

The Edible Editorial

December 2025

Welcome Providers!

Short days, chilly mornings, and lots of excitement from little ones. This month is a perfect time to focus on comfort foods that still meet CACFP guidelines, cozy indoor activities, and kindness in the classroom.

Creditable Christmas Themed Meals

Gingerbread Oatmeal Breakfast Bowl

Warm oatmeal (WG) lightly seasoned with cinnamon and ginger. Diced pears or apples on the side. Serves with unflavored milk. Components: WG grain, fruit, and milk.

Cozy Christmas Chili

Ground turkey, tomatoes, beans and peppers simmered gently. Serve with WG cornbread, apple slices and milk. Components: meat/meat alternate, vegetable, WG grain, fruit, and milk.

Holiday Turkey & Veggie Bake

Roasted turkey pieces mixed with carrots and green beans in a light gravy. Serve with brown rice (WG), mandarin oranges and milk. Components: meat, vegetable, fruit, WG grain, and milk.

Red & Green Veggie Wreath

Arrange cherry tomatoes and cucumber slices in a circle like a wreath. Serve a small portion of ranch or hummus. Components: Vegetable.

Holly Berry Fruit Cups

Mix diced strawberries and kiwi for a red- and – green “holly berry” cup. Serve chilled in small bowls. Components: Fruit.

Festive Activities

Ice Block Science Lab

What: Freeze small toys or leaves inside clear containers of water. Provider droppers with warm water and salt shakers.

How: Children explore how ice melts and experiment with freeing the items.

Why: Hands-on science, fine motor, sensory play.



Snowflake Symmetry Station

What: Fold and cut paper snowflakes, then match halves to explore symmetry.

How: Offer pre-folded squares for younger children; teach fold-cut-unfold magic for older ones.

Why: Early math, spatial reasoning, creativity.

Polar Bear Paws Snack

What: WG rice cakes, cream cheese, banana slices, blueberries for claws.

Why: Cute, creditable, low-sugar treat that meets CACFP pattern (grain and fruit).



Healthy Choices on a Budget

Ten Ways to Save You Even More Money

There is a huge misconception that eating healthy costs a lot more than the everyday average meal, especially if you have a small group to feed. You may have heard of some ways to help cut the grocery bill. Many of them are pretty common such as looking for coupons, meal planning, and making grocery lists. While those certainly help, we want to dig a little deeper and share ten ways to help you save even more change for your purse.

1 Share Ingredients First and foremost, meal planning is key. When planning your meals, share ingredients. For example, you make black bean and spinach tostadas on Monday; chances are you won't use all your spinach. Don't let it go to waste. Use the remaining spinach on Tuesday for spinach and strawberry salad. Wednesday's menu calls for strawberry pancakes. You get the idea.

2 Adapt to Sales Don't throw away the junk mail just yet. Check and see what's on sale before menu planning. If there's a great sale on whole grain pasta and canned tuna, make tuna noodle casserole for lunch that week. Plan ahead and if something you use often is on sale, like green beans, buy ahead of time to store or freeze until you need it.

3 Shop Specialty Stores Discount stores are perfect for saving money if you're creative with your meals and plan your menus with what they have available. Or shop online! Online grocers can be a source for savings and convenience. Also, grocers specializing in ethnic foods often times have hard-to-find ingredients at great prices.

4 Visit the Farmer's Market right before they close. Growers don't want to take produce back with them. They tend to give the best deals right before they call it a day. It saves them money too because produce gets wasted if it doesn't sell. You can't get any healthier than fresh produce.

5 Buy in Bulk Shop in the bulk bin section of your grocery store. Get your noodles, rice, quinoa, flour and other dry ingredients. Buying by the pound saves you some serious dough.

Bonus Buy your meat in bulk. Wholesale stores have great prices by the pound on ground beef, chicken and pork. Just separate and freeze when you get home.

6 Learn Price Per Unit Grocery stores have to display food costs in price per ounce or price per unit. Often, you'll find that the price per ounce is significantly less for the food item you want when purchased in a larger volume. It may cost more but you're getting a bigger bang for your buck.



7 Make Your Own Condiments Make your own dips, sauces, salad dressings and spreads. Not only are these items inexpensive to make, but you control the sodium and fat contents. You also eliminate unhealthy ingredients.

8 Stay Loyal Sign up for store loyalty programs. Some food markets and super stores offer cash back on your purchases or bonus points to use toward a discount on your bill at the register. The more you spend at that same store, the more you will earn - which can mean big savings over time.

9 Eat Less Meat Use meat alternates when possible. Beans and eggs are less expensive than a pound of hamburger. Use refried beans on your taco instead of beef, or serve egg salad sandwiches instead of turkey.

10 Get Paid to Grocery Shop Download rebate apps on your phone. Tag it with grocery store loyalty apps. Most apps do the savings for you. Just shop and scan. Some apps will even provide credit you if a product you recently purchased goes on sale within a certain time frame.

Stretch your food dollars. When you receive reimbursement from the USDA as a CACFP provider for serving healthy meals and snacks, you can purchase a greater variety of foods. Know someone who is not on the food program? Share our site, cacfp.org so they can:

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Beef Goulash - Recipe for Centers

CACFP Crediting Information: 1/2 cup goulash and 1/4 cup cooked noodles provides 1 1/2 oz. equivalent meat, 1/4 cup vegetable, and 1/2 oz. equivalent grains.

