



Chefs A' Field 'Lunchbox'

companion outreach materials to the award-winning public television series

EAT IT UP

COOKING UP NATURE'S BEST, TOGETHER...

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Chefs A' Field

Culinary Adventures with Family & Friends

THE COMPANION OUTREACH MATERIALS: ACTIVITIES, EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS & MORE

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ON THE TIP OF MY TONGUE - Taste Test To Tempt Your Palette

We can taste five flavors:

- Sweet
- Sour
- Bitter
- Salty
- Umami (best described as savory)

Contrary to what you may have heard, we sense all tastes, to varying degrees, on all parts of our tongues. We also can detect more than one flavor at one time, so we often combine different tastes in a recipe.

- Taste as many foods from this list as you can, or make up your own list. Which taste would you assign to each? Do some have more than one taste?
- Combine ingredients to create a “salad of tastes.” Choose an ingredient from each of the five flavor categories and combine the ingredients in a salad.

apples	watercress	radishes
mushrooms	pecans	oranges
walnuts	spinach	curly endive
romaine lettuce	pine nuts	strawberries
green grapes	red bell pepper	avocado

- What are some examples of each flavor? Which do you like best?
- Do flavors change when combined with other flavors? What are your favorites?



THE NOSE KNOWS Is Taste Related To Smell?

Use your sense of smell to try to recognize some common foods.

what you do

- Gather an assortment of foods with distinctive odors, such as banana, cinnamon, chocolate, lemon, orange, onion, and peanut butter. Dust a cotton ball with the cinnamon, and peel the fruits and onion.
- Place a small amount of each food in individual dishes, keeping the foods out of sight of the guesser. Give each person a turn at trying to recognize the foods just by smell. As necessary, you can let them taste, too.
- Which foods are easiest to recognize by smell? Which have the most-distinct smells?



FEELING FRUITY - Block Prints From Fruits & Vegetables

You don't need a paintbrush to create a work of art. Fruits and vegetables such as apples and potatoes make excellent artists' tools. You can easily make block prints using the ingredients in your kitchen.

what you do

- Lay out several whole potatoes, squash, and/or apples. Slice each open. (Try experimenting with cutting lengthwise, around, or in various shapes.) Look at the inside of each. What unique patterns do they have? What characteristics does each have?
- Pour tempera or fabric paint onto small paper plates or into recycled bowls. Dip the various foods in the paint, and place them on fabric or paper. Each item will give you a unique print that resembles the veins, seeds, and flesh inside. If desired, carefully cut the potato into various forms and shapes.

Try making block prints on cloth napkins for a unique party addition, or on canvas bags that you can reuse every time you go shopping. Create cards for your next party, by using recycled paper. These are not only fun, but good for the environment as well.



SEASONAL MEALS

Eat the Colors of the Season

Plan a special, colored theme seasonal meal. For example, for Fall or Halloween plan a dinner that is completely orange on the plate.

You could serve a vegetable soup with an abundance of carrots or a pumpkin soup, orange jello in scooped out orange shells or a carrot /raisin salad, a muffin with grated cheese, and an orange drink. Dessert may include pumpkin pie or orange sherbet. Follow the same plan for other seasons or holidays - try a red dinner for Valentines Day.

And of course - things are always best when they are in season - so eat whatever is freshest, all year round!



ROAD MAP TO GOOD EATING

Healthy Eating Incentives

To encourage healthy eating habits devise a chart and offer incentives. This can be the first step to getting your family on a healthier eating path.

- Draw a path on poster board or butcher paper.
- Using a ruler mark steps on the path. Place a marker at the starting line for each family member.
- Every step represents a fruit or vegetable that is eaten.
- Place reward flags along the way.
- Rewards may include a trip to the zoo, a bike ride, a family hike, a trip to the museum or a visit to a local farm.

At the end of the path, plan a grand prize and take pride in the fact that your child is eating in a healthier way.



WINTER PICNIC

Have an Indoor Picnic

If the weather is cold and blustery and you still want that picnic, simply spread a large blanket in front of the fireplace and serve your picnic dinner right there!

DESSERT FIRST

Have A Backwards Dinner

Surprise your children and show them your silly side!

