



# Make Menu Planning Easy

## Cooking with a Chef

### LESSON 1:

#### MAKE MENU PLANNING EASY

***Lesson Objectives:***

1. Practice planning healthy meals with balance, variety, contrast and eye appeal.
2. Practice of basic cooking techniques and knife skills.
3. Review the 5 flavor sensations.
4. Use special considerations in menu planning, such as food preferences, holidays, climate and seasonality of foods, and produce availability.





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### Culinary and Nutrition Terms

Mise en place:

Grill:

Roast:

Bake:

Sauté:

Stir-fry:

Poach:

Julienne:

Dice:

Mince:

Chop:

Tournée:

Savory:

Rich Flavor:

Caramelization:

Calcium:

Omega-3 Fatty Acids:

Menu Planning:

Volumetrics:





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## Cooking with a Chef

### Make Menu Planning Easy

Good menu planning can make a big difference in what you serve, and it's easier than you think. Your menu influences almost everything, from the foods you buy and how they are prepared to whether or not meals are popular. Food technology has made it possible to choose foods in many different forms—fresh, frozen or pre-prepared. All of this makes menu planning exciting as well as challenging. Check out the five basic menu planning guidelines listed below. Keep them in mind as you think about food preferences and nutritional needs.

1. Strive for balance
2. Emphasize variety
3. Add contrast
4. Think about color
5. Consider eye appeal
6. Special considerations

Tips:





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### Strive for Balance

As you plan meals, you can strive for balance in a number of ways.

- Balance flavors to make meals more appealing. Make sure individual foods served together make a winning combination.
  - Too many mild flavors can make a meal too bland.
  - Too many strong flavored foods can make a meal unacceptable. For example, a menu with sausage pizza, Cajun potatoes, coleslaw, and milk may have too many spicy and strong flavors.

Tips:

- Balance higher fat foods with ones that have less fat. Avoid having too many higher fat foods in the same week. For example, hot dogs, chicken nuggets, and burgers. Look for ways to use low-fat side dishes to balance a higher fat entrée.

Tips:





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### General Explanation of Flavors

#### Salty

Parmesan cheese, olives, soy sauce

- Enhances many other flavors.
- Can easily ruin a dish if too much is used.
- Consuming too much sodium (salt) can lead to health problems.

#### Sweet/Fruity

White and brown sugar, honey, molasses, fruits, sugar substitutes

- Increases the sweetness of a dish
- Try substituting fruit or fruit juices for a UNIQUE flavor

#### Sour

Vinegars, citrus

- Helps to make the mouth water.
- Adds a sharp contrast to most other flavors.
- Helps cut through sweet and fatty flavored foods and keeps the palette fresh.

#### Bitter

Coffee, dark chocolate, tea, grapefruit

- Not a bad taste!
- Another way to cut through overly rich dishes

#### Meaty

Beef, pork, chicken, mushrooms, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce

- Forms a major platform to build a dish around with other flavors.
- With proper use of this strong flavor, only a small amount is needed in final dish.

#### Seafood

Fish, shellfish

- Strength of flavor can vary widely.
- High amounts of important nutrients (omega-3 fatty acids) can be added to a dish by utilizing this flavor.

#### Rich

Butter, oil, cream, avocado, cheeses, sour cream

- Provides thickness to a dish.
- Helps increase the sense of being full.

#### Starchy

Potatoes, grains, flours

- Another way to add thickness to a dish.
- Can be flavored in many varied ways.

#### Herbal

Onion, garlic, rosemary, oregano, basil

- Adds great accents to dishes if used correctly.
- Helps bring out underlying flavors of a dish that would otherwise go unnoticed.



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### Emphasize Variety

Serving a variety of foods is important because no one food or food group can give you all the nutrients you need to stay healthy. Variety also helps make menus interesting and fun.

- Include a wide variety of foods daily. Avoid serving the same foods day after day or week after week serving the same meals without variation.

Tips:

- Vary the types of main courses you serve. For example, serve casseroles one day, soup and sandwiches the next, or maybe a entrée salad.

Tips:

- Include different forms of foods and prepare them in a variety of different ways. For instance, some vegetables are good eaten raw. If you usually serve a vegetable cooked, try it uncooked. You could also cook it, but use a different seasoning or cooking method, such as roasting or grilling.

Tips:

- Include a new or unfamiliar food occasionally. Try adding red cabbage or spinach to a salad.

