# Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs logo

# Child Nutrition Programs Standardized Recipe Style Guide

*Last revised 05/19/2022*

A standardized recipe is one that has been tried, tested, and evaluated to produce a consistent quality and yield every time when the exact procedures, equipment, and ingredients are used.

Refer to the [Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) Basics at a Glance](https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/) for specific measurements, symbols, abbreviations, and equivalents.

## Definitions and References

* **As Purchased (AP)** – The total amount of food purchased prior to preparation. A significant disparity can exist between the amount of food purchased (i.e., as purchased) and the final prepared product (i.e., edible portion (EP)). Greater quantities of ingredients, especially meats, fruits, and vegetables, must sometimes be purchased to make up for losses incurred during preparation.
* **Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)** – A systematic approach to the identification, evaluation, and control of food safety hazards. A system for monitoring the flow of food through an operation, from procurement to consumption, to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

For more information on HACCP principles in schools, review the [USDA Food and Nutrition Service Guidance for School Food Authorities: Developing a School food Safety Program Based on the Process Approach to HACCP Principles](https://www.fns.usda.gov/ofs/developing-school-food-safety-program-based-process-approach-haccp).

* **Critical Control Points (CCPs)** – points at which food safety hazards can be either prevented, eliminated, or reduced to acceptable levels. Examples of CCPs may include cooking, cold storage, hot holding, etc.
* **Process Approach to HACCP** – The [Process Approach to HACCP](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf) is a method of dividing the flow of food into categories based on the number of times a food item makes a complete trip through the temperature danger zone (i.e., 41ºF–135ºF).
	+ **Process #1** **(No Cook)** – The food item does not go completely through the danger zone in either direction.
	+ **Process #2** **(Same Day Service)** – The food item takes one complete trip through the danger zone (going up during cooking) and is served the same day.
	+ **Process #3** **(Complex Food Preparation)** – The food item takes two or more complete trips through the danger zone, going through both heating and cooling.

## Meal Patterns

* [**USDA: SBP Meal Pattern**](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/meal-pattern-chart)
* [**USDA: NSLP Meal Pattern**](https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-meal-pattern-chart)
* [**USDA: CACFP Meal Pattern for Snack**](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/child-adult-snacktable-edited-030722.pdf)
* [**USDA: CACFP Meal Pattern for Lunch and Supper**](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/child-adult-lunchsuppertable-edited-030722.pdf)
* [**USDA: SFSP Meal Patterns**](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/meal-patterns)

## Recipe Information

1. **Recipe Number:** Used for organizing recipes and recordkeeping. Recipe numbers should be sequential based on the date they are developed or implemented. Recipe numbers should be recorded on the Food Production Record.

 **Example:** *Recipe 1, Recipe 2, Recipe 3, etc.*

1. **Category:** Describes the food group(s) within a recipe, for example, entree, side, etc. If the recipe is offered to one or two grade levels exclusively, include that information in parentheses after the category.

**Examples:**

* *Breakfast Entrée*
* *Lunch Entrée (HS)*
* *Supper Entrée (MS/HS)*
* *Snack (ES)*
* *Vegetable Side*
* *Fruit Side*
1. **Recipe Title:** The name of the recipe. Recipe titles should reflect the main ingredients, the cooking processes used, and/or commonly known names. When possible, recipe titles should include the ingredients present in the largest quantities.

**Examples:**

* *Fiesta Chicken Burrito*
* *Beef Broccoli Stir Fry*
1. **Yield:** The number of servings a recipe produces. The yield should include container/size information as applicable.

**Examples:**

* *50 salads*
* *2 gallons + 2 quarts for 2 – 12”x20”x24” steam table pans*
1. **Serving Size:** The weight, volume, cut, or finished product for each recipe portion served.

**Examples:**

* *5-ounce salad*
* *½ cup (No. 8 scoop)*
* *2 tacos*

## Ingredients

1. Ingredients are the food items needed to prepare a recipe. They should be listed in the order that they are used during preparation (i.e., the order that they appear in the recipe directions).

