



COOKING CLASS

A beginner cooking group focused on teaching cooking and baking skills.

Staff Testimonial: “The excitement and interest that many of our residents have for participating in cooking is our inspiration for creating more formal cooking class. Learning how to make a snack or parts of a meal help our residents become more independent while participating in a club with peers who have similar interests develops a social component. Our groups of two to six students meet regularly and work together to practice kitchen skills and make functional snacks and meals. The groups have assisted making diet friendly baked goods and homemade salad dressings for houses who are not able to easily make them. Groups also regularly assist in meal preparation to help the chef make a side dish for dinner or breakfast for the next day.”



TCFD OUTCOMES

This activity is aimed at helping individuals excel in the following categories:

-  Life Skills
-  Socialization
-  Motor Skills

PLANNING A COOKING CLASS

- 1

Choose participants who enjoy cooking or eating.
- 2

Prepare monthly calendars with a plan for educational cooking lessons with activities and recipes.
- 3

Hold cooking classes regularly to teach and maintain skill development.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Kitchen Safety: One of the most important considerations when starting a cooking class is kitchen safety. These topics can be taught using social stories, safety videos, or kitchen demonstrations. Some examples may include: properly washing and storing food, washing your hands before handling food, wiping and sanitizing surfaces, being cautious of hot surfaces, handling sharp objects, and fire safety.

-  Encourage participants to practice hand-washing at the beginning of the meeting and regularly while cooking. As a beginning activity, participants can practice washing a piece of fruit. The piece of fruit may be dipped into flour to aid understanding of thoroughness.

Healthy Recipes: When choosing a recipe, keep healthy eating choices in mind. Limit snacks that have extra sugar and artificial ingredients and plan to eat the food during appropriate times during the day. For example, if cooking class is right before dinner, save it for an after dinner dessert.

-  Food made in cooking class can also be made to be delivered to a neighbor’s house, for a special occasion, or frozen for a later time.

Support Staff: Having a consistent staff leader to facilitate a cooking class is helpful to ensure lessons are planned, supplies and ingredients are available, and participants are equally assisted and challenged in their skill development. While the facilitator can lead the group by giving directions and assigning roles, additional support staff may be needed to provide hands on help. All support staff should be properly trained and familiar with the group members to facilitate safety, independence, and support.

MATERIAL CHECKLIST

- Healthy recipes
- Ingredients
- Aprons
- Gloves
- Cooking Supplies



COOKING CLUB ACTIVITIES

1

Preparing Cookware and Arranging Food

Assisting in the kitchen with preparation and arranging

Activity Ideas: rolling cookies and placing them on a tray, lining muffin tins, preparing baking dishes with butter, or spreading veggies on a sheet pan for roasting.



These activities introduce the concept of being in the kitchen and handling food without having the expectation of eating it right away.

2

Reading and following a Recipe

Participants will practice reading a recipe and following the steps in order



Recipes may be adapted to assist in this process. This can include: larger writing, one step per page, or visual directions utilizing icons.

3

Gathering Materials and Ingredients

Participants can use the recipe or a visual recipe with many ingredients to encourage them to locate items in the kitchen. Make it a game by designing a kitchen scavenger hunt.



Kitchen cabinets and drawers may be labeled with written or visual icons to assist participants in finding ingredients and putting them back in the correct location.

4

Pouring, Scooping, Mixing, Spreading

Participants will focus on skill acquisition by practicing cooking tasks such as pouring, stirring, scooping, and spreading. Assistance or adaptations should be provided as needed with the goal to remove support as participants learn.



Activities: Stirring batter in a bowl, mashing potatoes or other cooked vegetables, pouring milk or oil into a measuring cup, or spreading butter, peanut butter, avocado, or cream cheese on bread.



Encourage participants to work together by communicating what comes next, passing items, and working together on tasks.

5

Measuring Ingredients

Review principles related to measuring both wet and dry ingredients with an active demonstration.

Activity: practice measuring different textured ingredients and differing quantities (e.g., 2 cups water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 3/4 cup rice, and 1/2 cup of oil).

Bonus Activity

Make homemade spice mixes for personal use or gifts. For example: taco seasoning, meat rubs, dips, or salad dressings.

6

Simple Kitchen Appliances

Review safety and uses of simple kitchen appliances. Demonstrate use and allow participants to practice by making a healthy shake or preparing dessert for a gathering or party.



Use colorful stickers on appliances as a visual cue for which buttons to press. For example a green sticker for the "start" button on the blender and a red one for "stop".