Tips:



### Variety is the Spice of Life

What to do	How much daily	What to serve
Vary your Veggies	2 ½ cups	Broccoli Sweet potatoes Carrots Tomatoes
Focus on Fruits	2 cups	Banana Kiwi Orange Cantaloupe
Make half your grains whole	3 ounces	Whole grain bread Brown rice Oatmeal Popcorn
Get your calcium-rich foods	3 cups	Low-fat milk Yogurt Cottage cheese Pudding
Go lean with protein	5 ½ ounces	Beef or Pork Eggs Nuts Beans Fish Chicken





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### Add Contrast

Strive for contrasts of texture, flavor, and methods of preparation.

- Think about the texture of foods as well as their taste and appearance. For added appeal, serve a green salad or raw vegetables with spaghetti. Serve a crisp fruit or vegetable with a burrito or crisp steamed carrots and broccoli with meatloaf.

Tips:

- Avoid having too much of the same type of food in the same meal. A lunch with too many starches or too many sweets lacks contrast, as well as balance. Similarly, so does a meal with too many heavy foods. If you're serving a hearty casserole, plan to serve a vegetable or fresh fruit on the side.

Tips:

- Use a combination of different sizes and shapes of foods. Within a meal, present foods in several different shapes, such as cubes, shredded, or strips. A chicken breast, fresh fruit cup, mixed vegetables, and steamed rice provide foods in a variety of sizes and shapes.

Tips:





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### Think About Color

While taste is number one when it comes to menu planning, color should be second. Color indicates taste, flavor, and quality. A good rule of thumb is to use at least two colorful foods in each meal you serve.

- Avoid using too many foods of the same color in the same meal. A meal with turkey, white rice, cauliflower, pears, and milk lacks color. A better combination would be turkey and cranberry sauce, green peas, whole-wheat bread, orange slices, and milk.

Tips:

- Remember that vegetables and fruits are great for adding natural color to side dishes as well as entrees. A slice of tomato really brightens up a potato salad. Fresh grapes or sliced strawberries liven up a bowl of diced pears or peaches.

Tips:

- Use colorful foods in combination with those that have little or no color. For example, serve broccoli spears with whipped potatoes. Add pimento or green pepper to corn. Serve red apple slices with a hamburger, baked beans, and milk. Serve green peas and apricots with oven-baked chicken, mashed potatoes, and milk.

Tips:

- Don't forget the spices. It's easy to sprinkle on a dash of cinnamon to canned fruit or a little paprika on vegetables and potatoes for added color.

Tips:





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### Consider Eye Appeal

Your first impressions of a meal will be how it looks. Make sure what you serve looks as good as it tastes.

- Think of the total presentation. As you plan for color, consider the color of the dishes or plates, as well as the colors of foods.

Tips:

- Plan the way you will place the menu items on the plate. Visualize how the food will look when served and decide on the most attractive arrangement.

Tips:

### *Sample Menu*

Low-fat milk  
Hamburger pizza  
Carrot strips  
Dip for carrots  
Watermelon cubes





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### Volumetrics

The pictures on the left contain the same amount of calories as the pictures on the right. By paying attention to Volumetrics, you can consume more food for the same amount of calories.



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## Cooking with a Chef

### Volumetrics

Here's another example of Volumetrics at work. Notice how much more vibrant the dish on the right appears.

*For a 345-calorie entrée*



TRADITIONAL

How we lowered the ED

VOLUMETRICS

Pasta primavera

- ▶ Decreased the amount of pasta
- ▶ Increased the amount of veggies
- ▶ Omitted cream sauce

Charlie's Pasta Primavera

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THE VOLUMETRICS EATING PLAN

*Volumetrics material taken from:* The Volumetrics Eating Plan by Barbara Rolls





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### Special Considerations

As you apply the basic menu planning principles, keep in mind any special considerations.

- **Food Preferences:** Consider personal food preferences, but don't be afraid to introduce new foods from time to time. Include new foods, starting with small amounts, and encourage everyone to try them.

Tips:

- **Holidays and special occasions:** Try new, healthy twist on traditional dishes. For instance, rather than green bean casserole, try steamed green beans with caramelized onions and toasted walnuts.

Tips:

- **Climate or seasons:** Include more hot foods in cold weather and more cold foods in warm weather.

Tips:

- **Product availability:** Use foods in season. Plan to serve plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables when they are plentiful, reasonably priced, and at the peak of quality. Vegetables and fruits that are in season are fresher and taste better.