Plan your menu backwards. Set the table backwards and begin your meal with dessert, then work backwards serving your salad last! Perhaps, your family can even dress for dinner, wearing their clothes backwards, of course.



I DON'T HAVE A CLUE!

Host Your Own Treasure Hunt

This takes a little planning, but it's so much fun for the kids and for parents and if you plan right, everyone will be occupied for a very long time.

Write a clue telling you where to go for the next clue, and on and on. How difficult the clue is will depend on the age of your child.

Your decision on where or how long your treasure hunt will continue is up to you! At the end of the hunt, bury your treasure.

It may be tickets to the fair to see the dairy exhibit, it might be a coupon to pick blueberries, or it could be a movie, popcorn and all the fixings for a great family night!



TAKING A PAGE FROM MOTHER NATURE

Make Your Own Sketch Book

- make some tea
- pour tea into a large bowl or cake pan
- take sheets of plain white paper and carefully dip them into the tea. Be sure that the paper is fully submerged, count to five, and remove the tea stained paper.
- Repeat as many times as pages that you will need for your book.
- Hang the sheets of paper from a clothesline or lay flat on a covered surface to dry
- After paper dries place sheets on top of each other.
- Cut a paper bag to use as the cover of your book.
- Bind the book by wrapping a piece of string or twine around the center of the pages.
- Now take a nature walk to a local park collecting seeds and other souvenirs from nature. Place in the book and label each park treasure describing where it was found and other pertinent details. Also bring along sketching pens so that your nature observer can sketch plants or flowers that cannot be picked.



HAPPY FAMILY - Cook with your Kids!

Cooking together provides quality family time. Children enjoy helping in the kitchen while learning to make healthy choices. In addition children develop vocabulary, learn measurement skills and to follow sequential directions. This is a great way to bring families together in a healthy way.

- Involve children in the entire cooking process by preparing a shopping list together prior to cooking. Then take your child to the grocery store or local farmer's market to select the ingredients.
- Older children will enjoy using a calculator to determine the total cost of the meal.
- Teach your child the "safe" way to use cooking utensils while they mix, chop, measure, and stir.
- Involve them in the cleanup process, as well - it will help them appreciate the time and effort you put in.
- Let each person create the menu for one meal during the week.
- Keep a family recipe book with some of your favorite meals made together.
- Let the children experiment with ingredients. It not only encourages creativity but will help expand their palette.
- Integrate a variety of herbs and colorful vegetables into the meals. We all "eat" with our eyes, too. You may be surprised by what kids will try when they are a part of creating the meal.
- Don't forget to also sit down together to eat! [And turn off the TV!].



LET'S PLAY!

Make your Own Edible Play Dough

Who doesn't love to play with their food? You can use peanut butter to make your own edible play dough.

what you need

- 1 cup peanut or walnut butter
- 1 cup powdered milk
- 1 tablespoon honey

what you do

- Mix all of the ingredients together with your hands, kneading it until thoroughly mixed.

Use your play dough to create fun shapes. The best part is that you can eat your creations when you are done—no cooking is required!

Dough can be stored in the refrigerator in an air-tight container for up to 1 week.

HIGH AND DRY**Make Sun-Dried Tomatoes At Home**

Drying food is one of the oldest ways of preserving it, and sun-dried tomatoes are popular. But food simply left out to dry runs a race with mold. To dry tomatoes faster than mold can catch up with them, you can make a simple food dryer.

what you need

- Sturdy cardboard carton with a removable lid
- Scissors or knife
- Clean nylon screen or plastic mesh
- Tape
- Black construction paper or poster paint
- Plastic food wrap
- Tomatoes

what you do:**to make the dryer**

- The dryer consists of two parts: a mesh-covered base to hold the tomatoes and a top that concentrates heat from the sun.
- The lid of the box becomes the base for holding the food to be dried. To make “feet” for the base, cut rectangular pieces out of the sides of the lid. Begin cutting 2 inches from the corners and cut halfway up the side. (Repeat on all four sides.)
- Make the drying surface: Cut the screen or mesh to the same dimensions as the lid, and put aside. Cut out the center of the lid, leaving a 2 inch border all around. Tape the screen over the hole in the lid.
- The bottom of the box becomes the “oven.” Turn the box over so that the open end is down. Cut across one of the long edges of the box horizontally. Cut along the shorter sides at a 45-degree angle to the first cut until you reach the other long side. Cut across the long side to remove the piece.
- Paint the inside of the “oven” with black paint or cover it with black construction paper.
Cover the angled opening with plastic wrap, and secure with tape.

