

Favorite Foods Show - Educational Information

➤ Start with a Theme

Will you have a informal, casual theme or a formal one? Sometimes choosing a theme is the easiest way to get started on a table setting. Here are a few examples of themes. Whatever you choose, be creative and have fun with it.

- Picnic
- Birthday party
- Graduation party
- Family breakfast, lunch or dinner
- Holiday meals
- Luau
- Western
- Wedding reception

➤ Table Coverings

Be creative! In the proper setting a beach towel can be a great table cloth! Place mats, table runners, all kinds of table cloths, fabric, homemade table cloths from fabric are just a few of the ideas that can be used.

➤ Centerpiece

Make sure your centerpiece adheres to the basic rules that formal centerpieces follow:

- Don't let a centerpiece overwhelm a table.
- Don't have a centerpiece that blocks the view of people sitting across from one another.
- Don't create a centerpiece that hinders serving and dining.

➤ Food Choices

Pick a "favorite food" item to start with, and then plan your menu around that item. Keep the following in mind while planning.

- Menu should be nutritious. Use ChooseMyPlate to help with nutritional aspects. This is a 4-H learning experience, so plan to choose nutritious foods that represent each of the five main food groups. Resource: <http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov>
- Food should vary in temperatures -- hot, warm, and cold. A variety of temperatures is appetizing and adds interest to your menu.
- Food should vary in colors. Choose colorful foods that will add interest and variety to your plate. Current nutrition information reminds us to eat a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables because of the phytochemicals found in the colors. Think about using contrasting colors and whether the foods will look attractive and appetizing when served together.

- Flavor: Is there a combination of mild and strong flavored foods?
- Texture: Is there a combination of soft and crisp food items? Imagine these foods on one plate. Applesauce, mashed potatoes, cottage cheese, cooked cauliflower are all soft foods of similar color and not very appetizing.
- Shape: A variety of shapes of food is also important.

➤ **Menu Writing**

Use descriptive terms that give information about the temperature, texture, color or other special characteristics of the food. Words like fresh-picked or homemade sound appetizing and indicate freshness.

- Write menus in a symmetrical arrangement on the page, listing foods in the order that they are served. Group foods served in one course. Use single spacing between food items and double line spacing between courses.
- Use capital letters at the beginning of all words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. Correct spelling is important.
- When an item on the menu has an accompaniment:
 - Place the main item to the left and write the accompaniment to the right,

Braised Pork Chops	Applesauce
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 - Or you may enter the accompanying item underneath

Braised Pork Chops
Applesauce
 - If more than one accompaniment appears, place one at each side on the same line,

Sesame Seed Wafers	Tomato Bouillon	Saltine Crackers
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 - Or place both on the same line below

Tomato Bouillon	
Sesame Seed Wafers	Saltine Crackers
- When a food is commonly prepared in more than one way, avoid confusion by describing the method of cooking, such as: Roast Turkey or French Fried Potatoes.
- List each food with the exception of butter, cream, sugar, or salad dressing unless it is something special, such as Honey Butter or Poppyseed Dressing.
- List beverages last.
- Consider creativity when choosing names of menu items (except for formal menus.) Formal menus must use original names of items. Example: Using Patriotic Punch for a 4th of July theme and Cherry Punch for a formal theme.

Sample menu patterns:

Breakfast

Fruit or Juice
Hot or Cold Cereal
Eggs
Breakfast Meat
Toast, Biscuit, Pancake or French Toast
Choice of Beverage

Lunch

Entrée
Vegetable
Salad
Bread or Roll
Fruit or Dessert
Choice of Beverage

Supper

Entrée
Vegetable
Salad
Bread or Roll
Fruit or Dessert
Choice of Beverage

Capitalize all words except words like *or*, *and*, *with*.

➤ **General Table Setting Guidelines**

- The lower edges of the utensils should be aligned with the bottom rim of the plate, about one inch from the edge of the table.
- To avoid hiding a utensil under the rim of a plate or bowl, lay it approximately one inch away from the plate's side.
- The water glass should be placed approximately one inch from the tip of the dinner knife.
- Place knives with blades facing the plate.
- Do not place over three pieces of flatware on either side of the plate of one time (except forks if an oyster fork is used.)
- At an informal meal, the table setting is not cluttered and all the flatware is laid on the table at one time. The dessert utensils may be brought to the table on the dessert plate.

- The following is a **standard table setting** for a three-course meal. Note the basic “outside-in” rule (the utensils used first are on the outside, the piece used last is placed directly next to whatever plate you are using.)

