

# The \$15 Nutrition on a Mission Cook-off Challenge

4-H War on Hunger Activities



## The \$15 Nutrition on a Mission Cook-off Challenge

*A lesson about the challenges of preparing nutritious meals on a budget*

Age range: Middle & High School

### Overview

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The \$15 Challenge is designed to help your students learn about the hardships families living in poverty face when trying to prepare meals within a budget that are both nutritious and appetizing. Students will be asked to purchase and prepare ingredients to make a healthy, nutritious meal within the constraints of a \$15 budget. This activity will give students hands on-experience in learning to eat healthy on a budget, which will be an important skill for them to possess as they transition into late teens/adulthood.

### Goals

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- Students will learn how to make smart nutritional choices on budget.
- Students will get hands-on experience preparing a appetizing, nutritious meal.
- Students will learn some of the challenges that low-income families face.
- Students will learn how to read a food label
- Students will learn about the dietary guidelines according to the Food Pyramid.

### Materials

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- A location where students have access to a kitchen/cooking supplies (stove/oven, microwave, access to running water, etc.) Note. Your local Cooperative Extension Office may be a possible location. Contact your local 4-H agent to find out if this is a possibility.
- Access to a local grocery store (to purchase items).
- Copies of the Food Pyramid
- Copies of How to Read the Food Label Handout
- Copies of Nutritional Guide Handout



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Uniting the Fighting Spirit of the Eagle with the Compassion of the Human Touch

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## Instructions

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Explaining the Activity and Pre-Activity Discussion:

1. Teacher/Leader should explain to the students that they will be buying and cooking the food to make a good, healthy, nutritious meal all for \$15 or less. (note. receipts for food items purchased must be turned in along with a brief write-up about the nutritional value. Additional details will be provided below).
2. The Food Pyramid, How to Read the Food label, and Nutritional Guide handouts should be handed out and discussed in class to make sure students have an understanding of the material. The students should then use these handouts as a guide when purchasing the food items.
3. Before completing the activity, have a discussion to see if any students have done grocery shopping before. Some questions to ask:
  - What kind of preparation might be useful before going to the grocery store?
  - Why might a list be useful? How would you design it?
  - How/why do you think families on a budget have to think ahead about their groceries?
  - Do you think families on food stamps and in poverty face more challenges shopping for nutritional food on a budget?

Completing the Activity:

1. Figure out a place where your students can actually prepare the food (as was earlier suggested perhaps your local Extension office or any other location your students may have access to).
2. You decide how long the students will have to prepare the meal (base this on the what kind and the amount of equipment you have).
3. Pick a date and a time for the cook-off to occur along with people who can act as judges (i.e. parents, 4-H volunteers, community members, etc.)
4. After the cook-off is over discuss the activity with the students.
  - How hard was it to come up with a meal for \$15 or less that was good and nutritious?
  - What was easy about it? What was difficult?
  - Did you learn anything interesting?
  - What do you think some of the challenges for families living on a strict budget or in poverty might face?



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# Evaluation Questions

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Country \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program \_\_\_\_\_

Age:    9    10    11    12    13    14    15    16    17    18    19

\_\_\_\_\_ Male            \_\_\_\_\_ Female

Where I live is considered to be: \_\_\_\_\_ Urban    \_\_\_\_\_ Rural

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ White            \_\_\_\_\_ African American            \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_\_\_ Native American    \_\_\_\_\_ Asian            \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Think about how much you thought or understood different issues associated with hunger before doing this activity.

	Before this Activity				After this Activity			
	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
How much had you thought about global hunger issues?	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
How much did you know about hunger-related problems?	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
How much did you think about the possible solutions for addressing hunger-related problems?	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I understood that hunger impacts people all over the world.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

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## Additional Notes:

- Depending on the age group and your personal knowledge about your student's understanding of nutritional facts, you decide how extensive the brief write-up should be.
- Make sure the students understand that they are responsible for purchasing the food. If your students cannot afford to purchase the food some additional activity variations will be provided below.
- Only the main ingredients of the dish must be purchased by the students. Items such as oil, butter, seasonings (salt, pepper, etc), can be bought from home. Perhaps see if staples such as these can be donated for the students use.

## Variations:

- If finding a place for the students cook the food is not a feasible plan or if affordability is an issue, have students follow through all of the plans up unto the cooking portions. So have them come up with a plan for the items within the budget as they would if they were going to be cooking. As well as visit the grocery store to learn the nutritional information about the items.
- If going to the grocery store is not a feasible plan either, have students find out about the cost and nutritional items by looking online at the items. Many stores such as Kroger and Wal-Mart have a great websites that list grocery items as well as nutritional information about them.



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