**Example:**

*Ingredients:*

*Carrots, fresh diced*

*Tomatoes, fresh diced*

*Directions: Wash carrots under running cold water.*

1. List ingredients by their common name. Specifications, such as brand and state of preparation, should follow the ingredient name and be separated by a comma.

**Example:** *1 medium (approx. 2 ¾”) apple, Granny Smith, diced into ½” cubes*

1. Capitalize the ingredient name.

**Examples:**

* *Ground Beef*
* *Bok Choy*
1. Include the word “fresh” after the names of fresh produce ingredients.

**Example:** *Orange, Mandarin, fresh*

1. Include the word “dried” after the names of dried produce, meats, legumes, or other ingredients.

**Example:** *Cranberries, dried*

1. Include the word “raw” or “pre-cooked” to describe meat, poultry, fish, and eggs.

**Example:** *Chicken breasts, raw, skinless, boned, frozen*

1. Include the word “dry” for uncooked pasta, grains, and legumes.

**Examples:**

* *Spaghetti, whole grain, dry*
* *Rice, brown, long-grain, dry*
1. Include the measurement of the as purchased (AP) ingredient, if applicable.

**Example:** *Tortilla, whole grain, 10”*

1. Include the AP weight of the ingredient, if applicable.

**Example:** *Tortilla, whole grain, 10”, 2 oz. each*

1. Include a description of how the ingredient is packaged and/or stored.

**Examples:**

* *Chicken, frozen, pre-cooked, diced ½”*
* *Cheese, cheddar, reduced-fat, shredded*
* *Spinach, fresh, leaves only, pre-packaged, triple-washed*
1. Do not enter brand names in the ingredients list. Use two asterisks (\*\*) to identify that a specific brand was used. In the recipe *Notes* section, include the brand used and that the meal pattern contribution and nutrient analysis were based on the brand identified.

**Example:**

* + *Ingredient: \*\*Bun, hamburger, whole grain, 8 count, 1.5 oz. each*
	+ *Measure: 8 each*
	+ *Notes: \*\*Van de Kamps Hamburger Bun*
1. Include product descriptions as they appear in the USDA Food Buying Guide (FBG) or in the NSLP USDA Foods Product Information Sheets, if applicable.

**Examples:**

* *Ingredients: Chicken Parts, fresh or frozen, raw, back pieces, with skin, (about 6 oz. each)*

***Note:*** *raw was added to this description.*

* *Ingredients:* *Eggs, pasteurized, whole, frozen, 5 lbs.*
1. Include an asterisk (\*) with USDA Foods followed by the description included in the USDA Foods List with the AP weight.

**Example:**

*Ingredients: \*Rice, brown, long-grain, parboiled, dry*

 *Weight: 25 lbs. AP*

1. Include the word “additional” in parentheses after an ingredient that is optional.

**Example:** *Lemons (additional garnish)*

## Weight

Grains and meat/meat alternates should be weighed. Weight is used to determine how that menu item will credit towards meal pattern requirements. Some grains and meat/meat alternates contain other ingredients, such as binders or fillers, so you may need to provide a larger serving size by weight to credit 1.0 ounce equivalent. Refer to the [Food Buying Guide (FBG)](https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/MasGuestUsers/GuestUserLogin?ReturnUrl=%2FHome%2FHome) for guidance.

Please note that weight and volume are not interchangeable. An ounce (weight) differs from a fluid ounce (volume).

1. Include weight in pounds and ounces using the abbreviations “lb(s).” for pound(s) and “oz.” for ounce(s) for solid ingredients in quantities greater than two ounces.
2. Do not include liquid ingredients in the *Weight* column.
3. Use whole numbers or fractions and insert a plus (+) symbol between units if using more than one unit.

**Example:** *5 lbs. + 2 oz.*

1. Decimals should only be used for weights of AP ingredients.
2. Include the largest unit of weight followed by the smaller unit.

**Example:** *1 lb. + 6 oz.* instead of *22 oz.*

1. Include AP weights for fresh produce, fresh herbs, meats, poultry, fish, and other items that may decrease in size during preparation. Include “AP” after the weight.

