



4-H Special Foods Contest: A Fun and Challenging Culinary Experience!

The 4-H Special Foods Contest is an exciting “youth in action” event that blends nutrition knowledge, food preparation, and presentation skills into a hands-on competition! Participants showcase their ability to create a delicious, well balanced recipe while demonstrating their culinary expertise and nutrition awareness in an interview setting.

This contest is a unique and rewarding challenge! Youth perfect their recipes, master kitchen skills, and expand their nutrition knowledge—all while learning to pack, transport, and prepare their dish under contest conditions.

Why Participate? This Contest Builds Essential Life Skills!

- Time Management – Work efficiently under pressure
- Kitchen and Food Safety – Learn best practices for cooking with confidence
- Smart Nutrition – Gain knowledge that supports a lifetime of healthy eating
- Budget-Friendly Cooking – Understand cost per serving and make smart grocery choices
- Balanced Living – Recognize calorie intake and the importance of physical activity
- Confidence and Interview Skills – Communicate effectively and present your dish with pride
- Creativity and Individuality – Develop a unique approach to food preparation

Contest Workshop: Setting Youth Up for Success!

A contest workshop is the perfect way to help participants feel prepared and excited about competing! This interactive learning experience breaks down contest expectations, highlights key skills, and incorporates hands-on practice to boost confidence.

To make planning easy, we’ve provided a detailed workshop outline for 4-H professionals, volunteers, alumni, and others looking to lead an educational session. The workshop PowerPoint includes speaker notes to enhance your presentation and ensure a smooth learning experience.

We hope this tool helps you empower youth and makes presenting contest information feel easy and engaging! If you have any questions or need further assistance, don’t hesitate to reach out.

Contact the Contest Co-Chairs:

- Sonia Mack, Brookings County – sonia.mack@sdstate.edu or 605-693-8280
- Jodi Loehrer, Codington County – jodi.loehrer@sdstate.edu or 605-882-6300

Let’s inspire the next generation of confident, nutrition-savvy cooks!

Special Foods Workshop Planning Guidelines

1. Pre-Workshop Planning

- Schedule the Workshop
 - Pick a date and secure a location.
 - Advertise the event.
 - Plan for the workshop to last approximately 2 – 2 ½ hours.
 - Make a pre-registration plan. Considerations for registration:
 - Inquire about food allergies
 - Ask what questions they have; there's a good chance that many of the questions will be answered because of the workshop but a separate Q & A could be created.
- Encourage Participation
 - Invite new participants to learn correct contest procedures.
 - Require or encourage one adult (parent, older sibling, grandparent, etc.) to stay with their 4-H member. There is an abundance of information shared; helpful for adults to hear as well and will cut down on questions following the workshop by those not in attendance.
 - Share information/directions for pre-registration, including a register by date. This ensures that enough supplies are prepared and allows the organizer to establish small groups (see section 5 below).
- Review and Prepare Materials
 - Review workshop PowerPoint and print updated materials, including:
 - Special Foods Handbook
 - Contestant Packet (includes worksheets)
 - Contestant Scoresheets
 - Access updated contest materials from the [State Fair page](#) on the SDSU Extension website.
 - Contact contest co-chairs with questions, or for additional information or clarification if needed:
 - Jodi Loehrer – jodi.loehrer@sdstate.edu
 - Sonia Mack – sonia.mack@sdstate.edu

2. Selecting a Workshop Recipe

- Choose simple recipes that meet contest requirements (see page 4 for ideas).
- Use trusted resources, such as:
 - South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Recipe Book (2015-2020)
 - South Dakota 4-H Special Foods Recipe Book (2021-2024) <https://extension.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-4-h-special-foods-recipe-book-2021-2024>
 - Other county contest recipes
 - Self-selected recipe (use the serving size worksheet to confirm eligibility: 2-6 servings, fits a food group).
- Contact contest co-chairs for assistance with the serving size worksheet, if needed.

3. Gathering Supplies

- Recipe Ingredients
- General Supplies (e.g., bowls, scrapers, measuring cups, small appliances).
- Place Setting Items
 - Standard table setting components.
 - Centerpiece, recipe and menu cards, all necessary flatware.

4. Securing Workshop Assistance

- Recruit seasoned youth participants, alumni, or their parents to help.

5. Hands-On Activities for Youth

- Table Setting Practice
 - Folding a napkin.
 - Setting a table using:
 - Paper products
 - Plastic flatware
 - 11x17 paper as a placemat or a paper placemat
- Recipe Preparation
 - Option 1: Small groups each create a simple recipe, resulting in multiple workstations and final products.
 - Option 2: Work as one group to prepare a single recipe, set one place setting, and sample the final product.

6. Assembling Participant Packets

- Each participant should receive:
 - Workshop PowerPoint slides
 - Copies of worksheets (consider including a sample for reference)
 - Updated Special Foods Handbook
 - Updated Contestant Packet
 - Copy of workshop recipe(s) and how they align with the serving size worksheet
 - Current Scoresheets

Workshop Feedback

To continuously improve the content provided, we have developed a brief feedback form. Scan the QR code or click on the link to let us know what you think of these workshop materials.

