



Santa Clara County 4-H Favorite Foods Day

Let's get cooking!

Favorite Foods Day is an annual county wide 4-H event to provide a “Learn by doing” educational experience for 4-H youth members. Emphasis for this event is on meal preparation, nutritional knowledge, menu planning, food safety, table setting, and *Favorite Food* item. Members should make a product suitable for their age. Advanced members are expected to prepare foods that take extra time, preparation, and skills. All Novice, Beginner, Junior, and Senior entries are judged on a Danish System. This allows for each entrant to be judged independently according to the [Judging Guidelines](#) that have been provided. Hence, there may be more than one entry scored as first place and so on. Additionally, the top scoring entries will receive bonus prizes. Clovers will be evaluated and receive participation recognition and a prize. Clovers (age 5-8) do not receive place rankings.

Categories:

Build a menu around your favorite food and create a theme that compliments your entry.

Ages 5-8 may choose:

- Salad
- Dessert

All participants ages 9 to 18 may choose:

- Salad
- Dessert
- Healthy Substitution [Examples of Healthy Food Substitutions](#)**
- My Plate

Returning Members ages 9-19 May select one of the above or a One Dish Meal (soup, stew, Crock pot meal) Should include 3 of the 5 categories from the [My Plate Guidelines](#).

****Healthy food substitutions** may be used in any recipe. The definition of a healthy substitution is the simple art of altering a recipe to make it healthier. There are many ways to create healthy food recipes by just replacing one simple ingredient and not having to sacrifice taste and enjoyment. [Examples of Healthy Food Substitutions](#)

Favorite Foods Day Age Divisions:

There are five (5) age divisions for the event. This allows members to compete with others in the same age range or experience level. Enter the age division that corresponds to your age as of December 31 of the current 4-H program year.

The age divisions are as follows:

- Clovers 5 – 8 Years (Non-Competitive)
- Beginner 9 – 10 Years
- Junior 11 – 13 Years
- Novice 11 and older, have not participated in Favorite Foods Day before
- Senior 14 Years and older



Favorite Food Day Menu: What should be included in my menu?

Please plan a menu for the entire meal utilizing the *Favorite Food* being presented. Take into consideration color, texture and taste of the menu. Be sure to provide proper nutritional balance in the menu. Refer to [My Plate Guidelines](#) for more information.

- A menu card shall be prepared, with the (*Favorite Food*) shown or underlined. [Menu Card Examples](#)
- Menu plans should be listed in logical order in which they are served, as well as being attractive in appearance.
- Select a favorite food for the menu that is easy to transport and will retain its attractive appearance.
- The entire menu should be comprised of items that you could prepare on your own.
- The judge could ask you to describe how to prepare any item on your menu.

Basic Menu Pattern Example:

Salad
Main Course
Fruit
Vegetable
Grain
Dessert
Beverage

This pattern can be followed for all meals; however, you may leave out parts that do not fit. For example, if you are serving a salad, you might not be serving a vegetable so you would not include it on your menu. Capitalize all words except articles and prepositions (IE. and, of, with). ****Note: It is not appropriate to include an alcoholic beverage on a 4-H menu*

Recipe Guidelines What should be included in my recipe card?

Use “scratch” ingredients. Don’t rely on a prepared mix unless you transform it. Consider selecting a recipe that involves an unusual ingredient, imaginative garnish or method of preparation instead of a basic recipe. For example, add orange extract and/or chopped nuts to a basic cake recipe to give a new flavor. **Be prepared to tell the judge what you learned!**

- Preparing the Recipe Card: [Recipe Card Example](#) (specific nutrition information is not required.)
- It should be accurate, complete, simple, and clear. Include the name of your favorite food.
- It should list all the ingredients in the order used. Including exact measurements (i.e., 12 ounces - not 1 can).
- Do not abbreviate, if this is possible in the small space allowed.
- Include baking temperature AND baking time.
- Give total yield or number of servings, and state serving size.

A recipe for food exhibited must be available for the judges to review. It should be typed or printed legibly and displayed with your entry. A second copy of your recipe will go with your [People’s Choice entry](#).



Table Setting: How do I make my table setting? What should be included?

Members are assigned an area of approximately 24" x 24". All items used for your setting such as: dishes, flatware, place mat and/or tablecloth, napkin, glassware, decoration and your *Favorite Food* must fit into this space. The table setting should be appropriate for the complete menu (as listed on the menu card). The Favorite Food – **one serving of your entry** shall be displayed as part of your table setting.

Participants should prepare a Place Setting with the Favorite Food entry placed on top of the dinner plate.

Participants should prepare a place setting that includes the necessary items for their complete menu – including all flatware, dishes and the recipe item may be displayed on top of their place setting.

Participants should bring a crock pot, soup pot or on a warming tray to keep hot items hot (soup, stew, chili) Or, a cooler to keep cold food cold.

Please bring an extension cord if needed. You will be responsible for keeping your recipe item cold or warm for tasting. See notes on food safety.

A small table decoration is optional and is limited to 15" in height and in proportion to a single place setting. Decorations should not touch food unless they are edible. Examples: candle (not lit), bud vase, statue, floral basket.

Menu Card should be placed at the upper edge, above your place setting. [Menu Card Examples](#)

Recipe should be placed in a visible location within setting. [Recipe Guidelines](#)

Sample [Table Settings](#). Clovers would prepare a dessert or salad setting only.

What happens after I set up?

We encourage members to participate in the Skill-a-thon, food safety, get to know you games and judging contest. Our evaluators are excited to see you and what you have created. When it is your turn to present, be sure to introduce yourself and tell them about your food and table setting. Think of it as a 30 second commercial. The evaluators will ask you about your entry, basic nutrition and food safety.

People's Choice Entry

All participants are encouraged to participate in the People's Choice tasting contest. You will provide one serving of your "Favorite Food" for the judges. The remaining tastings that you have available will be placed on the People's Choice tasting table, along with a copy of your recipe.

Time will be provided to allow members and parents to view the place settings after the judges have finished. Everyone will have the opportunity to taste the entries and vote for their favorite entry. Remember to pack and bring your samples so that they stay cool or warm, as appropriate. Electricity is available, please provide your own extension cord.

Tasting will be at your own risk. 4-H and the Cooperative Extension will not take any responsibility for risks taken in tasting. (We trust your cooking, but we are required to include this statement.)



[My Plate Guidelines](#) What is a My Plate entry?

Questions? Check here first: [Favorite Foods Day Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Resources:

[Favorite Foods Day Safety](#)

[ADA Accommodation Request](#)



FAQ

The following general rules apply to all event participants.

- Participants must do all the food preparation, cooking, and table setting themselves with age-appropriate supervision as needed.
- Parents and leaders will not be allowed in the judging area at any time before or during the judging. Participants should come prepared to set up and display their entry on their own. Practice this at home.
- Recipe should serve four to eight persons.
- Finished food will be displayed at a place setting for ONE person.
- Space provided is 24 inches wide by 24 inches deep.
- Dishes, glasses, flatware, etc. should fit your theme and be selected from what is available or borrowed. (Running out to purchase fine china and some fresh exotic flowers defeats the purpose of this event.)
- 4-H uniform or theme related outfit is encouraged but not required
- Members should dress neat and long hair should be pulled back as a health consideration.
- Participants, you should be prepared to answer questions from the judges about how your recipe was prepared, what food group it belongs in, food safety, and some nutritional information.
- Time will be provided to allow members and parents to view the place settings after the judges have finished. Tasting will be at your own risk.
- Cooperative Extension will not take any responsibility for risks taken in tasting. (We trust your cooking, but we are required to include this statement.)