

2025-26 | DISTRICT 11
RULES & GUIDELINES

FOOD TRUCK



TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION



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District 11 4-H Food Show Guide

Food Truck Favorites ... Get ready to fire up your creativity and cooking skills for the **District County 4-H Food Show**, featuring the exciting theme **“Food Truck Favorites!”** From gourmet tacos to sizzling stir-fries and mouthwatering health inspired desserts, food trucks bring bold flavors and innovative dishes to the streets—now it’s your turn to bring that energy to the kitchen!

Participants will showcase their culinary talents by preparing dishes inspired by popular food truck fare. Whether it’s a globally inspired street food dish, a classic American favorite with a twist, or a fusion creation all your own, this competition challenges 4-H members to explore diverse flavors, unique ingredients, and creative presentation.

This event is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about **meal planning, nutrition, budgeting, and the science behind food preparation**—all while having fun and competing alongside fellow 4-H members. So, grab your aprons and get ready to cook up some delicious street-style eats that would make any food truck proud!

Let's hit the road and serve up some Food Truck Favorites!

<https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/>

The goal of the Texas 4-H Food Show is to provide an opportunity for 4-H contestants to highlight their culinary skills while also improving their presentation and interview skills. More than 120,000 youth participate in the 4-H Food & Nutrition Project where they learn to prepare nutritious and safe meals and adopt behaviors that can help reduce their risk for chronic disease.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop healthy eating habits to reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- Develop food preparation, safety, and nutrition skills.
- Provide leadership and public speaking opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for participants to connect MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines to their daily lives.
- Learn about nutrients and the health benefits they provide to your body.

NEW

This symbol denotes a new or modified rule for 2025-2026. Read closely!

CONTEST FORMAT

The District 11 4-H Food Show will consist of the following components which are explained throughout this guide:

1. Food Show Dish Presentation/Interview
2. Skills Showcase

DISTRICT 11 4-H FOOD SHOW PARTICIPANT RULES

1. **Special Note.** *The rules in this guide are for the District 11 4-H Food Show competition. Please refer to state guidelines for information on that contest.*
2. **Participation.** Participants must be 4-H members currently enrolled in a Texas 4-H Youth Development county program and actively participating in the Food and Nutrition project.
Age. Age divisions are determined by a participant's age/grade as of August 31 of the current 4-H year. See the Texas 4-H Rules and Guidelines for specific age requirements. **Junior Division: Grades 3 – 5; Intermediate Division: Grades 6 – 8; Senior Division: Grades 9-12**
3. **Counties** are allowed to send three (3) entries in each age group in each dish category to District 11 Competition.
4. **Theme.** This year's 4-H Food Show theme is Food Truck Favorites ... Get ready to fire up your creativity and cooking skills for the District 11 4-H Food Show, featuring the exciting theme "Food Truck Favorites!" From gourmet tacos to sizzling stir-fries and mouthwatering health inspired desserts, food trucks bring bold flavors and innovative dishes to the streets—now it's your turn to bring that energy to the kitchen! Participants will showcase their culinary talents by preparing dishes inspired by popular food truck fare. Whether it's a globally inspired street food dish, a classic American favorite with a twist, or a fusion creation all your own, this competition challenges 4-H members to explore diverse flavors, unique ingredients, and creative presentation.
The theme for the District 11 4-H Food Show will remain the same for two years. This gives counties an opportunity to provide education, workshops, etc. which targets the theme. The same recipe *cannot* be entered more than once to the State Food Show.
5. **District 11 Food Show Components.** Each food show participant will complete/compete in each of the following components. A brief description and/or rules are shown for each on the next page.

1. **FOOD SHOW DISH PRESENTATION/INTERVIEW:** Food show contestants will prepare a dish at home to present, as has traditionally been done. Dishes prepared should utilize only ONE recipe and not multiple to create versions or options of the recipe. (Example: an appetizer recipe should only feature one version and not multiple) Contestants should ensure they are choosing healthy recipes that follow guidance in the Recipes for Good Health resource located at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/> The selection and knowledge of the dish should highlight that the contestant has learned valuable skills and knowledge related to healthy eating and chronic disease prevention.