Special Foods Feedback: https://sdstateoir.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_26a5rzMp1ypJw1M



Workshop Recipe Ideas

Crunchy Grape Salad

Fruit Group; 6 servings

Ingredients

- 7 ½ cups grapes
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 8 oz. plain Greek yogurt
- ½ c. sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- ¾ c. sunflower seeds
- 4 T. brown sugar

Directions

Wash and dry grapes. Set aside. In a large bowl, mix cream cheese, yogurt, sugar and vanilla. Add grapes and ½ cup of sunflower seeds, mixing evenly. In a separate bowl, mix together brown sugar and ¼ cup sunflower seeds. Sprinkle mixture over grapes evenly. Serve and enjoy.

Rainbow Smoothie

Dairy Group, Serves 2

Ingredients

- 1 c. milk
- 1 c. vanilla yogurt
- 2 c. frozen strawberries
- ½ c. frozen blueberries
- 1 frozen banana

Directions

Blend together and top with whip cream and sprinkles.

Sausage Egg Bake

Protein Group, Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 lb. pork sausage
- 1 tube (8 oz.) crescent roll
- ⅛ tsp. pepper
- 4 eggs
- 2 Tbsp. milk
- ¾ cup shredded cheddar cheese

Directions

Cook pork sausage until internal temperature is 165 degrees F, drain. Unroll crescent dough into a lightly greased 12x8x2-inch baking pan. Press dough ½ inch up the sides; seal seams. Sprinkle with sausage. In a bowl, beat eggs, milk, and pepper. Pour over sausage. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake uncovered at 400 degrees F for 15 minutes or until done.



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Special Foods Recipe Worksheet

Name Cool Kid County Clover 4-H Age 9

Food Group Fruit Recipe Name Rainbow Smoothie

Age Division: Beginner Indicate number of servings: 2 3 4 5 6

Please write the exact recipe to be prepared for the Special Foods Contest in the area provided below. Include the ingredients, amount of each ingredient, and complete directions to prepare the dish. **Please indicate the size of your can/jar/package in ounces.**

1 cup milk
1 cup vanilla yogurt
2 cups frozen strawberries
1/2 cup frozen blueberries
1 frozen banana

Blend together, put in cups and top with whip cream and sprinkles.



Special Foods Serving Size Worksheet

Name: Cool Kid

County: Clover 4-H Age: 9 Age Division: Beginner

Recipe Name: Rainbow Smoothie # of Servings 2

Food Group Selected: Fruit

Step 1: List the amount of each ingredient in your selected food group (circled above). Complete only one of the columns below.

Step 2: Total the amount (cups or ounces) in the recipe for all of the ingredients in the **food group** you selected.

Step 3: Divide the **Total Cups or Ounces** (depending on the food group) by the number of servings in the recipe.

Step 4: Check **"Yes"** if your recipe contains the minimum serving size for the food group or **"No"** if it does not. All recipes entered in the Special Foods Contest must meet the minimum number of servings for the food group that was selected.

GRAINS Expressed in ounces or ounce equivalents	VEGETABLES Expressed in cups	FRUITS Expressed in cups	DAIRY Expressed in cups	PROTEIN Expressed in ounces or ounce equivalents
		2 cup frozen strawberries 1/2 cup frozen blueberries 1 frozen banana		
_____ Total ounces in recipe _____ ÷ Servings in recipe _____ = Ounces per serving Is there at least 1 ounce per serving? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____ Total cups in recipe _____ ÷ Servings in recipe _____ = Cups per serving Is there at least 1/2 cup per serving? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<u>3 1/2</u> Total cups in recipe <u>2</u> ÷ Servings in recipe <u>1 3/4</u> = Cups per serving Is there at least 1/2 cup per serving? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____ Total Cups in recipe _____ ÷ Servings in recipe _____ = Cups per serving Is there at least 1 cup per serving? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	_____ Total ounces in recipe _____ ÷ Servings in recipe _____ = Ounces per serving Is there at least 2 ounces per serving? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

NOTE TO 4-H MEMBER: Be prepared to answer questions on the recommended daily amounts from the food group you select.



Special Foods Menu Worksheet

Name: Cool Teen County: Clover 4-H Age: 14

Recipe Name: Lasagna

Place Setting Occasion: Family

Directions: Write your menu below. Keep in mind the guidelines for writing menus. Label each meal (**Beginners:** snack or one meal; **Juniors:** one meal; **Seniors:** a full day menu.)

Breakfast

Orange Juice
Cinnamon Oatmeal Muffins
Whipped Butter
Milk

Lunch

Grilled Reuben Sandwiches
Dill Pickles
German Potato Salad
Milk

Snack

Raspberry Yogurt
Toasted English Muffin w/Peanut Butter
Milk

Dinner

Lasagna
Skillet Zucchini
Garlic Bread
Fresh Fruit
Milk