to prepare the tomatoes

- Dip whole, ripe tomatoes in boiling water for about 30 seconds to loosen the skin.
- Peel the tomatoes, cut into ½-inch-thick slices, and remove the seeds.
- Place the slices of tomato on the screen or mesh.
- Top with the plastic-covered box.
- Place the dryer outside, facing in the direction that gets the most sunlight. Leave the tomatoes in the dryer for one to two days.
- Test your tomato slices for dryness—they should be pliable but should not have any moisture—before you store them in the refrigerator.



NATURE'S PAINT BRUSH - Make Veggie Prints

You only need to look as far as your local farmers market - or even your refrigerator to create beautiful and interesting art.

- Place tempera paint in a shallow pie tin or container.
- Cut off the end of a potato or a carrot or a corn cob may be used to create an extra interesting design. Older children may carve a design or shape on the end of the carrot or potato.
- Dip vegetable lightly into paint and stamp onto construction paper, newsprint or a brown paper bag.

This can be a fun way to create original wrapping paper - just unroll a long scroll of butcher paper or kraft paper and let everyone add their own prints.

Or, create an original shopping bag that you can take to the farmers market. Let everyone design their own bag using veggie prints. If you want to wash the bags, however, be sure to use fabric paint instead of tempera.



TRICKOR TREAT ? The Magic Shell Game

The shell game has been played at least since the Middle Ages. It can be played honestly or as a trick—so be sure you have a trustworthy partner!

to play:

- You need three walnut shell halves, as alike in size and color as possible. Line up the three shells on a table.
- Put a walnut piece (or dried bean) under one shell.
- Shuffle the shells around the table as fast as you can, ending with the three shells back in one line.

Can you identify where the walnut piece is? If you guess right, you get to eat the walnut piece as your prize!

The shell game often was played by gamblers who would bet on where they thought the bean was. The game often was turned into a swindle, however, by fast-fingered operators who moved the bean so it was never under the shell that the player had selected.



TO SHELL OR NOT TO SHELL
Nuts About Math

For a recipe, you need 4 ounces of shelled walnuts. How many ounces of whole walnuts do you need?

- Gather 10 walnuts in the shell.
- Weigh them.
- Crack them open and separate the shells from the meat. But don't eat any yet!
- Weigh the shells and nut meat separately. Record your results.

You should find that the nuts and shells weigh just about the same. The walnuts' weight is divided almost exactly in half between nut and shell.

So in your recipe, you will need 8 ounces of walnuts in the shell to equal 4 ounces of shelled walnut meat.



CRY BABY, CRY - Don't Tear Up When Cutting Onions

Cutting raw onions can make your eyes tear. Why? Because onions contain a chemical irritant that is released when the onion is cut.

When you slice through an onion, you break open cells that have enzymes inside of them. The enzymes, called amino acid sulfoxides, rearrange themselves to form a mild sulfuric acid, a volatile gas that irritates the eyes.

The nerve endings in your eyes are very sensitive so they pick up on this irritation. The brain reacts by telling your tear ducts to produce more water, to dilute the irritating acid so the eyes are protected. But don't rub your eyes—it will only make the reaction worse!

There are several suggested ways to avoid crying over cut onions, however. Try them. Which ones work for you?

- Cut the onion under running water.
- Chew on bread, chewing gum, or taffy while cutting the onion.
- Don't cut through the root end, which contains most of the chemical.
- Refrigerate the onion for at least 30 minutes before you cut it.
- Cut a cone out of the root end of the onion, about one-third the diameter of the onion and one-third as deep.
- Chop the onion in a food processor, but stand back when you open the processor.
- Use a sharp (not blunt) knife for chopping.
- Wear a pair of ski goggles to protect your eyes. They may look funny, but many swear that they work!



