

Food Demonstration Guidelines with COVID-19 precautions:

Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.

Demonstrators should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

Participants should remain seated while food is being prepared.

Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee.

- Food intended for samples shall be handled so as to be pure, free from contamination, adulteration, and spoilage.
- All food shall have been obtained from approved sources.
- Sampling shall be done in such a way as to prevent participants from touching, coughing or sneezing on food meant for others.
- Keep samples in approved clean, covered containers. A clear plastic container with a hinged lid, or a plate with a clear dome cover, provides effective protection from contamination while allowing the customer to see the product.
- Potentially hazardous foods shall be kept at or below 45°F, or at or above 140°F.
- Handwashing facilities, with single-service soap and paper towels, must be readily available for use near each location where products are being cut into samples.
- Waste shall be contained to minimize odor and insect development. Provide leak-proof garbage receptacles with close-fitting lids at each area/booth for disposal of pits, peels, food waste, and rubbish.
- Utensils, preparation and serving surfaces shall be washed, rinsed and sanitized prior to and after use. For sanitizing, use only approved products.
- Toothpicks or disposable utensils shall be used to distribute samples to minimize hand contact.
- Provide participants with hand sanitizer or wipes before providing samples.
- Individually distribute sample to each participant.

Best Practices for Conducting a Food Demonstration

Planning and Preparing

1. Practice cooking the recipe(s) ahead of time. Take note of cooking times and flavor.
Practice speaking as though you were presenting to an audience.
2. Make a list of preparation and cooking equipment needed as well as items for decorating the demonstration area.
3. Prepare handouts of the recipes and any additional materials that will be useful for participants.
4. Before the demonstration:
 - Shop for recipe ingredients.
 - Prepare ingredients that require cleaning, cutting, or mixing.
Store in airtight containers at the proper storage temperature.
 - Pack equipment and materials.
 - If taking prepared samples, prepare all food and store at the proper temperature.

The Day of the Demonstration

1. Be sure to dress professionally and appropriately for food preparation:
 - Hair should be pulled back and tied.
 - Limit jewelry.
 - Short and clean fingernails are essential.
 - Avoid using perfume or cologne.
 - Long sleeves should be fitted close to the body.
2. Right before the demonstration:
 - Arrive early depending on the amount of preparation time needed.
 - Set up the cooking station and preparation area.
 - Arrange chairs and any written materials.

During the Demonstration

- Prepare the recipe.
- The audience should be given an overview of the demonstration including what will be covered, the main nutrition theme, and approximate length of the demonstration. Nutrition messages should be repeated often throughout the presentation.
- Focus on the fruits or vegetables being used in the recipe and give details about their nutrient content, selection, and storage tips.
- Each step should be explained in detail as if the audience cannot actually view the techniques.
- Show a finished version of the recipe in its serving dish.
- Discuss alternative ingredients that can be substituted (e.g., frozen for fresh, or black beans for pinto beans).
- Discuss alternative equipment that might be used (e.g., a toaster oven instead of a stove oven).
- Have participants taste the food:
- Serve two or three bites.
- For large groups, prepare the finished recipe ahead of time and have sample-sized portions in disposable containers for tasting.
- Discuss the eye appeal, aroma, texture, and flavor.
- Ask if there are any questions.

Sources:

<https://www.azhealthzone.org/uploads/media/documents/food-demonstration-guide-2019.pdf>
<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health-Service>