**Example:**

*Ingredient: Onion, fresh, yellow*

 *Weight: 1 lb. + 4 oz. AP*

 *Directions: Peel and chop onion into 1” cubes to measure 3 cups chopped.*

1. Include the common purchasing unit of the ingredient in parentheses with the weight, if applicable.

**Example:**

*Ingredient:* *Cilantro, fresh, bunches*

*Weight: 4 oz. (1 bunch)*

## Measure

Use volume measurements for liquids and for solids in amounts less than 2 oz. Serving utensils labeled in ounces are for measuring volume (fluid oz.), which does not correlate to ounces in weight for solid food items.

1. Include measurements in gallons (gal.), quarts (qt.), cups (c.), tablespoons (Tbsp.), teaspoons (tsp.) or inches (”).
2. Include the largest unit of measurement.

**Examples:**

* *3 gal. + 2 c.* instead of *50 c.*
* *¼ c.* instead of *4 Tbsp.*
* *1 gal. +1 qt. + 2 c.* instead of *22 c.*
1. Include the common purchasing unit or portion in parentheses following the measurement for clarification.

**Example:** *1 qt. + ½ c. (½ No. 10 can)*

1. Include measurements for ingredients in the recipe directions.

***Note:*** *If shrinkage might occur, do not enter the measurement in the Measure column, but describe the measurement of the prepared item in the recipe directions. If there is shrinkage due to preparation of the AP ingredient, list the weight or measure in the directions after the procedure for preparing the ingredient. The AP amount should be listed in the Weight column.*

**Example:**

*Ingredients: Onion, fresh, yellow*

*Weight: 1 lb. + 4 oz. AP*

*Directions: 1. Peel and chop onion into 1” pieces to measure approximately 3 cups chopped onion.*

## Directions

The directions are detailed instructions for preparing the recipe, including cooking time and temperatures, types of utensils and cookware, and service/presentation.

1. Directions should be listed according to the order in which ingredients are used. The first step in the directions should include the first ingredient on the Ingredients List.
2. Number steps in the directions beginning with the number one (1).
3. Begin each step with a verb or action.

**Example:** *Peel and chop carrots into 1” cubes.*

1. Words such as “the” and “a” are not necessary in recipe directions.
2. Include terms that accurately describe each technique.

**Examples:** *Julienne, blanch, braise, mince, dice, etc.*

1. If not commonly known, include a description of the technique in the recipe *Notes* section.

**Example:** *Julienne means to cut food lengthwise into very thin, stick-like strips.*

1. All ingredients should be named in the directions. Do not combine similar ingredients.

**Correct Example:**

*Ingredients:*

* *Cumin*
* *Chili Powder*
* *Paprika*

*Directions: Combine cumin, chili powder, and paprika.*

**Incorrect Example:**

*Directions: Combine spices.*

1. Review each step for clarity and simplicity. Be sure to include actions like wash, drain, peel, thaw, and chop. Do not assume the user will complete these tasks without direction.
2. Identify the Critical Control Points (CCPs) in the recipe directions. Be sure to note the CCPs for storing, preparing, holding, serving, heating, reheating, and cooling.

**Examples:**

* *Directions: CCP: Thaw in refrigerator at 41˚F or below for 48 hours.*
* *Directions: CCP: Heat to 165˚F or higher for at least 15 seconds.*
* *Directions: CCP: Hold for hot service at 135˚F or higher.*
1. Include thawing as the first step if the recipe calls for thawing a frozen product. Be sure to describe the refrigeration thawing process.

**Example:**

*Directions: CCP: Thaw in the refrigerator at 41˚F or below for 48 hours.*

1. Include the corresponding scoop, ladle, spoodle, or other portioning utensil with the measurement in parentheses in the directions. Also include the size or capacity of serving containers, preparation containers, pan, pots, and skillets in their dimensions, volume, or weights.

**Example:** *Scoop ½ cup (No. 8 scoop) cornmeal mixture onto two 18”x26”x1” baking sheet pans.*

1. Include baking times for both conventional and convection ovens if the recipe indicates that either type of oven may be used. List conventional oven times first.

**Example:**

*Conventional Oven: 400˚F for 10 minutes*

*Convection Oven: 375˚F for 7 minutes*

1. For separate directions related to a specific process in the recipe, state “To prepare” followed by the name of the process.