MEASURING UP When Is A Cup Not A Cup?

One recipe calls for a cup of sliced carrots, a second for a cup of diced carrots, and a third for a cup of finely chopped carrots. What do these terms mean?

- **Slice:** Cut into thin sections.
- **Dice:** Cut into small cubes.
- **Chop:** Cut into the smallest pieces possible.

Does the technique make a difference in the size or the number of carrots you need to fill a cup? Try it for yourself.

You should find that the smaller the pieces, the more carrot you will need to fill the cup. A cup of chopped onion, for example, requires 50 percent more carrot than a cup of sliced carrot.



PAINT THE TOWN GREEN **Saucy Designs For Your Plate**

Add artistic flourish to a dish that calls for a sauce or a glaze.

- Pick up a variety of paintbrushes, in all sizes, at your local hardware or crafts store. Give each diner a plate, a small cup to hold the sauce or glaze, and a choice of brushes.
- Let the diners be their own decorators, brushing the sauce on their plates to create their own designs. Plate the meat or fish atop the sauce. You will have a table full of artistic work to show off at dinner!



RING-A-DING - Make Apple Rings

You can make dried apples to eat as a snack or to turn into a necklace. It's a great way to eat your apples all year long—and you know what the doctor says about an apple a day!

what you need

- 4 apples
- Knife
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons water
- Sturdy thread or twine

what you do

- Cut the apples into rings about 1/8 inch thick.
- Mix the lemon juice and water in a shallow dish. To prevent discoloring, dip each apple ring into the lemon-water mixture.
- String the thread or twine through the center of each ring and hang in a dry, warm place. The rings will take about 2 weeks to dry.

When dry, the rings will have a chewy texture. Drying apples helps to preserve their sweetness and nutrients. These dried apple rings make a healthy snack for school or any time of day. You can also use the Apple Rings as decorative elements to a Fall table. Why not use them as fun, edible napkin rings?



COLOR BAR

Make a Salad Bar at Home

To encourage kids to make healthy choices, set up a salad bar with a variety of salad fixings. The more colorful the salad bar, the better!

Some suggestions include your child's favorite lettuce or spinach, cucumbers, radishes, celery, carrots, zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, sunflower seeds or other nuts, dried cranberries, eggs, leftover meats or fish, cheese and their choice of dressing. Limit your choices depending on the age of your child, your budget and what's in the refrigerator.

And of course, choose things that are fresh and in season. Fresh, seasonal produce is usually sweeter, better textured and more flavorful. Let each person create their own salad.



IT'S THE PITS

Grow a Potato or a Pit

If you're serving potatoes, save one for a window garden.

- Place 3 or 4 toothpicks horizontally around the center of a potato (it can be sweet or white or any variety).
- Balance the toothpicks on the rim of a glass jar or glass.
- Add water to cover the bottom half of the potato and place in a sunny window.

In two weeks vines will begin to sprout into a plant. Watch the leaves and roots grow!

Did you have an avocado for dinner? Try this experiment with an avocado pit!

Remember to keep adding water to maintain your water level.



POPCORN GARDEN

Make a Garden Grow in a Bag!

- Place a few scoops of dirt in a plastic sandwich bag.
- Add enough water to moisten the dirt.
- Add several kernels of un-popped popcorn.
- Seal the bag and place in a sunny window.
- Watch it sprout! it will take about a week!



GIVE BACK
Community Helpers

Teach your child to give back and learn the art of giving!

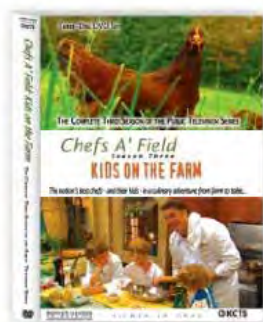
During the holidays it is a good time to show your child the importance of helping others by donating to local food banks or volunteering in your community.

[One thing to remember: when donating to food banks remember to give healthy foods!]

Chefs A' Field

EAT IT UP!

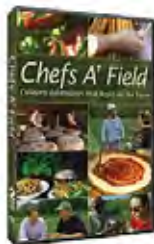
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Chefs A' Field

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