

Suggestions for Success



Cooking is an activity that requires close supervision and careful planning. For this reason, 20 students is the maximum number we recommend for a safe and quality cooking experience. If you have a class with more than 20 students, we suggest that you plan a way to cook with half of the class at a time. While one half cooks, the other half might read and discuss the farm profiles, do the related agriculture activity with a parent volunteer, or finish up their math work.

Successfully cooking with kids also depends on you, the teacher, anticipating and planning for potentially dangerous situations. Choose recipes that are suitable for your students' skill level; each crop includes at least one easy recipe that requires minimal cutting and cooking, and often one that is more advanced.

Try to get at least one and preferably two parent volunteers to help with the cooking; those extra sets of hands, eyes, and ears will really help things go more smoothly. Also, follow the suggestions below to further ensure safety and success.

Health and Safety

- Have all children wash their hands with soap and water before cooking. Discuss hand care, such as keeping hands away from mouth, nose, and hair while preparing ingredients or cooking.
- Clear off tables, and clean them with soap and water before cooking.
- Children must be carefully supervised when using knives.
- Pumpkin-carving knives or small serrated blades with rounded (not pointed) tips are good choices. Students must agree to use knives properly.
- Demonstrate using and holding knives safely. Demonstrate the safe way of cutting a fruit or vegetable by holding it on a cutting board while cutting. Emphasize that students are only to use knives at the cutting board.
- Discuss with students proper behavior around hot plates, blenders, and ovens.



Materials

Prepare a bucket, box, or trash can for compost waste to place in the school compost, if available. Ask students to bring simple ingredients from home to save on cost, and to enable students to feel good about contributing.

To reduce disposable items such as paper plates and plastic utensils, many teachers ask students to bring in their own personal set of utensils and a small bowl or covered plastic container. Students can label and keep them in class for other cooking activities and snacks.

Setting Up a Demonstration Table

Many of the recipes involve demonstrating how to prepare the produce or actually cooking the recipe. Set up a table for these demonstrations

that includes all the materials you will need and that allows everyone to see what you are doing.

Observation

- Allow students to observe each sample crop using their five senses before cutting.
- Ask students to record in their journal their observations about the samples.
- Give students time to share their observations along with their predictions about how the sample will change when the recipe is ready to eat.

Working Together

For ingredient preparation and cooking, groups of four students work best. Each pair of students within the group can work together to prepare the sample and discuss observations.

- Individual students should be responsible for recording observations in their own journals.
- Review social skills and table manners before students begin eating.
- While eating, students can share observations and insights.

Clean-Up

- Each group is responsible for cleaning its table, cutting boards, knives, bowls, and utensils.
- Rotate groups to clean class utensils, bowls, and pots.
- Leftovers can be saved for a snack, shared with another class, or taken home.
- If you have school compost, clean-up should also include composting food scraps.