NEW

Dish Categories. Texas 4-H Food Show dish categories are:

Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, and Healthy Dessert

- **Appetizer** – Traditionally an appetizer is a small dish or food that is eaten prior to the main course. When selecting recipes for this category, contestants should consider foods that are lower in fat, sodium, and calories so as to not ruin one's appetite.
- **Main Dish** – The main dish is usually the heaviest, heartiest, and most substantial dish in a meal. In a meal consisting of several courses, the main dish is served during the main course and is the featured dish of the meal. The key ingredient is usually meat or another protein food, but they may contain other foods.
- **Side Dishes** – Side dishes are foods that are usually served along with a main dish or as accompaniments to the main course. Suggested dishes may include salads, cooked vegetables, cooked fruit, pasta or rice dishes, and/or combination vegetable dishes.
- **Healthy Desserts** – Healthy can still mean delicious when it comes to desserts. Dishes in this category should be served at the end of the meal or for special occasions. Contestants should modify traditional recipes with healthy substitutions and consider MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines when selecting recipes for this category.

2. **SKILL SHOWCASE:** Food show contestants will showcase a skill learned in the food and nutrition project area when they bring their dish to be judged. Youth will demonstrate their knowledge of a skill assigned by judges. All materials to demonstrate this skill will be provided and judges will score the skill based on correct procedures, safety, and other pertinent information related to the skill assigned. The skill will be assigned during designated judging time for each contestant and not prior. The skill demonstration will include a time limit which will be announced during participant orientation.

3. **JUDGING TIME LIMITS:** These time limits will be followed during the judging process

- 5 min presentation with introduction
- 3 min Q&A
- 1 min serve (*SENIORS ONLY*)
- 2 min skill showcase
- 4 min judges' comments

DISTRICT 11 4-H FOOD SHOW ENTRY, PRESENTATION AND JUDGING GUIDELINES

The only required paperwork for entry is Food Show Recipe, entry paperwork MUST BE submitted to the Extension Office by October 8. Recipes should be typed in the standard recipe format using the Recipe Submission Checklist as a guide. By submitting the recipe, the contestant releases the recipe for use by Texas 4-H Youth Development and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

No copyrighted recipes should be used.



FOOD SHOW DISH RECIPE SUBMISSION: Recipes should be written in the standard recipe format using the included Recipe Submission Checklist as a guide. Nutritional analysis for recipe is not required and will not be judged. All four food categories may use ovens for their recipe, make sure that the oven cook time is limited to 60 minutes or less in all categories. No alcohol or ingredients containing alcohol may be used. Extract flavorings are acceptable. When choosing a recipe, please keep in mind what ingredients will be available or in season for all levels of competition: county, district and state. Additionally, please remember that the goal of the food and nutrition project is to learn healthy eating skills and healthy recipe selection.

NEW

When selecting your recipe, the entire preparation and cook time can be no more than 2 hours (120 minutes).

FOOD SHOW INTERVIEW

1. *Introduction/Presentation*

Juniors and Intermediate are allowed to bring only one (1) serving of their dish to present. Each contestant will start with a maximum five-minute presentation to introduce themselves and their dish. To earn maximum points, participants must use the 5-minute presentation to describe their inspiration in choosing your recipe, how recipe relates to the current food show theme, and the following areas of the scorecard: **Knowledge of MyPlate, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, and Food Safety Concerns.**

2. *Question and Answer*

Judges will have the opportunity for a three-minute interview asking questions applicable to the attached scorecard. It includes but is not limited to basic nutrition, food safety, food preparation, chronic disease prevention, age related nutrition, or other areas of health, as well as project experiences. Judges may ask additional questions related to general food and health, food systems, food safety, or food/health issues.

3. *Serving – SENIORS ONLY*

At the end of the question and answer period, senior contestants will have one minute to serve the judges a portion of their dish. This allows judges to visually evaluate the dish prepared. Contestants should practice proper food handling techniques when presenting food to the judges. Judges will not taste the food.

The food should be presented in a serving dish with a serving utensil provided by the contestant. In addition, a napkin to lay serving utensil on is allowed. The dish should be presented to the judges as if it were about to be placed on a table for a family dinner. In some instances, it is not necessary to present to the judges the entire recipe. For example, if a recipe makes two loaves of bread, only one loaf needs to be presented for judging. Contestants should serve judges what they deem is an appropriate serving size for evaluation purposes. Paper goods for these servings will be provided by the food show committee. Contestants will serve one serving to the judging panel, not a serving to each individual judge.

