

How To Do A Food Demonstration



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How To Choose A Recipe

Choosing the right recipe is very important. Even if your techniques are perfect, you won't get too far if your recipe does not appeal to the audience. The recipe you select should be:



- right for your ability level - challenging, but not too difficult;
- suitable for the facilities available and time allowed;
- appealing.

Where can you find the right recipe? Check in your 4-H Foods Project booklets. Family recipes are always a good choice, because they have been tested for appeal, and might be different from anyone else's recipe.

If this is your first public presentation, you will want a less complicated recipe than someone who is in their third year of demonstrating. After your first year, you will probably want to alter the recipe to add some originality. For example, one year I was looking through a magazine and I saw a giant cream puff that had chocolate filling. I liked the idea of the cream puff, so I changed the filling to a vanilla pudding mixture, and topped it with cherries for my demonstration. Another good thing about changing a recipe is that nobody else will have the same recipe you do. One year I remember four demonstrators who all made the same recipe. Be sure to read a copy of the rules and guidelines for the public presentation or event you plan to enter, since each is a little different.

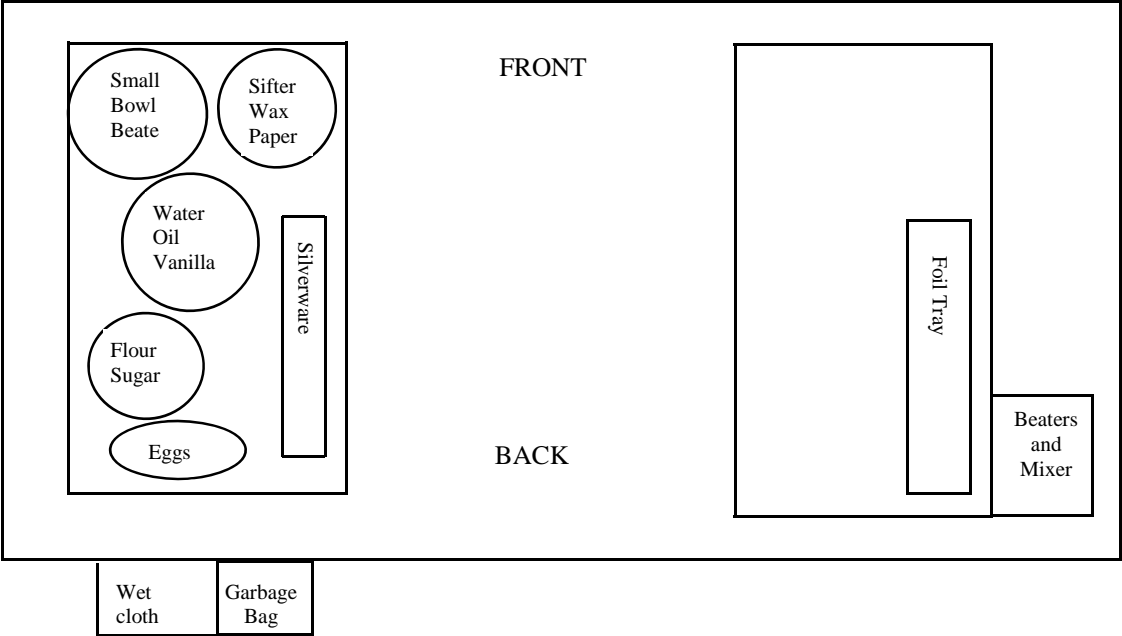
Next, try out the recipe to see if you like it. If you don't, you will never be able to stand to practice making it many times. Also, try it out on other people besides your family; they might have some good suggestions to help you improve it. Then practice and practice, until you can almost do the demonstration in your sleep.

Preparation for a Demonstration

Let's begin preparing and practicing for the demonstration. First, you will need two trays that measure about 13" x 16". If you don't have trays at home, you can borrow one, or use cookie sheets. Place all of your ingredients and equipment on one tray and move them to the other when you are done using them. (You can work from either left to right, or right to left.)

At the demonstration, you will have a work area of about 3-4 feet on the table. Be prepared to work in this amount of space. Practice using only this much work area at home.

Here is a diagram of how your trays might look.



Techniques for Demonstration

- * Remember to wash hands.
- * Use liquid measures to measure liquids and dry measures to measure dry ingredients. Measuring spoons can be used for either. Some ingredients can be pre-measured at home, especially to save time. Be sure to show how to measure at least one dry and one liquid ingredient.



- * Use a clear mixing bowl if it's available. This makes it easier for everyone to see what you are doing. Use a bowl large enough for what you are doing.
- * Level flour, sugar, etc, only with a flat spatula or knife.
- * Keep a damp sponge or cloth handy to wipe hands so you won't need to wipe them on your apron. Spills can be cleaned up easily.
- * Use equipment to fit the job you're doing. For example, a large butcher knife isn't needed to peel an apple.
- * Try to work quietly. Use plastic or wooden spoons and place a dampened cloth under bowls while mixing. This helps keep the bowl in place and also deadens sound. Use rubber scrapers to clean bowls out completely, and try to hold the bowl facing the audience as you scrape it out.



