

## CHAPTER SIX

### MENU PLANNING

#### HOW TO BEGIN

The responsibility for writing the menus should be delegated to one person. However, it is a good idea to utilize chapter members and the cook(s) for ideas and suggestions.

Planning menus in advance gives worthwhile results in many ways, including better use of your food budget, more efficient purchasing, more attractive and varied menus, less chance of repetition, time and labor savings in planning and preparing meals, and less worrying about what to serve. However, flexibility is important as you may want to make occasional changes to take advantage of good buys (seasonal fruits and vegetables) or to use foods that are on hand.

It is helpful to set aside a certain time one day each week to do your menu planning. Find a quiet place where it is possible to concentrate and where there is space to keep recipe books, recipe files, previous menus, and other necessary items. Remember the internet has many helpful resources.

The easiest way to begin is to plan menus for one week at a time. You will need the following items:

- blank menu sheet
- copy of food inventory
- copy of staff work schedule
- list of factors affecting the menu (e.g. special events, weather, guests, etc.)
- blank food order forms

Plan the meals in this order:

- Dinner entrees, followed by lunch entrees
- Vegetables
- Salads
- Breads
- Desserts
- Beverages

Write in the most important meal first (e.g. chapter night, exchange dinner, etc.), then build the rest of the week around this meal, taking into account the following:

- Will there be leftovers for another meal?
- Should these leftovers be used during this week, or can they be frozen for a later date?
- Can an expensive item this week be compensated for next week?
- Is the staff's workload balanced for each day?
- Is the equipment available to produce the meals?

Write in the accompaniments to the entrees (e.g. biscuits, dressings, sauces).

Write in the breakfast and lunch entrees before completing the whole dinner menu. You are planning a whole day to blend into a week of meals. Breakfast and lunch should complement the dinner menu. Do not plan to serve meals from the same meat group on the same day.

When you are satisfied with your selection of entrees, write in the other items in the prescribed order, using the aforementioned factors for menu planning. Be sure to work with the food inventory to use items that are in stock.

Check the staff work schedule to be sure you have the staff on duty that can prepare the meals.

When you're satisfied with one week's menus, check for controls:

- Can the cook prepare the food?
- Is the workload balanced over the week?
- When the dinner or lunch meal calls for extra sauces or a special dessert, is the other meal's preparation balanced to compensate?
- Do you have the equipment to produce the meals, serving hot food hot and cold food cold?
- Can the meal be served easily?
- Will the cost be within the budget allowance?

Finally, write out the menu IN DETAIL. Give instructions where necessary, including the quantity to be prepared. If you are unsure about the quantity, consult a good cookbook. Experience is a great teacher! Write the menu with explicit instructions so the meal can be served as you visualize it.

When you have prepared one week's menus, write up three more weeks without repeating an item used in the first week. You now have a four-week cycle which can be produced over a semester; however, don't just repeat menus automatically. Vary the pattern and introduce at least one new item in each week's cycle.

Post the completed menus as early as possible where everyone can read them. At the end of the week, file the final copy with comments on menu item popularity, cost, variety, difficulty of preparation, nutrition, etc. This is not busy work; it is the foundation of your food service. Ultimately, it will be a time-saver and a budget-cutter. Above all, you will have happy, satisfied chapter members.

## ORDERING FOOD

Check the weekly menu against the food inventory, and make a list for the food vendors, including the date for delivery. Remind the cook when items are to be taken out of the freezer for thawing (by placing in the refrigerator—not on the counter). Allow two to three days for thawing, depending on the density of the product being thawed.

## **COST**

Check the cost of raw food items or work with the whole meal costs to determine if you're living within the budget.

A comparison to last year's invoices can be helpful. It is also helpful to chart the general fluctuations of food costs. Keeping a meal count of how many meals are actually served will be useful in future planning. Make the necessary adjustments with your next set of menus.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Be a creative menu planner. Do not be afraid of trying new items. Be observant of the members' eating habits, and, without pandering to them, bring to the table attractive dishes that make mealtimes an enjoyable experience.

It's also a good idea to plan emergency menus in case the cook calls in sick, there is a snow storm, or a delivery is not made. A list of phone numbers for local pizza establishments that deliver may be the answer!

A survey of students at Washington State University found the following preferences:

- Favorite breakfast meats (in order of preference): bacon, sausage, ham
- Favorite lunch meats: hamburger, roast beef, cold cuts, hot dogs, ham, pizza
- Favorite dinner meats: steak, roast beef, fried chicken, ham, pork chops, turkey

According to the residence hall dieticians at Kansas State University, the factors to consider in planning meals include:

- flavor
- texture
- color
- shape
- combination of foods

You may want to conduct an occasional survey to help determine menu popularity. Listen for comments about the meals and observe plate waste. Chapter members (and parents!) are especially happy when you ask for recipes from home and then adapt them to large quantities.