**Example:** *To prepare marinade:*

1. The second to last step of the directions should start with “Portion” and include the portion size of the final product. This size should match the portion size at the top of the recipe. If there are several portions included in each recipe serving be sure to indicate the number of portions per serving.

**Examples:**

* *Portion ¼ cup (No. 16 scoop) cooked brown rice for each serving.*
* *Portion ½ cup (No. 8 scoop) prepared vegetable stir-fry for each serving.*
* *Portion ½ cup (No. 8 scoop) prepared casserole for each serving*
1. The last step of the directions should start with “Serve” and should indicate each serving size. This size should match the serving size listed at the top of the recipe.

**Example:** *Serve 2 tacos per serving.*

## Recipe Information

* **Preparation Time** – Enter the amount of time in hours and/or minutes that it takes to prepare and assemble the recipe for both 50 servings and 100 servings.
* **Cook Time** – Enter the amount of time in hours and/or minutes that it takes to cook, bake, grill, etc. the recipe for both 50 servings and 100 servings.
* **Process Approach to HACCP** – Refer to the definition on pages 1–2.
* **Contribution to Meal Pattern** – Schools must offer food components in quantities that meet program meal pattern requirements. Contributions to the meal pattern should be expressed in measurements used to credit food components. For example, the USDA lunch and breakfast meal patterns established in [7CFR210.10](https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=143a70190445a3054aeee876981115a9&mc=true&node=se7.4.210_110&rgn=div8) and [7CFR220.8](https://gov.ecfr.io/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=d34a18885d029c19f4ee42ef0ff7f715&mc=true&node=se7.4.220_18&rgn=div8), respectively, require ounce equivalents for grains, meats, and meat alternates and volume (cup) measurements for fruits, vegetables, and milk.

**Examples:**

* + *Contribution to meal pattern – 2 oz. eq. Grains and 1.5 oz. eq. Meat/Meat Alternate*
	+ *Contribution to meal pattern – 1.5 oz. eq. Grains and 1 cup Fruit*
* **Considerations for Seasonality** – Incorporating seasonal produce in recipes helps achieve flavorful results. Include as many seasonal recommendations as possible.

**Example:** *Considerations for Seasonality – Substitute chopped strawberries for chopped apples, when in season.*

* **Recipe Source** – If the recipe or a version of the recipe was developed by another individual or entity, a crediting statement should be included at the end of the recipe.

 **Examples:**

* + *Source – Recipe adapted from John Smith’s “Book of Recipes,” Recipe Publisher, 2007.*
	+ *Source: USDA Standardized Recipes Project.*
* **Additional Serving Suggestions** – Suggestions for enhancing the final product that do not impact the recipe's nutrient or meal pattern analysis.

**Example:**

*Additional Serving Suggestions – Serve with brown rice or whole grain spaghetti.*

* **Notes** – Includes preparation/pre-preparation necessities, tips for increasing efficiency, etc. When working with USDA Foods, include the note, “One asterisk (\*) indicates USDA Foods.”

 **Example:** *Marinade may be prepared up to two days in advance.*

* **Allergens** – List any allergens to be aware of when consuming the recipe/product. Consider the [top eight allergens](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-allergensgluten-free-guidance-documents-regulatory-information/food-allergen-labeling-and-consumer-protection-act-2004-questions-and-answers) designated by the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004 first. Other common allergens may also be listed here.

 **Example:** *Allergens – Eggs, Milk.*

* **Nutrition Information** –Similar to a Nutrition Facts Label, the nutrition information section includes the macronutrient and micronutrient content of the recipe. Nutrition information is not necessary for preparing a recipe, but is useful for meal planning. If available, recipes should include the number of calories (kcal), grams (g) of saturated fat, and milligrams (mg) of sodium per serving at a minimum.

**Example:**

*Nutrition Information – Calories (kcal) 250, Total Fat (g) 7, Saturated Fat (g) 2.43, Dietary Fiber (g) 7, Protein (g) 7, Sodium (mg) 430, Calcium (mg) 113, Iron (mg) 6.4*