- * When you clean batter from a spoon, tap it against your hand rather than against the side of the bowl. There are two reasons for this; you wouldn't want to chip the bowl, plus it makes too much noise.
- * Work on waxed paper. For example, if you are peeling an apple, the peels can be cleaned up quickly. Tape a small paper bag beside you on the table for peelings, egg shells, etc. Clean up as you go.

- * Crack eggs with a knife into a separate cup. Then, if shell gets in, or the egg is bad, you haven't ruined the whole batter. Always bring an extra egg or two.
- * Use a cutting board for chopping, slicing, etc. You won't need to bring mother's big one to the program, but a small wooden or lucite one works fine.
- * Pans can be greased ahead and brought in plastic bags. But, if you do it during your demonstration, use wax paper or a pastry brush, not your fingers; or use one of the non-stick vegetable sprays. Be sure your pans are clean, as is everything on your tray. Baking soda can help shine up a dull aluminum pan.
- * If using an electric mixer, don't leave beaters in to drip batter. Always disconnect the mixer, then remove beaters and clean them with a rubber scraper and remove to silverware tray. This can be made by shaping aluminum foil to the desired shape, and can be used for all your dirty utensils. I made it double thickness, and after finishing my demonstration, wrapped it up neatly to take home. It sure makes clean-up easier!
- * Plan to wear clothes that are easily washable and that you feel comfortable in. Solid colors that coordinate with your apron. Short sleeves are easy to work in, and all jewelry should be left at home. Having your hair pulled back is important and adds to your overall appearance.
- * Include nutritional, storage, buying and other information as well as the “ho to” instructions.
- * Do not use containers that show brand names. Use a separate container or cover the label or product name.

Before you display your finished product, clean up everything. Cover your trays with matching towels, and then display proudly what you've made. In a public presentation, this would be the finished product, ready to be tasted. In a cooking contest (like fruit or vegetable), one serving is displayed throughout the entire demonstration, while the remaining product goes to the tasting judges.

Day Before The Presentation Event

Practice one more time. Then, get everything ready for the next morning and place them in a box, bag, cooler or chest and place in the car or near the door. Refrigerated or frozen items should be packed on the day of the event. Do not forget your poster, apron, and gloves. If you are using an appliance that requires electricity, bring along an extension cord just in case. These items are your responsibility, not your parents.

On Day of the Presentation Event

Nervous? This is where all your planning will payoff. Check your list to be sure all your equipment is packed. Allow plenty of time to get to the program. Rushing at the last minute is a disaster.

There will be a registration table for you to check in, and they will tell you where to put the finished product you brought with you. Use eye appeal to display your finished product in it's serving dish or baking pan.



Next, go to the demonstrating area and arrange your trays using the diagram you made. Now you're ready to begin demonstrating, and as soon as the judge is ready, you can start.

While you're waiting, here are a few things you could be checking:

- * Take off all rings, bracelets, necklaces. Jewelry is distracting and can get in the way.
- * Make sure you have an apron on. Why not color coordinate it to your towels or outfit. All good cooks wear an apron while they're working.
- * Be sure your hair is back in a hair net, scarf, or chef s hat and that no stray hairs are sneaking out. No one likes hair nets, except judges.

Lastly, take a few real deep breaths and try to give the appearance of being calm, even if your stomach is doing flips.

Once you're told to begin setting up, do so quickly. Your parents should not be setting up for you, this is your presentation. When you are ready, start. The judges will be watching your organization and technique. After your summary, ask the audience if there are any questions. You do not have to call on people who are going to ask you silly questions.

They might ask you questions, answer them the best you can. Look at the judge as you answer. Turn off your mixer - don't try to talk over it. Smile as much as you can. It's hard to do, but it does make you look like you're enjoying yourself; even if you are petrified. Find a friendly face in the audience and look up and smile often. Eye contact works wonders! Or, look beyond your audience.

When you're finished demonstrating, wait quietly until everyone else is done. Parents and friends may be taking pictures now. After you've packed up everything, sit in the audience and watch the other demonstrators. I learned many of my techniques this way. Usually the evaluators will want to talk to you before the next demonstration starts.



When you receive your evaluation sheets, if you don't understand a statement, ask the judges. Judges are always willing to explain because they want to help you. Often they're rushed as they write their comments during the judging. And, remember that judges are human too. They might not see every single thing you did. Or you might not agree with all their comments. But judges have valuable experience, and their suggestions can help you to improve.

Save your evaluation sheets and look at them before you do your next demonstration. The comments can help you improve each time.

The way you feel about your accomplishment is the most important thing, and can be worth ten blue ribbons. And remember, practice makes perfect, no matter how experienced you become.

Parts of a Demonstration

1. Title: Get your audience's attention and peak their curiosity through your title.

2. Introduction: Gain the audience's attention by clearly explaining what you are going to demonstrate, why you chose the subject and your title.

3. Body: Narrow down the information you outlined to the main points you want to get across. (what is being done, how it is being done, and why this method is being used.) Think about what steps are necessary to effectively demonstrate what you are teaching. Sequence these steps and their explanation in a logical order.

4. Conclusion/Summary: Repeat the points you want your audience to remember one more time. Include ways that this topic can be valuable to your audience. Cite your resources, which means tell where you got your information from.

5. Visuals/Props: These include anything that your audience can view to better understand the information you are presenting (posters, word models, tri-boards, diagrams or props). These should be large enough to be seen 30 feet away.