## **Errors in Menu Planning**

- Flavor
  - all bland flavors
  - too many strong or distinctive flavors
  - repetition of similar foods and flavors
  - no tart or acid-flavored food
  - too many sweet or too many sour foods
  - too many highly seasoned foods
- Color
  - too many foods of the same color—no contrast or variation

- clashing or unpleasant color combinations
- Size, Shape and Form
- too many mixtures
- too many small pieces, especially of the same size and shape
- too many similar shapes
- Preparation and Type of Food
- too many foods prepared in the same way, such as fried, creamed, or with sauces
- no main dish
- more than one main dish
- too many starchy foods
- too many of the same type of fruits and vegetables
- too many high protein foods
- not enough low-carb foods
- too many food items prepared using the same piece of equipment, such as the oven
- Temperature
- too many foods of the same temperature
- Identity
- food items unidentifiable, such as “mystery meat”
- Texture
- lack of variety in texture or “mouthfeel”
- too many soft foods
- too many crisp or crunchy foods

## **Lunch Entrée Suggestions**

### **BEEF**

- chili
- spaghetti
- tacos
- sloppy joes
- roast beef on a bun (hot or cold)
- French dip sandwich
- hamburger or cheeseburger
- veal cutlet on a bun
- burrito with chili
- pizza
- BBQ beef on a bun

### **PORK**

- cavatini
- BLT sandwich
- grilled ham and cheese sandwich
- chili dog
- corn dog
- pork cutlet on a bun
- BBQ pork on a bun

- deli ham on a bun
- egg roll

#### POULTRY

- chicken tetrazzini
- chicken cutlet on a bun
- turkey club
- turkey and Swiss cheese (grilled)
- chicken and dumplings
- chicken salad

#### FISH & CHEESE

- fish on a bun
- tuna salad
- macaroni and cheese
- baked potato with broccoli and cheese
- garden pasta
- tuna noodle casserole

### **Dinner Entrée Suggestions**

#### BEEF

- beef stroganoff
- spaghetti with meat sauce/meatballs
- lasagna
- Mexican (tostada, enchiladas, fajitas)
- roast beef
- steak
- chicken fried steak

#### PORK

- baked ham
- pork chops
- ham roast
- sweet and sour pork
- pork loin
- BBQ ribs

#### POULTRY

- fried chicken
- baked chicken
- turkey
- chicken nuggets
- Chinese (sweet and sour chicken, chow mein)

#### FISH

- fish filets
- shrimp
- fish platter combo
- baked fish

## **MENU SUGGESTIONS**

### **SPECIAL OCCASION**

(e.g. SCHOLARSHIP DINNER)

- Lemon Pepper Chicken Breasts
- Spinach Salad
- Mixed Grilled Vegetables
- Twice-baked Potatoes
- Homestyle Rolls and Butter (or butter substitute)
- Iced Tea and Lemonade
- Brownies and Ice Cream

OR

- Sliced Turkey Breast
- Sweet Potato Casserole
- Mixed Peas & Carrots
- Salad Bar or Tossed Salad (with Sysco pre-made dressing)
- Homemade Rolls with Cranberry Jelly
- Strawberry Shortcake

OR

- Punch (served in living room while staff prepare tables)
- Mixed Green Salad
- Cordon Bleu
- Wild Rice Pilaf
- Vegetable Medley
- Homestyle Rolls and Butter (or butter substitute)
- Dessert Bars (served with coffee in living room so staff can clear tables)

### **CHAPTER DINNER**

- Beef Brisket (chopped and sliced)
- Salad (paella, pear, mixed greens, or green bean)
- Bread
- Dessert (angel food cake, ice cream, yogurt, toppings)

OR

- Lemon Pepper Chicken
- Spinach Casserole
- Corn on Cob (half)
- Fresh Veggie Tray with Dip
- Homestyle Rolls and Butter (or butter substitute)
- Jello Poke Cake or Seasonal Fruit

### **PARENTS' DAY BRUNCH**

- Bread Assortment (muffins, croissants, sweet breads, bagels)
- Platters (fruit, cheese, vegetables)

- Entrees
- Quiche
- Scrambled Eggs
- Sausage
- Miniature Waffles
- Beverages
- Juices (orange, cranberry, and apple)
- Coffee and Tea
- Desserts (assorted miniatures)