4. Serving

If needed to safely transport the dish, contestants should bring serving trays. Serving trays will not be provided. Fancy or elaborate placemats, linens, centerpieces, candles, etc., are not to be included with the dish as it is presented for judging interviews. Contestants should use only serving dishes and utensils appropriate and necessary to present and serve the dish to be judged.

Garnishes. Only edible garnishes are allowed. Participants will be asked to remove any other material besides a serving utensil, napkin, and edible garnish from the serving tray

SKILL SHOWCASE: Youth will be judged on an assigned kitchen/cooking type skill. Youth will complete this skill while at the judging table. All materials needed to demonstrate the skill will be provided for the contestant. No other materials may be used other than those provided. The interview judges will score their skill based on correct procedures, safety, and other pertinent information related to the skill assigned. The skill demonstration will include a time limit which will be announced during participant orientation.

Examples of skills to be assigned include, but are not limited to:

E X A M P L E S	
Skill	Purpose
Dry and wet measure equivalents	Demonstrate how to properly measure various dry/wet ingredients and/or equivalencies.
Garnish	Liven up a plate with edible products to add color and flavor.
Themed food	Create something from fruits and vegetables that illustrates the theme such as ants on a log for a nature theme.
Table/flatware setting	Demonstrate appropriate table setting.
Knives	Select a knife based upon food to be cut. Demonstrate how to dice, mince, chop a vegetable.
Cross contamination prevention	Explain food safety, cutting boards, knives, gloves, handwashing when using either raw or fresh foods.
Small appliance demonstration or kitchen gadget demonstration.	Demonstrate how to use a small kitchen appliance or gadget properly and safely.
Meal Planning	Plan a meal using MyPlate and/or grocery store ad.
Product selection/identification.	Demonstrate how to properly select a food product based on quality, variety, or type.

Judging Time Limits: These time limits will be followed during the judging process

- 5 min presentation with introduction
- 3 min Q&A
- 1 min serve (*SENIORS ONLY*)
- 2 min skill showcase
- 4 min judges' comments

4-H FOOD SHOW RECIPE SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Recipes for 4-H Food Show should adhere to the guidelines below. Please use this checklist to ensure recipes are correctly written.

	YES	NO
DOES YOUR RECIPE HAVE ALL OF THESE PARTS?		
Name of recipe	_____	_____
Complete list of ingredients	_____	_____
Size cans, number of packages, cans, etc. given *EX: 10 oz box chopped frozen spinach NOT Spinach, box of spinach or frozen spinach	_____	_____
Description for combining all ingredients	_____	_____
LIST OF INGREDIENTS		
Ingredients are listed in order in which they are used in directions	_____	_____
Ingredients listed as they are measured. *EX: ¼ cup chopped onion, not ¼ cup onion chopped. *EX: 1 green pepper, chopped, not 1 chopped green pepper	_____	_____
Measurements given in common fractions *Ex: 1/4 cup, 2 tablespoons, 1 teaspoon	_____	_____
All measurements are spelled out, not abbreviated. *Ex: cup, teaspoon, tablespoon, size can, etc. *Ex: 4-ounce can	_____	_____
No brand names are used.	_____	_____
Complete description of ingredients is included *EX: low-fat; packed in syrup; reduced fat; etc.	_____	_____
DIRECTIONS		
Clear instructions used for every step of combining and cooking the ingredients	_____	_____
Short, clear sentences used	_____	_____
Correct wording used to describe combining and cooking processes	_____	_____
Size and type of pan stated	_____	_____
Oven temperature and cooking times given	_____	_____
Number of servings or how much the recipe would make included	_____	_____
Total Cost of Ingredients	_____	_____

4-H FOOD SHOW RECIPE EXAMPLE

RECIPE EXAMPLE

4-H Shamrock Salad

6-ounce package lime gelatin	(not just 1 package lime gelatin)
2 cups boiling water	
1 cup lemon-lime soda	
8-ounce package cream cheese, softened	(not just 1 package/what kind) Low fat, Fat free, etc.)
½ teaspoon vanilla	
½ teaspoon lime juice	
6-ounce can mandarin oranges, drained	(always include size)
8-ounce can pineapple tidbits, drained	
2 cups green grapes, halved, seeded	(not just grapes also color/kind) Red, concord, green)
2 cups chopped celery	(not 2 cups celery chopped – you must chop the celery to measure it, so chopped must be written first)
½ cup chopped pecans	(are you measuring the pecans before or after chopping? The way it is written here indicates chopping first)
8-ounce carton frozen low-fat whipped Topping, thawed	
3-ounce package lime gelatin	(indicate low-fat, fat-free, etc.)
1 ½ cups boiling water	

