback reports for each recipe. All meals meet the USDA Meal Pattern for Grades K-8 and 9-12 and yield 100 servings.



CSPI favorites: [Thai Chicken and Basil Barley](#), [Vegetable Pasta Salad](#)

[Healthy School Recipes: Culinary Solutions for School Nutrition Programs](#)

This comprehensive online resource for K-12 foodservice providers allows users to filter recipes based on meal component, nutrition need, cooking technique, and more. All recipes include meal component and nutrition data.



CSPI favorites: [Baba Ganoush](#), [Mandarin Fruit Salad](#), [Strawberry Banana Smoothie](#), [Pizza Green Beans \(USDA\)](#)

Institute for Child Nutrition: Child Nutrition Recipe Box, Recipes for Schools

The Recipe Box for Schools features recipes for main dishes, vegetables, grains, breads, salads, accompaniments, soups, sandwiches, breakfasts, and desserts. All recipes yield 50-100 servings.



CSPI favorites: [Seasonal Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits](#), [Southwest Tofu Scramble](#), [Vegetable Chili](#)

New School Cuisine: Nutritious and Seasonal Recipes for School Cooks by School Cooks

The New School Cuisine Cookbook is a compilation of healthy recipes from schools around Vermont, including complete nutritional info and when the ingredients are in season. All recipes yield 50 servings.



CSPI favorites: Melon, Citrus & Jícama Salad with Mint (P.44), Spaghetti Squash Bake (P.90) Tabbouleh (P.127)

USDA: Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Schools

USDA's Cookbook for Schools from the Recipes for Healthy Kids competition includes recipes that feature whole grains, dark green and orange vegetables, and dry beans. All recipes yield 50-100 servings.



CSPI favorites: [Central Valley Harvest Bake](#)*, [Mediterranean Quinoa Salad](#), [Squish Squash Lasagna](#) (P. 87)

* Tip: use unsweetened applesauce to reduce added sugar content