OR

- Scrambled Eggs
- Bacon
- Tater Tots
- Tuna Salad
- Chicken Salad
- Egg Salad
- Bread Assortment
- Condiments (lettuce, tomatoes, pickles)
- Mini Muffins
- Coffee Cake and Cookies
- Juices (orange, cranberry, and apple)
- Vegetable Tray with Dip
- Fresh Fruit with Yogurt Dip
- Coffee, Tea, and Milk

## MENU SUGGESTIONS

### WALK-THROUGH LUNCH

- Full Salad Bar (tuna and egg salads, broccoli salad, bruschetta, cottage cheese, applesauce)
- Assorted Fresh Fruit
- Soups (tortilla soup and hearty garden vegetable)
- Grilled Chicken Sandwiches on Fresh Kaiser Rolls (with lettuce and tomato)
- Chocolate Chip Cookies

OR

- Open-faced grilled cheese sandwich
- Tomato Soup
- Homemade Salsa with Chips
- Salad Bar
- Fruit Bowl (bananas, apples, pears)
- Rice Krispie Treats
- Milk (two percent)

## EASY TO PREPARE MEALS FOR RECRUITMENT OR FINAL WEEKS

- Chicken Pita with chips and cookies
- Salads (chicken, tuna, pasta) which can also be used for sandwiches
- Chips and/or crackers
- Cookies
- Gyros (make your own or use Sysco lamb strips)
- Build Your Own Subs
- Fresh bagels with spinach dip (Knorr's vegetable recipe)

## HALLOWEEN DINNER

- White Worms (spaghetti)
- Blood with Dirt (marinara sauce with beef)
- Newt Tails (green beans)
- Variety Grass (salad)
- Rocks (rolls)
- Muddy Tombstones (chocolate pudding with vanilla wafers frosted like tombstones)

## Additional Resources Available On the World Wide Web

- [http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=14&tax\\_level=1](http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=1)
- [www.vrg.org/catalog/quant.htm](http://www.vrg.org/catalog/quant.htm)
- [www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-300834.html](http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-300834.html)
- [www.recipegoldmine.com/crowd/crowd.html](http://www.recipegoldmine.com/crowd/crowd.html)
- [www.canolainfo.org](http://www.canolainfo.org)
- [www.angelfire.com/bc/incredible/](http://www.angelfire.com/bc/incredible/)
- [www.razzledazzlerecipes.com/quatntity](http://www.razzledazzlerecipes.com/quatntity)
- [www.recipesource.com](http://www.recipesource.com)
- <http://allrecipes.com>
- [www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)
- [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com)
- [www.copykat.com](http://www.copykat.com)
- [www.bettycrocker.com/default.asp?csct=1](http://www.bettycrocker.com/default.asp?csct=1)
- [www.kraftfoods.com/kf](http://www.kraftfoods.com/kf)
- [www.recipeamerica.com](http://www.recipeamerica.com)
- [www.barbecue-recipes.org](http://www.barbecue-recipes.org)
- [www.annecollins.com/vegetarian-diet-nutrition.htm](http://www.annecollins.com/vegetarian-diet-nutrition.htm)
- <http://huhs.harvard.edu/clinicalservices/nutritionknowhow/vegetariannutrition.htm>
- [www.vegetariannutrition.net](http://www.vegetariannutrition.net)
- [www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000023.html#xtocid2381818](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000023.html#xtocid2381818)
- [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/admehg.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/admehg.html)
- [www.fda.gov/oca/sthealth.htm](http://www.fda.gov/oca/sthealth.htm)



## The New Food Pyramid

Released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in April of 2005, the new food pyramid has more specific advice on portion sizes and calories. The new food pyramid icon represents the recommended proportion of foods from each food group a person should eat each day, based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines. Physical activity is a new element in the symbol.

5-8 oz. a day

### Grains

- Make half your grains whole. Eat at least 3 oz. of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day
- 1 oz. is about 1 slice of bread, about 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or 1/2 cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta

2 1/2 cups a day

### VEGETABLES

- Vary your veggies
- Eat more dark green veggies like broccoli, spinach, and other dark leafy greens
- Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes
- Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils

2 cups a day\*

### FRUITS

Focus on fruits

- Eat a variety of fruit
- Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit
- Go easy on fruit juices

5 1/2 or 6 1/2 oz. a day\*

### MEAT & BEANS

Go lean with protein

- Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry
- Bake it, broil it, or grill it
- Vary your protein routine—choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds

3 cups a day\*

### MILK

Get your calcium-rich foods

- Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, and other milk products
- If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources such as fortified foods and beverages

6 or 7 tsps. a day\*

OILS

Know your fats

- Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils
- Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard

The new Food Pyramid allows for more personalized recommended allowances based on age, gender, and physical activity. Visit the website for more information.

\* Based on a 2000 calorie diet for men and women aged 19-30 with less than 30 minutes a day physical activity.