Dear Educator,

Take your students’ enthusiasm for Cool Food a step further with the Chopped: Cool Food for Kids Challenge. These two Cool Food for Kids program activities, from the National Frozen and Refrigerated Foods Association and Young Minds Inspired, will inspire students to host a cooking competition based on the popular Chopped television show. Your students will discover the versatility, innovation, and health benefits of foods from the frozen food and dairy aisles in this fun and exciting competition format!

Tips for Coordinating a Successful Chopped: Cool Food for Kids Challenge

• Familiarize yourself and your students with the Chopped television show on the Food Network. Each show features four chefs who must use the ingredients found in a mystery basket of surprising food items to prepare and serve three different dishes within 30 minutes. Chef contestants may use additional ingredients and all culinary tools available to them in the Chopped kitchen. A celebrity chef panel judges the competing chefs’ dishes on creativity, presentation, and taste. If a mystery basket ingredient is left out, or if, after tasting a dish, the judges deem its use of an ingredient lacks flavor or texture, that chef risks being chopped from the competition.

• Review the activity sheets with students before beginning the challenge. Tell them that this competition, while patterned after Chopped, has been adapted for secondary schools.

• Organize students into teams of three or four. Tell each team that they are responsible for creating one dish, cooking it, and cleaning up afterwards.

• Decide whether you want all groups to make a dish for the same menu category — appetizer, main dish, dessert — or if you want to assign a different category to each group.

• Start by giving examples of frozen and refrigerated foods, such as frozen meatballs, frozen spinach, cream cheese, Greek yogurt, or orange juice. Then, have students brainstorm and write the names of different frozen/refrigerated foods on slips of paper to create the Chopped basket of mystery ingredients. Put all the slips in a bag and have each group draw three. These will be the mandatory items they need to include in their recipe.

• Ask students to use the activity sheet to conceive and organize their menu item.

• Suggest that students explore the National Frozen and Refrigerated Foods recipe database at EasyHomeMeals.com for ideas on how foods from the frozen food and dairy aisles can star in a variety of healthy, delicious, and sometimes indulgent dishes, while still helping chefs save time and money.

• If you have a variety of frozen and refrigerated items in your classroom, that's great. If not, tell students that they need to make a trip to the supermarket to get the ingredients for their dish.

• On competition day, have all pots, pans, and utensils ready to go.

• Allot 30 minutes for preparation and the balance of class time for judging.

• Ask other teachers, the school principal, or other students to be judges. Provide them with a rating sheet so they can rate the dishes on a scale of 1-10 for each of these factors:
  • Use of all 3 mandatory ingredients
  • Creative use of the ingredients
  • Flavor
  • Texture
  • Presentation
  • Nutritional value
  • Adherence to the allotted time

• Then crown the winner of Chopped: Cool Food for Kids™ Frozen Foods Challenge.

• Repeat the steps and competition for foods from the dairy aisle. Be sure students use Activity 2 to help them plan their approach.

• At the end of the competitions, crown the winners from both the Frozen and Refrigerated challenges. You might even have the champions of the Frozen Foods and Refrigerated Foods contests face off in an Ultimate Cool Food for Kids Chopped Champion competition!

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Chopped: Cool Food for Kids™ Frozen Foods Challenge

It’s time for the Chopped: Cool Food for Kids Frozen Foods Challenge. This competition plays like everyone’s favorite cooking show competition, Chopped. Your group will use three items from the frozen foods aisle of your supermarket to create and prepare an appetizer, an entrée, or a dessert. You can add other ingredients to your recipe, but remember, you have to use the mandatory three or you will be “chopped” from the competition!

It’s time to get the Frozen Foods Challenge started!

Use the space below to organize your Challenge plan.

Remember, you have 30 minutes to create your dish and clean up.

• Record all ingredients used in your recipe.
• Use the MyPlate dietary guidelines to identify the nutritional highlights of your recipe — for example, high in protein, whole grain, low in fat, dairy-free, low in sugar, etc.

Our competition category:

☐ appetizer ☐ entrée ☐ dessert

Our mandatory ingredients:

1. __________________________________________ 2. __________________________________________ 3. __________________________________________

Additional ingredients:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Recipe directions:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Kitchen utensils and cooking items we will need:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Nutritional highlights:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Chopped: Cool Food for Kids™ Refrigerated Foods Challenge

It’s time for Round 2 of the competition! This time your team will use three ingredients from the dairy aisle of your supermarket to create and prepare an appetizer, an entrée, or a dessert.

You can add other ingredients to your recipe, but remember, you have to use the mandatory three or you will be “chopped” from the competition!

It’s time to get the Refrigerated Foods Challenge started!

Use the space below to organize your Challenge plan.

Remember, you have 30 minutes to create your dish and clean up.

- Record all ingredients used in your recipe.
- Use the MyPlate dietary guidelines to identify the nutritional highlights of your recipe — for example, high in protein, whole grain, low in fat, dairy-free, low in sugar, etc.

Our competition category:

☐ appetizer  ☐ entrée  ☐ dessert

Our mandatory ingredients:

1. ______________________ 2. ______________________ 3. ______________________

Additional ingredients:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Recipe directions:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Kitchen utensils and cooking items we will need:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Nutritional highlights:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Your creation will be judged on:

- Use of all three mandatory ingredients
- Flavor
- Texture
- Creative use of the three ingredients
- Presentation
- Nutritional value
- Adherence to the allotted time frame

Visit EasyHomeMeals.com to find delicious and nutritious recipes using frozen and refrigerated ingredients.