Tips:



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### Seasonal Vegetables and Fruits

January/February		March/April/May	
Avocados Broccoli Brussels sprouts Grapefruit Oranges Pears Spinach Sweet potatoes		Asparagus Avocados Berries Mangos Iceburg lettuce	
June/July/August		September/October/November	
Asparagus Cucumbers Grapes Peas Summer squash Tomatoes Watermelon Zucchini	Melons Peaches	Apples Cranberries Lettuce Mushrooms Pears Winter squash Sweet potatoes Pumpkins	



### Moist Heat Cooking Methods

Poach (shallow & submerge): A method of gently cooking food in liquid.

PRO: No additional fat is required during cooking  
Variety achieved through sauces and garnish  
Good for tender delicate fish and poultry

CON: No flavor from caramelization  
Product dries when removed from cooking liquid

#### Nutrition Tips:

- Season cooking liquids
- Trim surplus fat before cooking
- Serve with light flavorful sauces
- Utilize cooking liquid for sauces when possible
- Cook only as long as necessary



### Dry Heat Cooking Methods

**Broil/Grill:** A method of cooking that involves dry heat (no additional moisture is added during the cooking)

**PRO:** Food is cooked on a grid, this allows rendering fats to drip from food  
Food can be cooked quickly to order  
Foods receive flavor from caramelization

**CON:** Tender, more expensive cuts of meat or fish are used  
Foods do not hold well in heat ( service, or steam table)

#### Nutrition Tips:

- Flavor food with marination
- Oil and bread crumb lean fish
- Cook items to order- do not hold
- Use herbs and spices for seasoning
- Serve with simple flavorful accompaniments



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## Cooking with a Chef

### Basic Knives and Their Uses



To peel, trim, chop,  
slice, dice, fillet, cut.

1. Chef's knife



To trim peels from  
fruits and vegetables.

2. Paring knife



To cut large items, such  
as meats.

3. Slicer



To remove the bones  
from poultry, meat,  
seafood, and to  
remove fat.

4. Boning knife



To trim potatoes and  
vegetables into shapes  
that resemble footballs.

5. Tourné knife



To cut bread.

6. Serrated knife



To fillet fish.

7. Fillet knife



To cut meat.

8. Butcher knife

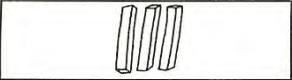
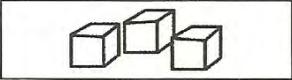
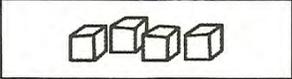
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### Basic Knife Cuts

Cuts for vegetables and their best knife cuts. Chef's knife can also be used in place of utility knife with most cuts.

	A. French fry	Chef's
	B. Stick	Utility
	C. Baton	Chef's
	D. Julienne	Utility
	E. Fine matchstick	Utility
	F. Large dice	Chef's
	G. Medium dice	Chef's
	H. Small dice	Chef's
	I. Round	Utility
	J. Diagonal	Utility or Chef's

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### **Beef Stew-Soup with Barley**

(makes 6 servings)

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 quarts low-sodium beef stock
- 2 cups seasonal vegetables (green beans, mushrooms, corn, etc.)
- 1 can (15 oz) beef stew
- 1 can (14.5 oz can) low-sodium diced tomatoes
- ½ cup quick cooking barley
- 2 tsp herbs (parsley, basil, etc.)

#### Instructions:

In a stock pot, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil. Add beef stock and vegetables. Simmer 5 minutes. Add can of beef stew, tomatoes, and quick cooking barley. Simmer 15 minutes. Season to taste with herbs.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories: 250  
Total Fat: 9g  
Saturated Fat: 2.5g Carbohydrates: 32g  
Fiber: 6g  
Protein: 13g





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## Cooking with a Chef

### **Fresh Fruit Crunch**

(makes 4 servings)

#### Ingredients:

- 1 Red Delicious apple, cored and finely chopped (may substitute seasonal berries or peaches)
- 2 (8 oz) non-fat cherry or raspberry yogurt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Grape-Nuts brand cereal

#### Instructions:

Divide half the chopped apple among serving dishes. Spoon 4 Tbsp of yogurt into each dish. Add 2 Tbsp Grape-Nuts. Top with layers of remaining yogurt, chopped apple, and garnish with a sprinkle of cereal.

#### Nutrition Information:

Calories: 150  
Total Fat: 0g  
Saturated Fat: 0g  
Carbohydrates: 30g  
Fiber: 2g  
Protein: 7g

