Standardized Recipes

Key Terms

**Tested Recipe:** A recipe that has been developed under controlled conditions to insure the correct proportion of ingredients, the correct procedures for mixing and cooking, and the correct yield using the listed ingredients and procedures.

**Standardized Recipe:** A tested recipe that has been “tailored” to suit a particular Child Nutrition Program operation.

**Recipe Yield:** The amount of product after all parts of food procurement and production have been completed.

Managers Responsibility

One of the most important parts of the manager’s job is to insure good quality food. Students often rate the quality of the food in a school cafeteria as the most important reason they would choose to eat lunch at school.

Good food depends on having a manager who is always responsible for quality control. It is your final call as the manager to decide if a food product meets quality standards. Do not serve a food if it is not good quality.

It is a good practice to pull recipes and post them at least one day in advance for staff to review and use for advance planning.

Tested Recipes

Are you a good cook? Many managers are good cooks at home and became interested in working in Child Nutrition Programs because of their interest in food and cooking. If you are a good cook, you probably use cookbooks at home. Good cookbooks are developed by testing recipes in a controlled kitchen to make sure the food is of good quality. The same is true of recipes for quantity food production.

*Quantity Recipes for School Food Service, School Recipe Portfolio,* and *A Tool Kit for Healthy School Meals* include recipes that have been tested in controlled kitchen situations and in schools. When these recipes were tested in schools, comments from students were used to make final changes so they would taste good. The recipes in these two sources provide certain information always found in tested quantity recipes.

There are six parts in every tested recipe: Recipe title, yield, cooking time and temperature, ingredients and quantities (weights and measures), directions for combining ingredients, and serving size. When you follow them exactly, the food has the same good quality each time it is prepared. This is why tested recipes are used in school kitchens.
Standardized Recipes

School kitchens are different from each other. They have different equipment, different serving methods, and use different brands of ingredients. All these differences mean that tested recipes sometimes have to be changed a little to fit a particular kitchen. Standardizing a recipe means adapting a tested recipe for use in a specific food service operation.

You could say a tested recipe is like a jacket you bought in your size. It almost fits but has to be altered a little to fit you better. You may take up the sleeves and put in a dart. Making changes or altering a recipe for your own school kitchen is the same kind of thing. A tested recipe meets certain important requirements, but it has to be altered to fit your kitchen better.

Recording Your Own School’s Recipes

State Departments of Education are required to use a USDA-approved computer analysis program called a nutrient database to analyze school menus as part of the School Meal Initiative (SMI) review. The menu analysis will be completed using Food Production Records and school recipes. This is another very important reason to be sure there are recipes for all foods that are scratch-prepared or finished in the kitchen.

What should the manager do?

Sometimes cooks prepare their own specialty foods without using recipes. For example, the baker at Sandy Creek Elementary prepares her specialty, Peach Sweet Rolls, by using USDA dried peaches cooked with sugar and cinammon. She uses the USDA roll recipe but makes her own peach mixture. The peach mixture is spread on roll dough, rolled up, cut like a cinnamon bun, baked and then iced. These sweet rolls are a favorite on the breakfast menu and are sometimes served for lunch, too. There is no recipe for the peach mixture.

Answer:

As the manager, you are responsible for obtaining a recipe or helping assistants record the recipe for every scratch prepared or finished menu item containing more than one ingredient. Oftentimes, when there is no recipe for a food item, only one assistant can prepare it to meet quality standards. Work with that assistant to develop and write down a recipe. Then, make sure the standardized recipe is used every time to ensure a quality product.
How to Record a Recipe for a Menu Item (Altered Recipe Documentation)

Step 1: Select the CNP Assistant (cook) who prepares the menu item to meet quality standards. Ask the CNP Assistant to work with you to record and standardize a recipe for the item. Explain the reasons why this is important.

Step 2: Use a USDA recipe as a pattern (see pages iii-iv). The recipe that is finally developed and standardized should have the same information as a USDA recipe. Sit down with the CNP Assistant and review a USDA recipe for a menu item similar to the one you will record.

Step 3: When preparing the food item, carefully record the information below:
- **RECIPE TITLE:** Name of food
- **COMPONENTS:** How it is credited or counted as part of a menu
- **SERVING SIZE:** Portion size (if this varies for different age groups, record the serving size for each age group)
- **YIELD:** Total number of portions
- **INGREDIENTS:** Name and description of each ingredient (list the ingredients in the order they should be used in the recipe)
- **QUANTITIES:** Weight or measure for each ingredient
- **DIRECTIONS:** Steps for combining ingredients (list the directions for groups of ingredients)
  - Directions for scaling (pan size and amount per pan, either by the number of portions or the weight for each pan)
  - Directions for baking/cooking
  - Directions for serving (portion control tool to use, garnish)
    Any special information that is necessary to insure a quality product.
- **HACCP:** Temperatures for Critical Control Points must be on all recipes.

Step 4: Have the CNP Assistant prepare the product following the new recipe exactly. **If any changes are necessary, write the changes on the recipe.** Once the recipe is written exactly as the product is prepared in the school kitchen, it has been standardized and should be used every time the menu item is prepared. Store the recipe where it is easily accessible to the cooks or to anyone who needs to review it.
Recipe Title __________________________________________________

Serving Size __________________   Total Yield_____________________

Credit Per Serving ___________________________________________________________________

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