



The Mississippi 4-H Cook-off is designed to help youth make wise choices in the selection and preparation of the foods that they eat. Members enrolled in this project will learn the importance of including a variety of foods using MyPlate, the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and other sources of nutrition and food safety

information. They will learn the important role that nutrition plays with respect to good health and food safety. They will also gain an understanding of where the foods they use are grown locally, regionally, and nationally. Included in this project will be the application of scientific principles of nutrition and food preparation.

Teams should be prepared to turn in a competition day menu, ingredients list, proof of location for each ingredient being used, nutrition information for each dish component, and nutrition information for entire plate, prior to registration.

The 4-H Mississippi Cook-Off is a food preparation contest with all menus to be prepared on site and within a 1-hour time limit, including preparation and clean-up of the station. The only items that will be available to the competition team are one refrigerator/freezer, stainless steel table, 4burner cook-top, and one 2-rack oven. All other items including food/ingredients, food safety equipment (e.g. aprons, hair restraints, thermometers, gloves, hot pads, etc.), food preparation equipment (e.g. mixing bowls, spatulas, mixer/food processor, measuring cups, etc.), food storage equipment (e.g. containers, trays, plastic storage bins, etc.), and food presentation material (e.g. plates, bowls, flatware, napkins, etc.) are each team's responsibility.



Perishable items should be transported safely in coolers. Please refer to the contest coordinator for locations to store food until the contest begins. Each food should be clearly marked with the county name and contestants to prevent the potential for missing items. An inventory of items will have to be provided to the contest organizer upon storage. All other non-perishable items, including



food preparation equipment, must be stored with the team until the day of the contest. Storage of these items will not be allowed in the food preparation area prior to the team's competition time.

4-H Thrive

Positive Youth Development

Developing Competence

Adults create environments where youth can develop competence in their chosen project area.

Building Confidence

Youth build confidence as they learn to think for themselves, build mastery, and are recognized for their efforts.

Nurturing Caring

Adults nurture a caring environment where mutual trust between youth and adults is established. Caring relationships with adults are key to resilient youth.

Finding Connection

Youth build solid connections which are critical to their well-being.

Forming Character

Create a community where youth play an active role in developing their character.

Determining Contribution

Youth actively contribute to their clubs and communities.

***Mississippi State University is
an equal opportunity
institution.***

Part 1:

CONTEST FORMAT

- Team format contest
- 1 team per county eligible to compete
- Teams must have a minimum of two members and will only be allowed to compete with a maximum of 4 members.
- County teams can be larger than 4 members providing for an alternate or in preparing members for future contests. However, only the final competing team of four will be recognized as winners and will be able to compete in the national contest. (*Seniors Only*)
- Each member participating should have some role in the food preparation and food presentation during the contest. (For example: one team member will not be allowed to only present the food to the judges without participating in the actual preparation of the food.)
- Recipes for dishes must contain no more than 750 calories per dish and must be submitted along with other material (see Part 2) two weeks prior to the contest day
- Recipes will follow a standardized format:

2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans should be considered in recipe selection
- Excessive amounts of fat, sodium, and added sugars should be avoided
- Number of servings per recipe should be clearly stated
- Nutritional information should be included at the end of the recipe steps
- Food safety will need to be guaranteed throughout the selection, preparation and service of all recipes.
- Food may be brought by county, but documentation of safety will be required for team to compete. Alternatively, food can be purchased once team arrives Refrigerated and frozen storage will be available (See Part 2)

Continued

- Each competitor must wear appropriate clothes and closed toe shoes. Hair restraints are required. Chef's coats, aprons, and other foodservice accessories are allowed.
- Teams are responsible for food preparation supplies (e.g. bowls, dishes, small appliances, knives, cutting boards, utensils, etc.) Ovens, cooktops, and stainless-steel prep tables will be provided.
- Competitors must use USA domestic products and at least two of the ingredients must be Mississippi products. Other products (excluding spices) can be national products or commodities. (Competitors must be able to provide all packaging to determine country of origin-failure to do so could result in disqualification)
- No branded products will be endorsed or displayed prominently in a work station.

Part 2:

LET THE CONTEST ACTIVITIES BEGIN

- Two weeks prior to contest day registration, all competing teams MUST provide the following items via email to compete in the contest. These items include:
- Competition day menu
 - Contest day recipes
 - Ingredients list
 - Nutrition information for each dish component
 - Nutrition information for entire plate

Failure to provide these items in advance of the contest could result in a disqualification preventing the team from participating in the contest.

The day of the contest, all competing teams MUST provide the following items to compete in the contest.

- Proof of location for each ingredient being used

Failure to provide these items in advance of the contest could result in a disqualification preventing the team from participating in the contest.

Part 3:

SCORING CRITERIA

CATEGORY:

APPEARANCE OF TEAM MEMBERS

(hair restraints, closed-toe shoes, matching/correct uniforms, fingernails, jewelry)

SCORE **10 Points**

AGRICULTURAL IMPACT/ COMMODITY KNOWLEDGE

(Must state in presentation the economic impact of the commodity to Mississippi. Must explain which commodities are grown in Mississippi and which are grown elsewhere.)

SCORE **25 Points**

FOOD PREPARATION & SAFETY

(Steps in preparation, food safety concerns, food safety practice)

SCORE **25 Points**

SERVING SIZE INFORMATION

(Use of all MyPlate food groups, correct number of servings, size of serving, plating)

SCORE **10 Points**

FOOD APPEARANCE, QUALITY, NUTRIENT VALUE

(Appearance of food, garnishing, taste, variety, nutrition information)

SCORE **50 Points**

PRESENTATION SKILLS

(voice, poise, equal distribution of responsibility, effectiveness of presentation)

SCORE **30 Points**

TOTAL SCORE **150 Points**

Expand your experiences!

ADDITIONAL RULES:

- No advance cooking or preparation of a dish is allowed. Pre-cut vegetables and peeled/deveined shrimp will be permitted. Permission by the contest specialist and/or contest judges must be received in advance.
- Contestants will have one hour to complete the meal, which includes preparation, meal plating, and clean-up of their station. Once the team has reached the one-hour time limit all work in the station will be stopped.
- Contestants will prepare 4 complete and identical servings (3 judges servings and one for photography) of each meal.
- Contestants will deliver a presentation up to 5 minutes that describes their menu, preparation, ingredients and importance to the state or region, and food safety. The 5minute presentation will not be included in the one-hour time limit. Any presentation lasting longer than 5 minutes, excluding judges' questions, will be penalized in the team's final score.

Resources

1. [Home | Center for 4-H Youth Development](#)
2. [Mid-South 4-H Food Pantry Contest | Farm & Gin Show/midsouth4-hfoodpantrycontest](#)
3. MyPlate- <https://www.myplate.gov/>
4. NIFA- <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/>

Connections & Events

For Juniors

Project Achievement Day Contests
(Contact your local Extension office for availability in your region)

For Seniors

Club Congress Contests

4-H State Fair Chopped Contest

4-H Mid-South Food Pantry Competition

Contact your local Extension office to learn more.

4-H Record Book

4-H members practice skills in data collection, organization, and analysis as they document their project activities and goals in their record books. The books provide practical information as well as highlight progress made toward goals.

Juniors and Seniors can enter the state record book competition.

Seniors are eligible to win a trip to National 4-H Congress.

Activity Suggestions

Service and Leadership projects related to the 4-H Cookoff

Organize a county contest allowing youth to practice working as a team.

Invite professional guest speakers/chefs to come share their expertise.

Tour/Field Trip Ideas:

- Tour a chef's kitchen
- Invite the community for a county contest and invite local celebrities to judge