Dissolve the 6-ounce package lime gelatin in 2 cups boiling water. Stir in 1 cup lemon-lime soda. Combine this with cream cheese, vanilla, and lime juice in blender, and process until smooth. Pour blended mixture into bowl. Stir in all fruit, celery and pecans. Fold in three-fourths carton whipped topping. Pour into 13x9x2 inch pan. (Note size of pan is listed) Chill until firm; then cut whole pan into 8 equal sized portions.

In order to make the 4-H Shamrock gelatin jigglers, dissolve the 3-ounce package lime gelatin in 1 ½ cups boiling water. Pour into shallow pan, 24x16x1 inches. Chill until set. Cookie cut the jiggle gelatin into 4-H Shamrock shapes. Serve salad squares on lettuce-lined plate. Top with 4-H Shamrocks. Garnish with remaining whipped topping. Chill until serving time. May add other garnishes to serving try for color variety. Yield 8 ½ cup servings. (Note number of servings is listed.)



CONTESTANT NAME:							
CATEGORY <i>Please check one</i>	☐	☐	Main Dish	☐	Side Dishes	☐	Healthy Desserts
COUNTY							
AGE GROUP	☐ Junior ☐ Intermediate ☐ Senior						

Name of Recipe:			
Prep Time:	Cook Time:	Oven Temperature:	Cost:

By submitting the recipe, the contestant releases the recipe for use by Texas 4-H Youth Development and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

Texas 4-H Food Show | Presentation Scorecard

Contestant Name: _____ District: _____ County: _____

Entry Category: ___ Appetizer ___ Main Dish ___ Side Dish ___ Healthy Dessert

	Comments	Points	Score
I. PRESENTATION			
Theme: How does the theme fit with the dish?		(5)	
Knowledge of MyPlate: - Food group(s) represented in dish. - Serving amount needed from each group daily for age. - How did MyPlate guide choice of dish? - How does this dish reflect MyPlate?		(10)	
Nutrition Knowledge: Key nutrients of dish and function of those nutrients		(10)	
Food Preparation: - Preparation key principles and function of key ingredients - Healthy substitutions		(10)	
Food Safety Concerns & Practices: - Knows food safety concerns in preparation and storage of dish - Follows FightBAC principles		(10)	
II. INTERVIEW <i>(category specific)</i>			
Judge's Questions		(15)	
4-H Food & Nutrition Project Activities		(10)	
III. FOOD PRESENTATION/QUALITY			
- Appearance of food (texture, uniformity) - Garnishing		(5)	
IV. EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION			
Voice, poise, personal appearance		(5)	
V. SKILL SHOWCASE SCORE			
Proper demonstration of assigned skill.		(10)	
Additional Comments:		Total Points	Possible (90)

Texas 4-H Food Show Resources

Participants are encouraged to use the following resources as a foundation to learning nutrition, food safety, and food preparation knowledge. Participants should not solely rely on these resources but seek other credible resources to expand their knowledge and expertise.

NUTRITION RESOURCES

Functions of Ingredients Fact Sheet

https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/food_nutrition_fact_sheet_functions_of_ingredients.pdf

FightBac

https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/food_nutrition_food_challenge_fight_back_brochure.pdf

Food Safety Fact Sheet

https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/food_kitchen_safety_fact_sheet.pdf

Know Your Nutrients

https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Know-Your-Nutrients_FINAL.pdf

MyPlate Mini Poster

<https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/MyPlate-Mini-Poster.pdf>

Quick Ingredient Substitutions

https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/project_food_nutrition_quick_ingredient_subs-1.pdf

THEME RESOURCES

Texas Department of State Health Services

Mobile Food Units: How to Mobilize Your Food Operation Under DSHS

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/foodestablishments/pdf/GuidanceDocs/23-15129-Guidelines-for-MFU--w-Citations-04152019.pdf>

REVISED

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