Makes 25 servings.

Ingredients:

4 lbs. Beef, round, roast or steak, fresh or frozen, lean raw, 1/2" cubed

2 lbs. 13 oz. Onion, fresh, peeled, 1/4" diced

8 cloves or 1 Tbsp. 1 tsp. Garlic, fresh, minced

1 cup Ketchup

1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce

1/4 cup Brown sugar, unpacked

2 1/8 tsp. Salt, table

1 Tbsp. 1 tsp. Paprika

1 Tbsp. 1 tsp. Mustard, yellow, prepared

1 cup Water, warm

1/2 cup Flour, all purpose, enriched

12 1/2 oz. Egg noodles, whole grain-rich, uncooked.



Directions:

1. Place beef, onions, minced garlic, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, salt, paprika, and mustard into an 8 or 8 1/2 slow cooker. Stir well.
2. Cover and cook for 5 hours on high or 10 hours on low. Critical Control Point: Heat to 165 degrees F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
3. To make slurry: Combine warm water and flour to form a thin paste. Use a whisk or fork to mix. Add the slurry to the slow cooker and cook for 20 minutes or until the goulash has thickened.
4. Fill a large stock pot with water.
5. Bring water to a rolling boil. Slowly add noodles. Stir constantly until water returns to a boil. Cook uncovered for about 8 minutes or until al dente. Stir occasionally, Do not over cook. Drain well.
6. Serve 1/2 cup goulash over 1/4 cup noodles.

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1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

DECEMBER

ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>make animal 7 qwack hissss sounds</p>	<p>describe the 1 taste of different apples</p>	<p>color a 2 picture for someone special</p>	<p>fill glasses with 3 water, tap to make music</p>	<p>dance of 4 exercise to music</p>	<p>cut different 5 shapes, glue into a collage</p>	<p>cut a 6 sandwich into 4 pieces... ... share</p>
<p>HANUKKAH 14 begins</p>	<p>make 8 Smoothies with fruit and yogurt</p>	<p>HELP clean 9 the house</p>	<p>check out 10 books from the library</p>	<p>use your 11 favorite vegies to make a salad</p>	<p>close 12 your eyes, what do you hear?</p>	<p>READ a 13 book about WINTER</p>
<p>FIRST day 21 of WINTER</p>	<p>count all the 15 steps at your house</p>	<p>touch your 16 toes ten times</p>	<p>make 17 Smoothies with fruit and yogurt</p>	<p>MAKE 18 HOLIDAY CARDS</p>	<p>sing 19 HOLIDAY songs</p>	<p>make animal 20 sounds</p>
<p>fill glasses with 28 water, tap to make music</p>	<p>LOOK for 22 tracks in the SNOW</p>	<p>mix equal parts 23 of liquid starch and glue, play with</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS 24 EVE</p>	<p>MERRY 25 CHRISTMAS Ho Ho Ho</p>	<p>KWANZAA 26 begins</p>	<p>LOOK 27 for letters that you know</p>
<p>TALK about 29 things you did in the year</p> <p>2025!</p>	<p>NEW YEARS EVE! 31</p>	<p>GOOP 30</p>	<p>NEW YEARS EVE! 31</p>			

IGLOO COLOR BY NUMBER

Color the picture according to the code.

1 - Grey 2 - Blue 3 - White 4 - Pink 5 - Brown



Small Hands Crafting

Have your children make a Kwanzaa Bracelet! You'll need a 12" piece of yarn in red, green and black. Show the kids how to braid the three colors together. When their yarn is braided, tie it off and make a bracelet for them to wear.



Celebrate Kwanzaa

Did you know that the CACFP has grown throughout the years and serves over 3.3 million children?

Children are served meals nationwide in family day care homes, child care centers, and Head Start Programs. The goals of the CACFP are to ensure that well-balanced, nutritious meals are served and to help children learn to eat a wide variety of foods as part of a balanced diet. The CACFP serves children under the age of 13, migrant workers' children, age 15 and under, physically or mentally disabled persons receiving care in a family day care home or child care center, adults who are functionally impaired or over the age of 60, and unable to care for themselves.

This Holiday season we honor and appreciate CACFP providers and staff. Happy Holidays!

Safari Counting Tag! Movement on Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a holiday that lasts for seven days. Kwanzaa Tag is a good way to learn about the holiday and reinforce counting to seven. Designate one or two children as the lions. The other children are the impalas. When the impalas are tagged by the lions they must "freeze" as they count to seven. After seven, they are free to go again. Change lions every two minutes. Want some variation? Try skipping, galloping or side-stepping instead of running.



Corn-Casserole

- 1/2 cup onion (chopped)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium cream style corn
- 3/4 cup yellow or white cornmeal
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- nonstick cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a saucepan, cook onions over medium heat in vegetable oil until tender (about 4 to 5 minutes). Open canned corn and drain liquid into a measuring cup. If needed, add low-fat milk to make 1 cup of liquid. Add liquid and cornmeal to the cooked onions in the saucepan. Stir until the mixture boils. Remove saucepan from heat and mix in corn. In a mixing bowl, mix flour and baking powder. Add cornmeal mixture. Mix well. Spray a 9-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Pour mixture into baking pan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Cut into 6 servings.

Recipe adapted from USDA Mixing Bowl