

4-H Demonstrations Food Demonstration Tips



Supplies:

Table Cloths and Aprons:

- Use a table cloth, apron and hair covering (hat, scarf, ribbons, etc.) that matches the theme of the demonstration. It's not always necessary to use a large table cloth. Often 4-H members have a difficult time straightening it and waste valuable minutes on this part of the demonstration.
- Use a small square that just covers the area in which you working. A team demonstration may need a larger table cloth.
- To aid in cleanup, a clear piece of plastic (cut to work area size) can be placed over the cloth tablecloth.
- Wear a clean, pressed apron.
- Never wipe hands on an apron.

Bowls and Containers:

- Use clear bowls and liquid measuring cups, if possible, so your audience can easily see what you are doing. If you can't, be sure to work on a raised surface or tilt the bowl so they can see what the food looks like.
- Pre-measure and label ingredients in clear containers. It's best not to use specific brand name containers. Clear containers give the demonstration a uniform appearance.

Utensils:

- Use standard utensils and standard techniques for measuring ingredients. Example, dry measures for dry ingredients and liquid measures for wet ingredients.
- Level off dry ingredients with a knife.
- Avoid the use of sharp knives for junior demonstrators. It's better to pre-cut the food. Always use a cutting board and cut away from yourself.
- If using an electric fry pan, always keep the cover handy in case of spattering fat or steam. If possible, and if you must leave food cooking to prepare the next step, cover pan.
- Wooden spoons are not as noisy as metal spoons, so they are good choices for mixing and stirring.
- Use a rubber spatula to remove all the food from a container.
- Place a damp cloth or towel under cutting boards, bread boards or bowls to keep them from slipping.
- Use a cutting board for chopping.



- If using an electric mixer or blender, place several thicknesses of towel beneath the appliance to deaden the noise.
- Extension cords and appliance cords should run away from you and towards the end of the table. If you must walk over the cords for any reason secure the cord with duct tape.

Method:

- Working from left to right or vice versa keep full ingredient containers on one side and empty ones on the other side. As each ingredient container is used, replace the dirty container on the proper tray.
- Pre-measure food ingredients ahead of time unless you are teaching measuring techniques.
- Don't measure ingredients over the mixing bowl or other ingredients. Measure over the tray or separate container.
- As you finish each step, clear away all unnecessary equipment before bringing on another tray or the clutter will build up. If you don't, the audience will not be able to see through the clutter and you will have little space to work in.
- **DO NOT USE YOUR FINGERS FOR HANDLING FOOD!** Use a spoon, fork, spatula or tongs to transfer food from one container to another.
- Keep a damp cloth handy for wiping your hands before and during the demonstration. It's important that you wipe your hands before handling food. Having paper towel handy can be used to wipe up spills.
- Use a knife to crack each egg, then open it into a custard cup before adding to the rest of the ingredients. This will allow you to remove any shells.
- If preparing any hot dish, have potholders on hand.
- Use a small plate or cover from one of your containers to hold soiled utensils. Never lay utensils directly on a tablecloth or balance them in a bowl. If right handed, this plate should be placed to your right and at a comfortable arm's length from table edge (opposite for left- handed people.)
- Always **TALK NATURALLY** to the audience, and not to the food. It's not necessary to say "Now I am going to ..." before every step. Just describe everything that you are doing in a natural voice. Avoid using personal pronouns such as "my flour".
- Plan to take a few extra ingredients (like eggs) and equipment (like spoons and spatulas) in case something gets broken or misplaced.
- Show the audience the final product after completion.
- If something goes wrong - stay calm and keep going. The judges respect your ability to deal with any problems gracefully.

Appearance:

- Clothing should be appropriate for the demonstration - avoid long, flowing sleeves, large chunky jewelry or rings.
- Hair should be clean, neat, tied back or covered.
- Nails should be clean.
- Small cuts or abrasions should be covered with a band aid.
- Never place hands near face or hair. If you must sneeze or cough, please look away from food. Excuse yourself! Wipe hands on cloth and proceed.

Content:

- If using terms such as beat, fold, etc. make sure you are doing them correctly and know why you are using that procedure, in case you are asked.
- Give number of servings for recipe.
- Suggest other ways of preparing dish if appropriate; also, additional foods to complete meal.
- Use Nova Scotia products where possible (Gravenstein apples versus bananas).
- Give nutritional and agricultural production information.
- Safety tips are always good fillers when using appropriate appliances.
- Food safety information is always a good filler and of interest to the audience.
- Provide alternate suggestions or substitutions for ingredients if possible (e.g., yogurt for sour cream)
- Freezing and storing information can also add to the content of a demonstration.
- Take those extra steps to insure a finished product is attractive (i.e., nice platter, garnishes, etc.)
- Try to use foods with different textures, colors and shapes.