Let's Get Cooking



Making your own meals can be lots of fun. Stirring, beating, mixing, baking—learn safe ways to prepare delicious, healthy meals with these fun activities.



1. Keeping It Clean

When preparing and eating food, keep your hands squeaky-clean! Believe it or not, bacteria can cling to the natural oil on your hands. Want to see? Take two apple pieces. Wash one apple piece and then wipe it with dirty hands and place it in a sealed jar. Label the jar "dirty hands." Now wash your hands. Take a second apple piece and wash it, then wipe it with your clean hands. Label this jar "squeaky-clean." After one week, look at both apple pieces. Are there any differences? How does this experiment demonstrate the importance of washing your hands?

2. When in Doubt, Throw It Out

Talk with a dietician, a health educator, or a restaurant owner and find out: How long can you keep different kinds of leftovers before they become dangerous to eat? How long can you keep a picnic lunch out of refrigeration? What actions can you take to keep your food safe?

3. Have It Your Way

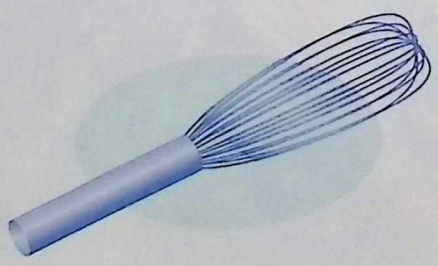
With a group of friends, create your own *healthy* fast-food restaurant. Develop a menu, set the prices, and design the look of the restaurant. Don't forget to give it a great name. Assign jobs like hostess, waitress, or chef. Decide where people will be able to find this restaurant. Then stage your "grand opening." Invite people to come to your "restaurant" and try some of your creative dishes.

4. Something for Everyone

Not everyone has the same access to healthy food. Tragically, more than one billion people worldwide are underfed. Collect food that can be donated to shelters or to another organization that could benefit from additional food. Make sure you include nutritious food that won't go bad, such as canned goods, juice boxes, dried fruit or fruit rolls, packaged cereals, and pastas.

5. The Perfect Egg

Eggs are a great source of protein and can be prepared in many different ways. Create a recipe in which eggs are used. Need inspiration? You might look at cookbooks with recipes from other countries. *Note:* Although eggs taste good and are good for you, they can be dangerous if you don't cook them properly. You can limit the threat of these harmful bacteria by making sure that eggs are fully cooked. Uncooked eggs are one reason not to taste cookie dough or cake batter before it's been baked!





6. New Wave Chef

Microwaves, electric grills, rotisseries, and other appliances help make cooking fast and fun. Select an appliance and, with an adult's help, try out a recipe that lets you use it.

7. Tasty Treats: Fruit Surprise

Here is a great way to make a tasty treat for you and your friends that doesn't involve cooking.

What You Need

- 1 cup* container of fruit-flavored yogurt
- 1 cup* of whipped cream or whipped cream substitute
- 4 mini pie crusts (pre-cooked)
- Fresh berries or other fruit

What You Do

1. In a bowl, mix the fruit-flavored yogurt and the whipped cream.
2. Scoop the mixture equally into each of the four pie crusts.
3. Decorate the pies with the fresh berries or other fruit.
4. Refrigerate for 15 minutes. Then, devour!

Now it's your turn: Create your own no-cook recipe.

8. Mix It Up

Blender drinks are fun, quick, and easy to make. When you use healthy ingredients, the drinks can also boost your energy. Hold a blender party. Invite each guest to bring a recipe for a vegetable or fruit drink and all the ingredients it requires. Be sure to plan ahead, so you'll have everything you need. Experiment with combinations of fruit, milk, yogurt, juice, honey, and natural flavorings to create a variety of drinks. Select fruits such as blueberries, strawberries, melon slices, peaches, pineapple, or bananas. Also try tropical fruits such as kiwi, mango, and papaya. For vegetable juices, try combining carrots, celery, and tomatoes.

9. Food Around the World

With your Girl Scout troop or group, eat your way around the world. Start in the U.S. and trace a path around the globe—in any direction. Each girl chooses a country on the "trip." She then finds a healthy recipe from that country to share with the troop. What can you learn about a culture from a recipe and its ingredients?

10. The Big Change

With the help of an adult, take a recipe that you find in a cookbook and make it healthier. For example, you can change the ground beef in a meat sauce to ground turkey or chicken. If you are baking, try substituting a half cup* of applesauce for a stick of butter. Try tofu in your cooking as a healthy source of protein. Be creative and have fun!

* See page 235 for the metric conversion chart.